

Communications Toolkit for the Whale Communications Committee

Release of FAQ Document (V6)

February 2025

The Offshore Wind Environmental Technical Working Group (E-TWG), led by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), formed a Specialist Committee in May 2023 to develop communications materials to aid in the dissemination of accurate, readily understandable information around recent whale mortality events and the level of potential risk to whales from offshore wind energy development activities. This committee, made up of a diverse set of subject matter experts, is developing a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as a resource for stakeholders who receive questions from the general public related to whales and offshore wind. Given the urgency of disseminating accurate information, this FAQ is intended to be a living document that is updated over time to address emerging questions related to whales and offshore wind energy development.

We are providing this communications toolkit to facilitate and encourage entities to 1) share and amplify the release of an update to the FAQ document, and 2) develop your own communications products and/or adapt the information in the FAQ document as you see fit.

Note: The FAQ document is intended primarily as a resource for stakeholders who are in direct communication with the general public, and who regularly receive questions from the public on these topics. The intent of this document is to provide scientifically sound, accurate answers, in varying levels of detail, to address common questions. This is a technical document, and users should be mindful of the audience they are communicating with when determining how best to share information. This toolkit includes:

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Feel free to adapt any of the following materials to best suit your needs. Contact Eleanor Eckel (eleanor.eckel@briwildlife.org) with any questions, and please let us know if you share this document on social media or reference it so we can track where the information is being shared. Thank you!

Section 1: Materials to announce a new FAQ release

1.1 Direct Links

Whale Communications Committee Website: www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications OR accessed via the QR code:



E-TWG Website: www.nyetwg.com

1.2 Background Information

The Whale Communications Specialist Committee was formed in May 2023 to develop communications materials to aid in the dissemination of current, accurate, and readily understandable information around recent whale mortality events and the level of potential risk to whales from offshore wind energy development activities. The committee includes representatives from environmental nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and offshore wind energy developers. External reviewers of committee products encompass scientific experts including federal and state agency representatives, academics, and other environmental stakeholders.

The main outcome of the committee is a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which serve as a resource for stakeholders who are in direct communication with the general public about whales and offshore wind. The intent of this effort is to provide scientifically sound, accurate answers to address common questions.

1.3 Key talking points

A group of scientific experts has produced Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about whales and offshore wind. The intent of this effort is to provide scientifically sound, accurate answers to address common questions.

In January 2025, the group released an updated version of the FAQ document (Version 4) with additional topics. New FAQ responses include:

- What are the drivers of recent humpback whale strandings on the East Coast of the United States
- Can publicly available data and reports from Protect Species Observers (PSOs) help improve our understanding of marine mammal populations?
- What are the risks and benefits of tagging whales?

The FAQ document provides multiple levels of detail in response to each FAQ: 1) Brief bulleted summary (i.e., talking points for each topic); 2) Brief answer to key question in paragraph form (when necessary); and 3) Detailed answer with associated scientific citations, to provide readers with a better understanding of the facts and information sources.

Given the urgency of disseminating accurate information, this FAQ resource will be updated over time to address emerging questions related to whales and offshore wind energy development.

1.4 Sample posts around releases

- My organization, **XXX**, participates in an expert working group that has released an updated FAQ document to aid in the dissemination of scientifically sound information about whale mortality events and the level of potential risk to whales from offshore wind energy development activities. The most recent FAQ responses are available at <https://www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications>
- To meet the need for accurate and readily understandable information about whale mortality events and the level of the potential risk to whales from offshore wind energy development activities, a group of experts (including from **MY ORGANIZATION**) has released an FAQ document with answers to common questions. **An updated version of the document with additional FAQs** is now available at <https://www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications>.
New FAQ responses include:
 - What are the drivers of recent humpback whale strandings on the East Coast of the United States?
 - Can publicly available data and reports from Protected Species Observers (PSOs) help improve our understanding of marine mammal populations?
 - What are the risks and benefits of tagging whales?
 New sections of the FAQ document are being publicly released as they are finalized. Feel free to contact me for more information.

Section 2: Other example content

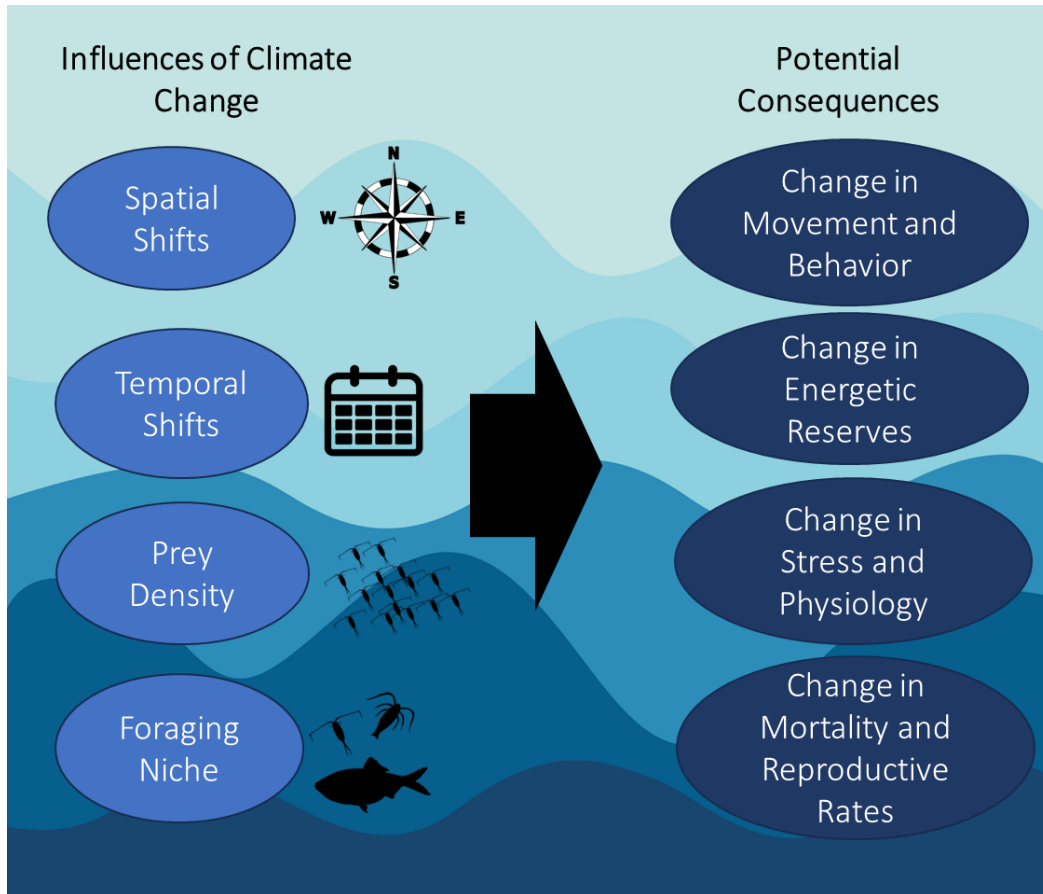
Entities may share these posts as is or use graphics and content from the FAQ document to create posts of a similar nature.

2.1 Sample posts

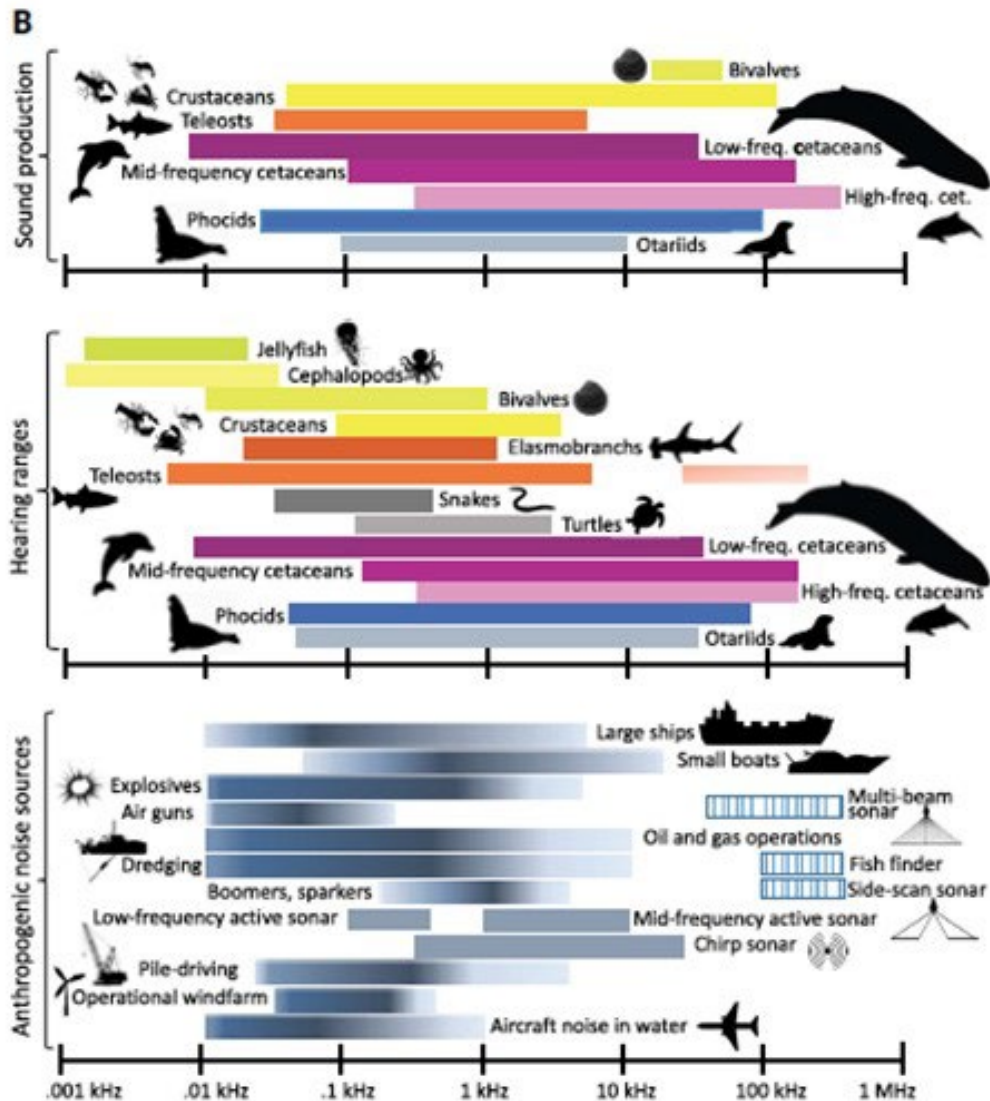
Do you know that Protected Species Observers (PSOs) are trained professionals who monitor for marine animals that are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and/or Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), to help a wide range of industries meet their regulatory compliance needs? Learn more about PSO's and the data they collect here: www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications

Do you know that biologging devices known as "tags" can be attached to marine mammals? Attaching tags provides an opportunity to gather data on whale movement and behavior when they are not visible to observers, and to collect data for longer periods of time rather than snapshots of behavior and locations of whales at the water's surface. Learn more about process, benefits, and risks of tagging whales here: www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications

2.2 Sample graphics



How is climate change affecting large whales? Climate change may alter food web dynamics for whales including spatial and temporal shifts, leading to potential consequences including changes in behavior, energetic reserves, and more. Learn more about the impacts from climate change and topics related to whales and offshore wind energy development at www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications. An updated FAQ document was just released! Graphic source: Biodiversity Research Institute



Offshore wind energy construction, marine oil and gas exploration, military sonar, and vessel activities all produce substantial amounts of underwater sound. Such sounds can vary in intensity/amplitude (volume), duration, and frequency ('pitch'). Learn more about the how sound from offshore wind development compares with other industries at www.nyetwg.com/specialist-committees/wildlife-faqs/whale-communications. An updated FAQ document was just released! Graphic source: <https://c3polab.org/sounds-in-the-sea/>