

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON  
OREGON'S FLOATING OFFSHORE WIND (FOSW) SITING PROCESS

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has been an active participant in the Bureau of Ocean Energy and Management (BOEM) Oregon Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force (Task Force), since it was formed in 2011. The Department appreciates the on-going partnership and collaboration of BOEM and our sister state agency, Department of Land Conservation and Development, in this process. Over the last two years, the activity of the Task Force has increased as wind energy industry interest and technical capability has increased globally, since Oregon, Washington, California, and other western states have increased their clean energy commitments, and since the Presidential Executive Order 14008, which addressed tackling the climate crisis and setting a national target of “30 by 30” to develop 30 GW of offshore wind energy production by the year 2030. The wind energy resource increases off Oregon from north (Washington border) to south (California border), and Oregon offshore waters have generated interest globally for both wave and wind renewable energy generation potential.

In [2019](#), BOEM established a study area for Oregon’s offshore waters to gather information and stakeholder input on floating offshore wind (FOSW) siting; the study area spans from the CA border to the WA border, and from the 3 mile territorial sea line out to the 1300 meter depth contour. In 2021 and during the information gathering process, ODFW commented to BOEM on remaining data needs for the FOSW planning process, focused on fisheries ([Agenda Item E.a.1 Supplemental ODFW Report 1, September 2021](#)) and ecosystem ([Agenda Item E.a.1 Supplemental ODFW Report 2, September 2021](#)) resources. ODFW comments were based on the data holdings at those times on the Oregon-specific data portal [OROWindMap](#).

In fall of 2021, ODFW provided marine habitat data for OROWindMap, helped curate additions to the ecosystem portion of the catalog, and submitted fisheries data to BOEM for evaluation and use. Fisheries data submitted included maps of fishing effort based on commercial fisheries logbook data from both Council-managed and State-managed fisheries, and sport bottomfish effort estimates from dock interviews and video boat counts. These data are now available on OROWindMap for use by the agencies and the public to inform further work on offshore wind siting. Simultaneously, logbook data have been shared with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service for use in development of a spatially-explicit mapping of fishing grounds under the project name Pacific Fishery Effort Model (PacFEM). PacFEM is intended to marry fisheries landings (fish tickets), with fisheries effort (spatially-explicit time on water), through the use of logbook data, vessel monitoring system (VMS) data, and other. The outcomes of this study will inform spatial values of fisheries activities.

On 2/25/2022, the Task Force met for BOEM to reveal the proposed “Call Areas” which will be formally published in the Federal Register, to solicit public comment and initiate BOEM’s leasing process. Following publication of the Call Areas, BOEM will conduct analysis of data and consider public input to winnow down the Call Areas to smaller Wind Energy Areas (WEAs). According to BOEM’s schedule (as presented at the [2/25/2022 Task Force meeting](#) and again at the PFMC [Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee meeting on March 4, 2022](#)), WEAs are currently

scheduled for publication to the Federal Register in Fall of 2022; however, BOEM has indicated that this timeline is not absolute and might be adjusted to accommodate high-priority analysis and/or information gathering.

There remain significant information needs for existing ocean uses and ecosystem resources to feed into the planning process to establish Oregon WEAs, which should be located in areas of greatest potential to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts of future offshore wind on those same resources. The Oregon Department of Energy is conducting a [state study on the benefits and challenges of floating offshore wind](#) at scale and is drafting a report (pursuant to Oregon House Bill 3375), which will inform how potential offshore wind development could be best balanced with existing ocean uses and ecosystem resources. The study spans many energy-specific issues relating to floating offshore wind development, including how it could benefit Oregon's target for 100 percent clean energy by 2040, challenges with floating wind energy technology and the necessary infrastructure upgrades to ports and the transmission system, and the potential economic effects for Oregon. All of these issues will be explored at a high level and the final report is due to the Oregon legislature in September 2022. ODFW's particular focus for the planning processes with BOEM and the state remains on the data and information gaps for ecosystem and fisheries resources, and potential tradeoffs between these resources and future offshore wind development. Specific information needs include:

1. Stakeholder engagement to interpret or develop fisheries footprints by sector/group/port, depending on the data gap. Of note, sport fisheries represent a particularly glaring data gap, although some data have been provided to OROWindMap as described above.
2. Spatially-explicit economic analysis of fishery value in the call areas which incorporates ODFW logbook and fish ticket data, VMS data, NOAA observer data, as well as various economic and social information needed to characterize fishery value in terms of the harvesters, buyers, processors, port infrastructure, community impacts, effort shift impacts, etc. Stakeholder engagement will be needed in this analysis to fully characterize and understand potential economic impacts.
3. Ecosystem resources and potential impacts to those resources. Notable ecosystem resources that are not yet fully accounted for in Call Areas (but not a comprehensive list):
  - i. Rock habitats
  - ii. Cable routes to shore (to avoid rock habitat and other sensitive areas both on the seafloor on along the shoreline)
  - iii. Methane seeps
  - iv. Seabird and marine mammal distribution, critical habitat, feeding areas, and migration corridors
  - v. Wind shadow impacts on productivity of the California Current
  - vi. Others

ODFW supports the completion of the above information gathering and analysis, prior to publication of WEAs for Oregon offshore waters. ODFW also supports consideration of a phased approach to development, to foster minimization of impacts to current uses and ecosystem resources, while the nascent offshore wind energy industry resolves crucial logistical and market barriers to using Oregon's offshore wind resource.

Within the boundaries of the original study area (state borders out to the 1300 meter depth contour), there are conflicts with historical fisheries effort and/or ecosystem resources throughout, even though there is a spectrum in the degree of conflict based on space and time. Our management responsibility guides us to determine how best to minimize this conflict with addition of new uses, guiding responsible development towards areas of minimized conflict.

This report is provided as informational to the Council, as the Council considers coast-wide processes for FOSW siting, leasing and development.

PFMC  
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