

NOAA science supports New York's offshore energy planning

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A newly released NOAA study will help New York state officials make advances in managing their coastal waters and guiding future development of offshore wind energy projects.

The study, A Biogeographic Assessment of Seabirds, Deep [Sea Corals](#) and Ocean Habitats of the New York Bight, will help the state identify favorable wind energy development sites in the Atlantic and protect critical offshore bird and fish habitats. Ultimately, siting decisions will be streamlined spurring development of wind energy industry jobs in the region.

The report is the result of a two-year collaboration between the New York Department of State's Ocean and Great Lakes Program and NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) to compile and interpret existing ecological information the state needed for offshore [renewable energy](#) planning. The report will help [coastal managers](#) better understand the interactions between renewable energy development and natural resources, and reduce uncertainties for investors in renewable energy projects.

"We are pleased to have partnered with NOAA to efficiently translate incomplete existing information into a useful tool for New York's offshore planning. Our work showcases the benefits of state and federal cooperation and serves as a model for the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond," said New York Secretary of State Cesar A. Perales. "We believe this work will serve as an important asset for New York's

offshore planning discussions and ultimately, help us meet our state's renewable energy goals."

Key findings include understanding the biodiversity, habitats, resources, and ecological processes of seabirds, deep-sea corals, sponge habitats, as well as seafloor sediments and bathymetry, and identification of data gaps in the study area. The data helped create maps that can be used by industry, federal and state managers and other stakeholders to make informed decisions moving forward. This will be particularly helpful to the offshore renewable energy development interests in their siting decisions.

"Developing these studies with our regional and state decision-making partners ensures their needs are met and that NOAA's expertise is being leveraged to balance the protection of the natural ecological resources along the coast and needs of the users in the region, namely renewable [wind energy](#)," said David Kennedy, assistant NOAA administrator for the National Ocean Service. "Working together early in the process is not only more time efficient and economical, but leads to better science-based decisions."

Information from this study, one of several regional studies underway at NCCOS, will serve as a model to support inter-state planning initiatives launched by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean. The regional government council works to maintain and improve the health of ocean and coastal resources, and ensure that they continue to contribute to the high quality of life and economic vitality of the region.

"This collaboration, which culminates with today's study, has shown how NOAA can work with states interested in answering similar energy questions," said Chris Caldow, NCCOS biogeography branch chief and NOAA lead on the project. "The study's success shows that our sound science and expertise provide a valuable resource for the nation."

"This great partnership between NOAA and the State of New York is bringing important scientific information into the management process up front," said Eric Schwaab, NOAA assistant secretary for conservation and management. "This is exactly the type of benefit envisioned by President Obama's National Ocean Policy and we are happy to see it in action."

More information: A Biogeographic Assessment of Seabirds, Deep Sea Corals and Ocean Habitats of the New York Bight Report:
[ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/c ... spatialplanning.aspx](http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/c...spatialplanning.aspx)

Provided by NOAA

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