

Offshore Wind and Marine Mammals

The offshore wind industry is deeply committed to protecting the marine environment. Developers and government agencies take proactive steps to safeguard marine life, including establishing exclusion zones around construction sites, utilizing the latest mitigation technology, and pausing work during crucial migration seasons.



Our Vineyard Wind 1 project is subject to more than 3,000 specific permit conditions

Setting the Record Straight

There is no scientific evidence linking whale deaths and offshore wind activities. This has been confirmed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Marine Mammal Commission, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Documented risks to marine mammals include vessel strikes and entanglement with fishing gear. ¹

Of all maritime industries, the U.S. offshore wind industry operates under the strictest regulatory framework for marine mammal protection. Dozens of federal and state agencies review all proposed activities and only approve projects adhering to strict protection and mitigation measures. This includes mandatory vessel speed restrictions that are optional in other maritime industries. ²

Offshore wind developers are not, and have never been, authorized by government agencies to cause serious injury or mortality to marine mammals, intentionally or accidentally. Incidental take authorizations (ITAs) are granted by NOAA Fisheries for human activities that could incidentally disturb—not injure or kill—marine mammals. ITAs are also issued for oil and gas development, military exercises, construction projects and research. ³



Big Bubble Curtain deployed on pile driving for Vineyard Wind 1

How the Offshore Wind Industry Protects Marine Mammals

Through the federal and state permitting processes, offshore wind developers are required to take numerous steps to protect marine mammals. Our Vineyard Wind 1 project, for example, is subject to **more than 3,000 specific permit conditions**. Some of these actions include:

1. Suspending piledriving operations during North Atlantic Right Whale migration season.
2. Establishing “exclusion zones” around foundation installation sites monitored by Protected Species Observers with the power to shut down operations if they detect the presence of marine mammals.
3. Adhering to mandatory vessel speed restrictions to protect whales from strikes. No other marine sector conducts this level of mitigation and monitoring for marine mammals during vessel transit.
4. Implementing extensive noise reduction and acoustic monitoring measures. This includes noise-reducing bubble curtain technology as well as the first large passive acoustic monitoring network for marine mammals on the East Coast.

Offshore wind vessel activity currently accounts for around 2% of the tracked traffic in the waters from North Carolina to Southern New England ⁴

¹ Marine Mammal Commission, *Update on Strandings of Large Whales along the East Coast*
² American Clean Power, *Offshore Wind: Safeguarding Marine Mammals During Development through Operations*
³ NOAA Fisheries, *Incidental Take Authorizations Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act*
⁴ American Clean Power, *Offshore Wind is Protecting Whales*

