

Winds of Change

New collaboration focuses on underwater soundscape below offshore wind turbines

Wednesday, April 20, 2022



As the offshore wind industry gains momentum in New England, a new collaboration with UNH will focus on the underwater soundscape near the turbines — and any changes that occur during and after site construction.

UNH will partner with Vineyard Wind of New Bedford, Massachusetts, to deploy underwater acoustic devices intended to record ambient ocean sounds and vocalizations from dolphins, whales and other mammals in the vicinity of the nation's first commercial-scale offshore wind farm located 15 miles from

SERIES:

[GRANTS AND](#)

[CONTRACTS NEWS](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNH TODAY NEWSLETTER](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY RSS](#)

Martha's Vineyard. Under the new five-year contract, UNH graduate students will receive tuition assistance to collect and analyze the acoustic data, specifically focusing on the amount of sound generated by the offshore wind project and identifying the species and number of marine mammals in the Vineyard Wind lease area. The results will be compared to previously recorded acoustic data in the Atlantic Ocean.

“Sound is the dominant sensory mode for life underwater, and as the regional oceans become busier, sound from human activity has the possibility of masking biologically important sounds which could potentially alter the local ocean soundscape and impact marine life,” says [Jennifer Miksis-Olds](#), research professor and director of [UNH's Center for Acoustics Research and Education](#), in a [recent news release](#). “This exciting collaboration with Vineyard Wind will provide valuable data that could help make a positive difference in effective monitoring and mitigation of marine mammals and be a model for future ocean users to be sound environmental stewards.”

Miksis-Olds currently leads the [Acoustic and Environmental Observation Network in the Northwest Atlantic \(AEON\)](#), which provides long-term monitoring of marine soundscapes to evaluate changes in marine mammal behaviors and prey concentrations due to projected changes in the ocean dynamics. She previously led the [Atlantic Deepwater Ecosystem Observatory Network](#) in the Mid- and South-Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf to assess the ecology and soundscape of that region.

Vineyard Wind, an 800-megawatt project that will utilize 62 wind turbines, is expected to begin delivering energy to approximately 400,000 homes and businesses in Massachusetts starting in 2023. The acoustic devices will begin recording underwater sounds at least 30 days before the offshore construction starts — expected in spring of 2023 — and will continue for a minimum of

three years of turbine operation and maintenance.

“Our collaboration with the University of New Hampshire allows us to leverage their significant local expertise and build on existing scientific capacity in New England to support future work in this growing industry,” says Klaus Skoust Moeller, CEO of Vineyard Wind, in a [recent news release](#). “The data we collect in this program will allow us to make informed, science-based decisions that will allow responsible wind energy development with minimal impact on the marine environment.”

WRITTEN [Rebecca Irelan](#) | Institute for the Study of Earth,
BY: Oceans, and Space | rebecca.irelan@unh.edu | 603-
862-0990

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS NEWS

RELATED ARTICLES



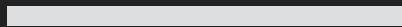
October 8, 2020 | GRANTS AND CONTRACTS NEWS

A Research Record



November 5, 2020 | GRANTS AND CONTRACTS NEWS

Collaborative to the CoRE





November 19, 2020 | FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Geophysical Fellows



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

