



What leaders are saying about offshore wind farms and recreational fishing?

“Offshore wind farms are here to stay so recreational fishing may as well get a seat at the table.” said **Tony Friedrich**, vice president and national policy director of the **American Saltwater Guides Association (ASGA)**.

The Association recently announced an offshore wind energy initiative to make sure wind farms are built responsibly with fish and habitat research before, during and after construction. Most of the twelve fishing community leaders I spoke to about offshore wind farms and recreational fishing felt similarly.

Offshore wind energy is needed along with other sources of renewable energy to help stem the tide on the damage burning fossil fuels has created in this nation and world. Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO2) trap heat from the sun under the earth’s atmosphere which heats our air, earth and water to the melting point.

And today, our carbon saturated air has also been absorbed into ocean water, creating ocean acidification, a carbon overload that leads to the deterioration of life creating ocean coral reefs and shell fish.

I have always been a believer that fishing and offshore wind energy development can coexist and thrive. In fact scientists have found the structure, habitat and fish abundance that offshore wind farms have created in European and at the Block Island Wind Farm will be an asset for fishing. An asset for fishing particularly in areas where there are now no fish, the artificial reef effect will actually create habitat and fish were there are no fish now and add to fish abundance in areas where there are fish.

Here is what twelve of our most active fisheries leaders in this nation had to say about offshore wind farms and recreational fishing.

Richard Hittinger, near offshore recreational fisherman and commercial rod & reel crew member, 1st VP of RI Saltwater Anglers, Coastal Resources Management Commission Fisherman’s Advisory Board



“I am supportive of offshore wind farm development to help curb the impacts of climate change as a renewable energy source. However, they need to be developed responsibly with research on recreational fish and habitat done before, during and after construction in each wind farm area,” said Hittinger.

“We have also given wind farms and their relationship to recreational fishing a lot of thought and believe we need to explore enhancing habitat at the base of pylons,” he continued.

“The Block Island Wind Farm has created great habitat with

jacketing pylons so there is more structure there and the reef effect has created habitat and fish for anglers. We have suggested creating enhance scour protection at the base of pylons that also increases habitat.”

Capt. Paul Eidman, Reel Therapy Charters, Anglers for Offshore Wind Power outreach coordinator



“Anglers are supportive of offshore wind farms that are responsibly developed. We are advocating for head boats doing a lot of the hook & line studies to determine the type of fish anglers catch in wind farm areas.” Eidman said, “There is a synergy today. Local captains and their vessels have taken a big hit with COVID and are or were no longer working. However, offshore wind has engaged them, employing them with good paying jobs on vessels that serve wind farms. As I speak with anglers in the New York and New Jersey area they are excited about offshore wind coming to their area. Their posture is ‘Your putting more structure in the water, bring it on. It will be great for fishing.’”

Michael Waine, Atlantic Fisheries Policy Director for the American Sportfishing Association and ROSA Advisory Council



“The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) has taken a leadership role in recreational boating and fishing developing a board approved offshore wind policy and aims to provide and offer developers the broad based perspective of its boating and fishing membership,” said Waine. “Recreational fishing does not offer the data that commercial fishing does on who is fishing and what they catch in wind farm areas so the input of anglers and boating is vitally important. Recreational anglers and boaters find offshore wind complex and hard to understand so sharing information is a big part of what a recreational angler and boating group can do.”

Zach Cockrum, Northeast Director of Conservation, National Wildlife Federation



“We supported the start of Anglers for Offshore Wind Power (www.anglersforoffshorewind.org) and believe in the group’s founding principles of access, public input and science. Wind farm development is more ‘real’ today as various offshore wind farms work their way through planning. (to page 21)