

# Empire Energizer



Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm – North Sea, England

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## Empire Energizer Community Update

May 26, 2023

Dear Neighbor,

This week's *Energizer* includes a fact sheet created by the Federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) about offshore wind and marine mammal protection. This fact sheet and other educational resources can be found on [BOEM's website](#).

Coming up on June 8th, we will host our second Open House in the spring series. Details are provided on our event page; [don't forget to register!](#) Community participation in the recent Island Park open house has provided our team with valuable input, and we look forward to continuing the conversation with the community on June 8th.

*Another excellent opportunity;* on Wednesday, June 14 at 1:00 p.m. NYSERDA is hosting an offshore wind webinar as part of their Learning from the Experts series. Jonathan Fraser and Jeff Stewart with the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) will discuss BSEE's offshore wind regulatory authority from design through decommissioning, including key development, oversight, and enforcement responsibilities for safe and environmentally responsible renewable energy production. More information, including how to register, can be found [here](#).

We on the Empire Wind 2 Team hope you and your loved ones have a wonderful Memorial Day weekend. We forever remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service of our country.

Your Community Partner,  
Susan Lienau  
Director of Community Affairs, Empire Wind 2

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The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) manages the development of U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) energy and mineral resources in an environmentally and economically responsible way. The bureau promotes energy independence, environmental protection, and economic development through responsible, science-based management of energy and mineral resources on the OCS.

## **Offshore Wind Activities and Marine Mammal Protection**

At the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), environmental protection—informed by the best available science and law—is a priority and an indispensable consideration in our decision making. Our approach to ocean energy and marine mineral development comes with our unwavering dedication to responsible stewardship, which includes protection of America's ocean environment and marine life.

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **How does BOEM ensure that whales are protected from offshore wind leasing and development activities?**

BOEM requires strict protective measures for when the offshore wind industry conducts activities offshore, including:

- Exclusion zones around vessels. Operators must establish an "acoustic exclusion zone" for geophysical surveys, so that the zone is clear of any marine mammals and sea turtles for a certain amount of time before acoustic sound sources can be operated.
- Visual monitoring by trained third-party, independent Protected Species Observers. [Protected Species Observers](#) are trained professionals that look for marine mammals so that the possibility of vessel strikes is minimized and to shut down any sound sources if marine mammals are detected within a certain distance.
- Independent reporting by Protected Species Observers during geophysical surveys. Any interactions with protected species are immediately reported to NOAA Fisheries and BOEM.

For more information about these and other protective measures, see: <https://www.boem.gov/pdcs-and-bmps-atlantic-data-collection-11222021>.

#### **Do offshore wind vessels use seismic airguns for their surveys?**

Deep penetration seismic airgun surveys are not used for offshore wind energy projects. These types of surveys rely on high-energy sound pulses aimed at penetrating deep (thousands of meters) into the seafloor to map deep geological features, such as oil and gas deposits.

The offshore wind industry typically uses High Resolution Geophysical (HRG) surveys to assist with their siting efforts. HRG surveys use a suite of active sound sources to produce sounds that are reflected off subsea structures to obtain images of the seafloor and shallow geophysical features.

The sound sources used in HRG surveys are much lower in energy than seismic airguns and have other important characteristics that set them apart from seismic airguns. Scientists from BOEM recently co-authored a scientific paper that describes key physical attributes of HRG sources – such as beamwidth, exposure duration, and frequency – that make them unlikely to result in incidental take of marine mammals. The paper and a video describing its findings can be found on BOEM's website at: <https://www.boem.gov/environment/center-marine-acoustics-recent-work#tabs-4126>.

BOEM and NOAA Fisheries rigorously assessed the potential effects of HRG surveys associated with offshore wind development in the Atlantic, and the agencies concluded that these types of surveys are not likely to injure whales or other endangered species.

#### **How do HRG surveys affect marine mammals?**

BOEM and the NOAA Fisheries have assessed the potential effects of HRG surveys associated with offshore wind development in the Atlantic. Following a rigorous assessment, NOAA Fisheries and BOEM have concluded that these types of surveys are not likely to injure whales or other endangered species.

BOEM requires developers to use protective measures, such as trained [Protected Species Observers](#), to avoid whales during these survey activities.

#### **Where can I find more information about HRG surveys?**

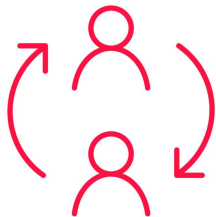
The following sources are available for more information on HRG surveys.

- BOEM's Center for Marine Acoustics provides detailed information on HRG surveys. <https://www.boem.gov/environment/center-marine-acoustics-recent-work>
- BOEM's fact sheet provides a comparison of HRG surveys conducted for offshore wind activities vs seismic airgun surveys done for oil and gas exploration <https://www.boem.gov/gandg-overview>.



Protected Species Observer using Big Eye Binoculars. Photo by Laura Morse/NOAA





## We want to hear from you!

Any comments, thoughts, or questions you may have **please email us at [empirewind@equinor.com](mailto:empirewind@equinor.com)**. We're dedicated to ensuring our projects are developed with continuous dialogue and feedback from our communities.



Learn more at:  
[www.empirewind.com](http://www.empirewind.com)

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