

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFFSHORE WIND TOWERS AND MARINE LIFE

Literature reviews and European research have documented:

- Foundations of wind towers provide structured habitat and refuge for invertebrates (shellfish, tubeworms) and fish in ways similar to artificial reefs
- Hard substrates around turbine bases can be rapidly colonized by marine plants and animals such as mussels
- Intense and repetitive sounds from pile driving operations can impair the hearing system of marine mammals near the source and disrupt their behavior at considerable distance
- Seal and porpoise populations declined in the farm area during construction, but recovered over time after construction
- Noise from wind farms can change sea turtle behaviors, even causing them to avoid or leave the area
- Increased boat activity around wind farms can result in an increased risk of collision with marine mammals

For additional information on offshore wind impacts see the July 2007 MMS report: “Worldwide Synthesis and Analysis of Existing Information Regarding Environmental Effects of Alternative Energy Uses on the Outer Continental Shelf”