



NExUS Ongoing Projects and Activities Thu Feb 21 21:06:35 EST 2019

Name	Mapping the Distribution, Abundance and Risk Assessment of Marine Birds in the Northwest Atlantic: Phase 1
Description	This project will develop a series of maps depicting the distribution, abundance and areas of high, medium and low risk to marine birds from offshore activities (e.g., energy development) in the northwestern Atlantic Ocean. There are numerous efforts underway to identify marine habitats of importance to marine birds in the offshore environments of the eastern U.S. Many of these efforts are gathering similar types of information (i.e., baseline data) but are focusing on different regions and using different technologies. This project will bring together a unique partnership to pull together data from a variety of sources, including ships of opportunity, aerial surveys, species-specific telemetry studies, and the historic (from the 1970s to present) marine bird database (Atlantic Seabird Compendium) maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). These data will be used to model distribution and abundance patterns of many species or species groups of seabirds and then combine them with species risk assessments to create a spatially explicit risk surface. The resulting "best bird map" can be used for informing decisions about siting offshore activities such as wind turbine installations, marine spatial planning efforts, or other uses requiring maps of seabird distributions such as identifying marine protected areas. The goal of this effort is to document and predict areas of frequent use and aggregations of birds and the relative risk to marine birds within these areas. The resulting risk surface can be used to inform offshore energy development and, more generally, marine spatial planning efforts about the importance of the pelagic habitats to marine birds.
Category	- Climate-change Specific Projects - Research
Sector	- Infrastructure - Natural Ecosystems - Biota
Region	- Regional Or State -- New England -- Mid-Atlantic
Status	- Ongoing
Timelines	Start Date 2011; End Date December 2013
Lead Agencies	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative, and Northwestern Atlantic Marine Bird Conservation Cooperative
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