



OFFSHORE WIND & WHALES

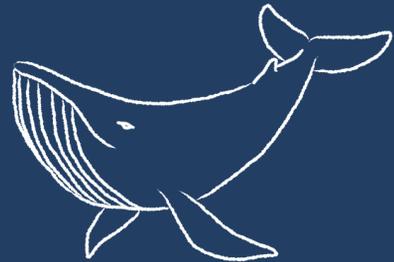
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. DOES OFFSHORE WIND KILL WHALES?

No - there is no evidence that offshore wind energy activities kill whales.

Noise from offshore wind energy development (including site assessment activities, construction, and turbine operations) is insufficient to directly cause mortality. However, sounds emitted during offshore wind energy development - like other marine activities including oil and gas development, shipping, and military activities - may impact whale hearing or behavior. A range of mitigation measures are in place to reduce risk of potential impacts to whales from offshore wind energy development in the United States.

A recent study in the U.S. Atlantic (Thorne & Wiley 2024) found no correlation between whale mortalities/injuries and the timing and location of offshore wind energy activities (site assessment surveys or construction) from 1995-2022.



2. WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO WHALES FROM OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT?

Marine mammals may be affected by offshore wind development via 1) underwater noise; 2) vessel interactions; and 3) changes to habitat and prey. The offshore wind industry follows a stringent federal permitting process to minimize and mitigate marine mammal disturbance. For example, being struck by boats is a leading cause of death for many whale species, but offshore wind vessels in the U.S. are required to follow strict speed restrictions and other safety requirements to prevent whale collisions.

3. WHAT MEASURES ARE USED TO PROTECT WHALES DURING OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT?

Offshore wind mitigation and monitoring requirements are much more stringent than for other maritime industries. To reduce vessel-related risk, requirements include speed restrictions and dedicated observers on vessels. Mitigation to reduce sound-related effects during construction activities include temporal restrictions on turbine installation (e.g., pile-driving), the use of professional Protected Species Observers and passive acoustic underwater monitoring to detect whale presence and shut down activities if whales are detected nearby, gradual "ramping up" of sound to allow animals time to move away from sound-generating activities, and use of sound abatement systems (e.g., bubble curtains) that contain the sound and minimize the size of the "noisy" area.

LEARN MORE

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SCIENCE BEHIND THESE AND OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS RELATED TO WHALES AND OFFSHORE WIND, VIEW THE FULL FAQ DOCUMENT AT THIS QR CODE OR VISIT NYETWG.COM

THIS FAQ WAS DEVELOPED BY SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS CONVENED BY THE NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (E-TWG) TO HELP PROVIDE SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT AND WHALES

