

NOAA and BOEM announce draft strategy to develop offshore wind energy and protect North Atlantic right whales

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These two rare North Atlantic right whales were photographed by the NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Center aerial survey team in May 2016. Credit: Tim Cole/NOAA Fisheries, NEFSC

Today NOAA Fisheries and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced the release of a draft joint strategy to protect and promote the recovery of North Atlantic right whales while responsibly developing offshore wind energy. The draft strategy identifies the agencies' goals and objectives to better understand the effects of offshore wind development on the whales and their habitat. The public is invited to review and comment on the draft strategy by December 4, 2022.

The draft strategy identifies areas where the agencies will work together to improve upon the necessary science, information and Indigenous knowledge to support the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of developing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030 while protecting biodiversity and promoting ocean co-use. It provides a clear path forward to expand upon existing efforts to understand, mitigate and monitor potential impacts. Additionally, the draft strategy provides a long-term approach to adaptive management by integrating new information as it becomes available.

"BOEM is deeply committed to ensuring responsible [offshore wind energy](#) development while protecting and promoting the recovery of the North Atlantic right whale. Working with NOAA Fisheries on this draft strategy leverages the resources and expertise of both agencies to collect and apply the best available scientific information to inform our decisions," said BOEM Director Amanda Lefton. "We're seeking open and honest feedback from the public to help us evaluate and improve this effort."

"As we face the ongoing challenges of climate change, this strategy provides a strong foundation to help us advance [renewable energy](#) while also working to protect and recover North Atlantic right whales, and the ecosystem they depend on," said Janet Coit, assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries and acting assistant secretary of commerce for oceans

and atmosphere at NOAA. "Responsible development of renewable energy sources and protecting endangered North Atlantic right whales are priorities both agencies share."

The draft strategy identifies three main goals: 1) mitigation and decision-support tools, 2) research and monitoring, and 3) collaboration, communication and outreach. It focuses on improving the body of science and integrating past, present and future efforts related to North Atlantic right whales and offshore wind development. The strategy also establishes the agencies' plans to engage stakeholders, partners and other ocean users on these issues. Following review of public comments, the strategy will be regularly evaluated and updated as new information becomes available.

Today's announcement initiates a 45-day public review and comment period on the draft joint strategy, which will close on December 4, 2022. For more information about the draft strategy and how to submit comments, visit [BOEM's website](#).

NOAA Fisheries and BOEM share a commitment to protect and promote the recovery of North Atlantic [right whales](#) and other [marine life](#) while responsibly developing offshore wind energy. The agencies signed an [interagency memorandum](#) outlining the intent to responsibly advance offshore wind energy development in January 2022.

Provided by NOAA Headquarters

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