

Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium Advisory Board

Round 2 Research Projects Kickoff Webinar*

Webinar Summary

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

12:00-1:00pm

Webinar materials are available [here](#).

*Webinars are optional opportunities for Advisory Board members

WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

On October 15, 2025, the Maine Offshore Wind Research Consortium (Research Consortium) Advisory Board (AB) held a virtual “Project Kickoff” meeting for three new Research Consortium-funded research projects. The objectives of this webinar were to:

- Provide opportunity for AB members to meet project teams and become familiarized with Round 2 Research Projects

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Katy Bland (Maine Sea Grant), Research Consortium Program Manager, reviewed the webinar agenda and objectives, and gave a brief overview of the webinar guidelines. Meghan Suslovic (Maine Department of Energy Resources [DOER]) introduced the speakers and provided context around project topic selection. The AB, Collaborators, and Program Management (PM) team met throughout 2024 to review existing research priorities, discuss ideas in mini-workshops, conduct small group follow ups, and draft 1-page summaries of potential projects. The AB discussed and ranked the projects, after which the Steering Committee (SC) used the ranking to make a formal recommendation to the State to advance the three projects related to potential socioeconomic impacts, secondary entanglement risk, and offshore bat monitoring. DOER (formerly the Governor’s Energy Office) then issued a competitive solicitation to select the researchers that presented on the projects below.

A list of AB members who attended the webinar can be found in Appendix A.

A summary of the Zoom chat can be found in Appendix B.

PROJECT OVERVIEW (RFA#2 TOPIC: POTENTIAL SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS)

GULF OF MAINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Project title: “Assessing Social, Cultural, and Economic impacts of Floating Offshore Wind on Maine’s Fishing Communities: Baseline Offshore Wind Livelihood Impact Needs Exploration (BOWLINE)”

Presenters: Dr. Kanae Tokunaga (Gulf of Maine Research Institute [GMRI]) and Chas Van Damme (GMRI)

Timeline: Fall 2025-Fall 2026

Dr. Kanae Tokunaga began by identifying the study’s primary objective to conduct baseline assessment of potential social, economic, and cultural impacts of floating offshore wind development on Maine’s fishing communities. She explained that the economic assessment will rely on a modeling approach developed by Livermore & Guilfoos (2024) — the latter of whom is a subcontractor on this project – to evaluate potential on-the-water impacts, such as spatio-temporal distribution of fishing efforts and associated landings values. The economic assessment will also consider potential shoreside impacts,

with particular focus on local employment and wage multipliers. The sociocultural assessment, led by Dr. Christine Beitzl (University of Maine [UMaine]), will measure on the water impacts by collecting “stories from the sea” to explore connections between offshore fishing grounds and onshore communities. Dr. Beitzl and her team will also gather ethnographic data and conduct a comparative case study of select communities to anticipate positive and negative shoreside impacts.

Chas Van Damme (GMRI) noted that, to ensure industry perspectives and local knowledge are reflected in this work, the project will engage a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to provide guidance, review methodologies, and serve as a conduit for broader engagement. In addition to ongoing engagement opportunities throughout the project, the PAC will also be invited to participate in two workshops planned for late 2025 and early-to-mid 2026. The initial workshop will be aimed at building stakeholder understanding of study approaches and assumptions and initial scenario development. Project findings will be shared at the second workshop, during which the PAC will be invited to discuss scenario assumptions and provide feedback on the findings. All fishing industry-representing members of the Research Consortium AB have been invited to the PAC, which is expected to be finalized by the end of October 2025. Chas Van Damme (GMRI), Hannah MacDonald (GMRI), and Maine Coast Fisherman’s Association (MCFA) will support coordination with the PAC and all other engagement aspects of this work.

For more detailed information from their presentation, see the webinar slides on the meeting archive page.

PROJECT OVERVIEW (RFA#2 TOPIC: SECONDARY ENTANGLEMENT RISK)

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Project Title: “Quantification of the Risk of Secondary Entanglement due to Derelict Fishing Gear for Floating Offshore Wind Turbines”

Presenter: Dr. Spencer Hallowell (UMaine, Advance Structures and Composites Center)

Timeline: Fall 2025 – Fall 2026

Dr. Spencer Hallowell introduced the project on behalf of the research team, which includes Dr. Damian Brady (UMaine) and PhD Candidate Everett Rzeszowski (UMaine). He explained that floating offshore wind turbine (FOWT) infrastructure poses a risk of capturing derelict fishing gear that could potentially ensnare marine species. Given that this risk is dependent on the movement of Abandoned, Lost, or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) that is in the wind energy area (WEA), this research seeks to quantify such risk by focusing on the process in which ALDFG ensnares on FOWT infrastructure.

The project has kicked off with a literature review on gear types and gear loss rates. Informed by both the literature review and the work of Dr. Brady and Everett Rzeszowski, this study will focus on three fishing gear types in the Gulf of Maine (bottom trawl, dredge, and pots/ traps). The team will engage with the fishing industry to inform gear loss rates and provide feedback on the models and assumptions employed in the study. The team will then perform a desktop risk assessment to track how often gear is likely to float into WEAs and to understand the likely interactions between gear and infrastructure as well as gear and marine species. The risk assessment will also include research on potential monitoring approaches and technology needed for retrieval, with the overall goal of preventing secondary entanglements.

For more detailed information from their presentation, see the webinar slides on the meeting archive page.

PROJECT OVERVIEW (RFA#2 TOPIC: OFFSHORE BAT MONITORING)

BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Project Title: “Baseline offshore bat monitoring assessment in the Gulf of Maine”

Presenter: Merra Howe (Biodiversity Research Institute [BRI])

Timeline: Field seasons from mid-April to end-of-October in 2026 and 2027. Analyses to be conducted in late 2027 through 2028.

Merra Howe shared project details on behalf of her co-PI, Dr. Wing Goodale (BRI). She began by noting that, despite the significant data gaps around bats in the offshore space, researchers have confirmed the presence of bats offshore in the Gulf of Maine, which can occur up to 169 km off the coastline. To help fill this knowledge gap, this project will use an acoustic monitoring approach to develop an occupancy model of bat frequency offshore. The model will be informed by data collected from 26 detectors at 22 different sites, including buoys, vessels, and island and coastal sites. The team is working with a diversity of partners, such as Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS), Bat Conservation International (BCI), Maine Coast Fisherman’s Association (MCFA), UMaine, and others to help access and maintain acoustic detectors.

The team is currently working with partners, DOER, and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to refine their data collection approach and determine the environmental covariates to be collected. A draft study plan is expected to be submitted by December 15, 2025.

For more detailed information from their presentation, see the webinar slides on the meeting archive page.

NEXT STEPS

- If an AB member has particular interest in any of these projects, reach out to Meghan to stay involved.
- The PM will be in touch with the AB about Round 3 project recommendations.
- The kickoff webinar summary and slides will be posted online.

APPENDIX A – ATTENDANCE

71 individuals attended the webinar, including:

Advisory Board Members

Alison Bates, Colby College, Co-Chair
Sarah Haggerty, Maine Audubon
Laura Morse, JASCO
Becca Peters, Maine DMR
John Perry, MDIFW
Mary Beth Tooley, O’Hara Corporation
Stephanie Watson, DOER
Anthony Viselli, UMaine
Ann Zoidis, TetraTech
Gayle Zydlewski, Maine Sea Grant

Collaborators

Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)
New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC)
National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium (NOWRDC)
Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS)
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA)
Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA)
Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative (RWSC)

RFP#2 Awardees

Christine Beitzl, UMaine
Todd Guilfoos, University of Rhode Island
Spencer Hallowell, UMaine
Clea Harrelson, UMaine
Merra Howe, BRI
Hannah MacDonald, GMRI
Chas Van Damme, GMRI
Kanae Tokunaga, GMRI

Program Management, Advisors, and State Agency Staff

Katy Bland, Maine Sea Grant
Beth Bisson, Maine Sea Grant
Julia Hiltonsmith, Maine Sea Grant
Jess Jansujwicz, Maine Sea Grant
Laura Singer, SAMBAS Consulting
Meghan Suslovic, DOER

Additional observers attended online.

APPENDIX B – ZOOM CHAT SUMMARY

- Link to the DOER archive page: <https://www.maine.gov/energy/news/public-meeting-archive>
- Responding to BRI's request for input on vessels for hire:
 - Suggestion to contact Dr. Anna Mercer to ask about vessels used by NOAA's Cooperative Research Branch.
 - Suggestion to consider using Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Science's research vessel.
- Question about how common bats are offshore. Response that the bat monitoring project seeks to learn exactly that, but there are indications that bats frequently travel offshore.
- Question about if the cancellation of [ProjectWOW](#) will affect the bat monitoring project. Response that while the status of ProjectWOW is still uncertain, funding is secure until at least the end of the year to continue BRI's bat monitoring efforts.