

## Social Science and Offshore Wind Energy

### Assessing Social Values Relative to Offshore Wind Energy Areas in North and South Carolina

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Office of Renewable Energy Programs (OREP) oversees development of offshore renewable energy projects on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). BOEM has identified wind energy areas (WEAs) on the OCS of North Carolina and is in the process of identifying WEAs in South Carolina. BOEM's responsibilities include determining and evaluating the effects of OCS activities on natural, historical, and human resources, and the appropriate monitoring and mitigating of those effects. This study is needed by BOEM to describe the values and activities of coastal residents in order to characterize and monitor the complex interactions between society, the environment, and offshore energy development.



### Goal

Few studies focus on the importance of values and place-based attachment in mediating community support for or opposition to offshore wind energy development. Additionally, research has not explored the relationship between social values, support for or opposition to offshore wind energy development, and propensity for protective action. These gaps in information limit our understanding about the effect of offshore wind energy development on coastal communities. Researchers with NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) will determine how a multitude of social factors influence community support for or opposition to offshore wind energy development, as well as mediate social action to advance or thwart development activities.



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## Project Area: Offshore North Carolina

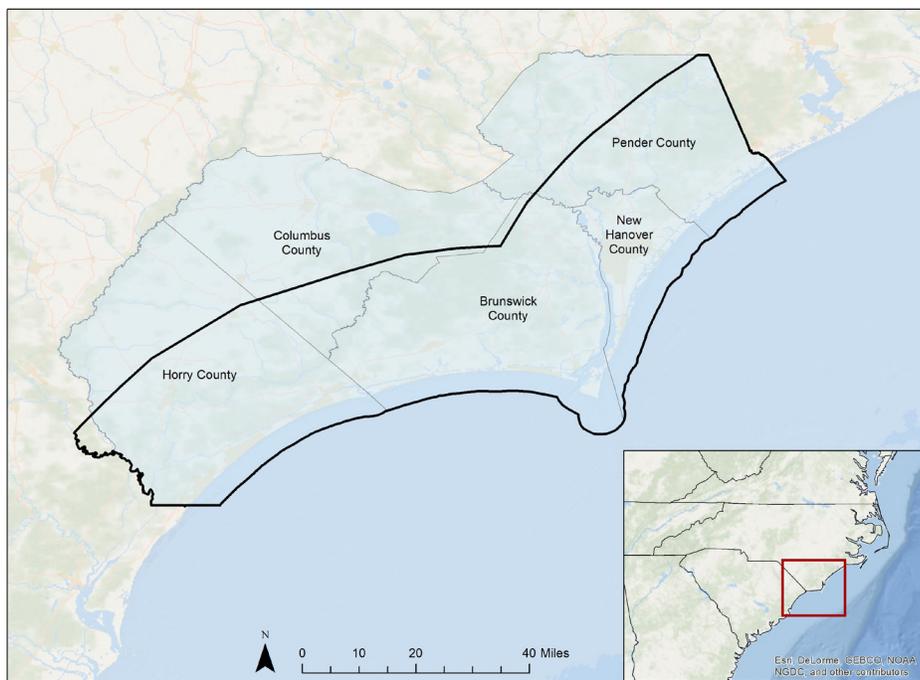
This study is focused on the coastal region spanning southern North Carolina and northern South Carolina where BOEM is at varying stages of proposing offshore areas for wind energy development. The study region (depicted in the map below) consists of the region within 20 miles of the coast across Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties in North Carolina, and Horry county in South Carolina.

## Methods

NCCOS will conduct a randomly sampled household survey to collect information about residents' attitudes, beliefs, and values related to marine and coastal landscapes, as well as offshore wind energy development.

## Expected Outcomes

This study will provide BOEM and NOAA with an enhanced understanding of the relationship between marine space use and non-use, the type and intensity of place-based attachments and value orientations in regions adjacent to WEAs, and the likelihood of local engagement in social action to support or oppose renewable energy projects.



Credit: NOAA, NCCOS

## Partners

This project is a collaborative effort between the NCCOS, BOEM, and NOAA's Office for Coastal Management.

## Online Resources

NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science: <https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/>

BOEM's Office of Renewable Energy Programs: <http://www.boem.gov/Renewable-Energy/>

NOAA's Office for Coastal Management: <https://coast.noaa.gov/>

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NCCOS supports the achievement of NOAA's coastal missions by providing cutting-edge research, scientific information, and tools that help balance ecological, social, and economic goals.

