



Save Right Whales Coalition

# Conflicts of Interest

Environmental Organizations Take  
Offshore Wind Industry Money

4-26-2022

# **Conflicts of Interest: Environmental Organizations Take Offshore Wind Industry Money**

<b>Executive Summary</b>	2
Environmental organizations that have accepted wind industry donations	2
<b>Details and Documentation</b>	4
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution	4
The New England Aquarium	5
Environmental League of Massachusetts	6
Mystic Aquarium	6
Center for Coastal Studies	7
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	8
Delaware Center for the Inland Bays	9
National Audubon Society	10
New Jersey Audubon Society	11
Wildlife Restoration Partnerships	11
The Nature Conservancy	12
World Wildlife Fund	12
International Fund for Animal Welfare/Whale Alert	12
Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts	13
Assateague Coastal Trust	14
Wetlands Institute	14
Project Oceanology	15
Consortium for Ocean Leadership/National Ocean Sciences Bowl	15
Maryland Coastal Bays	16
Blue Planet Strategies	16
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries	16
<b>Appendix: Key to Wind Industry Donors</b>	17

# Executive Summary

The Save Right Whales Coalition, a group of scientists, conservationists, and community leaders, has discovered that **many conservation organizations accept donations from the offshore wind industry.**

Based on extensive offshore wind projects in Europe, it is known that **offshore wind projects are lethal to some marine species** to a significant extent. The construction and operation of these projects in the North Atlantic right whale habitat will put this **critically-endangered species** under even more stress.

Donations from the wind industry represent a **conflict of interest** for groups that should be holding wind companies accountable for harms wind projects cause to marine species. **Many of these groups have released statements in favor of offshore wind, or declined to comment.**

For each conservation organization, we documented the **history of donations** from offshore wind industry players. We also noted whether the organizations have made **statements on offshore wind**, both before and after the donations. ALL documentation of these conflicts of interest can be found in [this spreadsheet](#).

## Environmental organizations that have accepted wind industry donations

1. **Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute** received a donation of **\$500,000** from **Ørsted** in or after 2018. Woods Hole has endorsed offshore wind since at least 2019.
2. The **New England Aquarium** received a donation pledge of \$250,000 in 2018 from **Bay State Wind**. In 2019, **Vineyard Wind** donated an undisclosed amount to the Aquarium. In 2020, **Equinor** also donated an undisclosed amount. The Aquarium has supported offshore wind since at least 2021.
3. The **Environmental League of Massachusetts** (ELM) received a donation ranging \$5,000 - \$9,000 and an event sponsorship in 2020 from **Vineyard Wind**. In the same year, **FirstLight Power Resources** donated **\$10,000+** to ELM. ELM has supported offshore wind since at least 2010.
4. In October 2020, the **Mystic Aquarium** featured an exhibit promoting offshore wind. In June 2021, **Ørsted** and **Revolution Wind** donated **\$1,250,000** to Mystic Aquarium to create new pro-offshore wind exhibits and a video, among other allocations.
5. The **Center for Coastal Studies** (CCS) received a donation pledge of **\$5,000 for five years** from **Bay State Wind** in April of 2018, but did not ultimately receive the donation. **Vineyard Wind** is listed as a **corporate donor in 2018** to CCS and was a **corporate sponsor in 2020 and 2021**. CCS has supported offshore wind since at least 2019.
6. The **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** (NFWF) received a donation of **\$100,000 - \$499,999** from **Avangrid Renewables** in 2019 and 2020. In 2021, NFWF announced a partnership with US-based wind company **Apex Clean Energy** where Apex will donate to NFWF **\$1,000 per megawatt** of generating capacity Apex commercializes. NFWF has not released any statements supporting or opposing offshore wind.
7. The **Delaware Center for the Inland Bays** (CIB) received a donation of **\$50,000** from **Ørsted** in April of 2021. After the Ørsted donation, the executive director of CIB released a statement in favor of offshore wind.

**US Wind** gave **\$100,000** to CIB in December of 2021. CIB will name a new building the “**US Wind Environmental Education Center.**”

8. In August 2020, the **National Audubon Society** received a **\$200,000** grant from the **New England Forest and Rivers Fund**, a granting organization that takes money from the **Avangrid Foundation**, which is part of **Avangrid Renewables**. The National Audubon Society has supported offshore wind since at least 2010.

**Several regional Audubon chapters** who are part of National Audubon including Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Maine have also received grants from organizations affiliated with the offshore wind industry. The New Jersey Audubon Society, which is independent of the National Audubon Society, hosted an event sponsored by Ocean Wind in 2022. NJ Audubon has supported offshore wind since at least 2019.

9. **The Nature Conservancy** received a \$165,218 grant from the New England Forest and Rivers Fund, a granting organization with funding from the **Avangrid Foundation**. The Nature Conservancy has supported offshore wind since at least 2021.
10. The **World Wildlife Fund** received a **sponsorship grant of undisclosed value** from **Ørsted** in 2019. The World Wildlife Fund has supported offshore wind since at least 2021.
11. The **International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)** in 2018 received a donation pledge of **\$5,000 a year for five years** from **Bay State Wind** to finance its **Whale Alert** app.
12. The **Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts** in 2018 received a **\$250,000** donation pledge from **Bay State Wind** to prevent gear entanglement of right whales. The Lobster Foundation has no statements on offshore wind.
13. **Assateague Coastal Trust** received a donation of **\$50,000** from **US Wind** in December 2021. The Trust has supported offshore wind since at least 2009.
14. The **Wetlands Institute** received donations from **Ørsted** of **up to \$49,999** starting in 2019. The Wetlands Institute has made no statements regarding offshore wind.
15. **Project Oceanology** received a **\$950,000** grant from Ørsted to be distributed in installments from 2021 to 2024. Project Oceanology is a marine science educational nonprofit that has used the grant money to promote offshore wind in its educational materials.
16. The **Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL)** received a pledge from **Bay State Wind** to provide COL a grant of **\$5,000 a year for five years** starting in 2018 for COL’s National Ocean Sciences Bowl. Pro-offshore wind materials are included in the bowl. The **National Ocean Sciences Bowl** has also received donations from Ørsted, whose Massachusetts bowl donations have **totaled above \$60,000**.
17. The **Maryland Coastal Bays** program received a **\$100,000** donation from **US Wind** in 2021. Maryland Coastal Bays has no statements on offshore wind.
18. The **Blue Planet Strategies** received a **\$296,816 donation** from **Shell** through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
19. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries received a \$201,207.00 donation from Shell through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

# Details and Documentation

NB: ALL documentation of these conflicts of interest can be found in [this spreadsheet](#).

## 1. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Founded in 1930 and based in Falmouth Massachusetts, the **Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution** is a trusted research organization dedicated to understanding oceans. The organization had [\\$263 million](#) in revenues in 2020. A [2017 report](#) in collaboration with the **Center for Coastal Studies** and **New England Aquarium** found “consistent annual use” of areas proposed for offshore wind projects “by a significant portion of the *E. glacialis* [north Atlantic right whale] population, with a strong correlation between season and presence.”<sup>1</sup> In May 2021 Woods Hole marine ecologist Mark Baumgartner said in an [interview](#): “*We already have a fairly industrialized ocean, with shipping traffic and fishing activities. Adding these large wind farms with many, many, many turbines is certainly concerning.*” Despite this statement and other research findings,<sup>2</sup> Woods Hole released a statement in November 2021 saying that they are excited to use Department of Energy funds to help make offshore wind more sustainable. **Bay State Wind** [pledged \\$500,000 to Woods Hole in April 2018](#).<sup>3</sup> In response to an email inquiry by the Save Right Whales Coalition, Woods Hole said they received this donation directly from Ørsted. Woods Hole has supported offshore wind since at least 2019.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Findings such as this have been used to justify seasonal restrictions on vessels as a mitigation measure for offshore wind projects.

<sup>2</sup> Woods Hole published a press release on July 7, 2021 promoting new research that demonstrates that lobsters communicate to one another through sound, which raises questions about the impact of pile driving - which is loud and disruptive - on lobster populations. Woods Hole research also found that pile driving noise negatively impacts Longfin Squid feeding practices. Woods Hole research in 2021 found that the noise from pile driving harmed lobster and squid populations, which whales eat.

<sup>3</sup> Woods Hole confirmed by email that they received these funds and used them “to operate two whale-detection buoys in Massachusetts and New Jersey state waters, as well as to work on adding some new capabilities to the whale-detection system.”

<sup>4</sup> Bay State Wind gave the donation to Woods Hole for developing advanced whale detection systems. Bay State Wind pledged the contribution in April of 2018 and is slated to be paid out over a couple of years, provided that Bay State Wind is chosen as the developer of a wind project near Martha’s Vineyard. Woods Hole has supported offshore wind since at least May 2019. Save Right Whales Coalition could not find statements from Woods Hole regarding offshore wind before the donation.

## 2. The New England Aquarium

Founded in the early 1970s, the **New England Aquarium** is a leading educational, conservation, and research organization based in Boston. The Aquarium's [yearly budget](#) in 2019 was \$41 million, with \$8 million going to research, education, and conservation. In 2020 CEO Vikki Spruill [described](#) the Aquarium's right whale conservation program as **“one of the longest-running and most comprehensive whale research and conservation initiatives in the world.”**

The New England Aquarium was involved in [preliminary state-funded surveys of offshore marine life in 2014](#), early in the development and permitting process for a MassCEC offshore wind project. A [2017 report](#) in collaboration with the **Center for Coastal Studies and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute** found **“consistent annual use” of areas proposed for offshore wind projects “by a significant portion of the *E. glacialis* [north Atlantic right whale] population, with a strong correlation between season and presence.”**<sup>5</sup>

**In 2018 Bay State Wind, a planned offshore wind project in Massachusetts, [pledged \\$250,000](#) to the aquarium contingent on Bay State Wind being chosen as the developer for a project near Martha's Vineyard.**<sup>6</sup> The Bay State Wind donation was earmarked for preventing gear entanglement of the North Atlantic right whale. **The Aquarium also received a [donation](#) of undisclosed value in 2019 from Vineyard Wind, a project managed by Avangrid Renewables. In 2020, the Aquarium received a [donation](#) of an undisclosed amount from Equinor Wind US.**

In 2021, the Aquarium President and CEO Vikki Spruill gave an [interview](#) with *Boston Business Journal* where she described the Aquarium's relationship with offshore wind companies, saying, **“We are getting contracts with all of the wind developers, again, who are helping to underwrite our research: We're going to look at what's happening with the ecosystems and the fish populations in the areas where wind turbines are going to be sited.”**

**In [2020](#) and [2021](#), representatives of the New England Aquarium made statements in favor of offshore wind.** Dr. John Mandelman, Vice President and Chief Scientist for the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium, spoke in [August 2020](#) in favor of **“environmentally responsible offshore wind,”** claiming that their research will help minimize the impacts of wind power on marine life. In [October 2021](#), Jessica Redfern, chair of a New England Aquarium program to assess risks to

---

<sup>5</sup> Findings such as this have been used to justify seasonal restrictions on vessels as a mitigation measure for offshore wind projects.

<sup>6</sup> New England Aquarium was not immediately available for comment regarding the status of this donation.

marine life, said, “There's a lot of us who really believe in the importance of offshore wind,” provided that it is “sustainable.”

Yet in **October 2021**, Philip Hamilton, senior scientist from NEA’s Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life, [said](#) of the right whale, “*We know what the issues are and we’ve known for a long time...but clearly by this decrease in numbers, it hasn’t been good enough....We know they can recover. We just have to stop injuring and killing them, and they will do their part.*” Scott Kraus, the Cabot Center’s Director, [reiterated](#) in the same month, “No one engaged in right whale work believes that the species cannot recover from this. They absolutely can, **if we stop killing them and allow them to allocate energy to finding food, mates and habitats that aren’t marred with deadly obstacles.**”

**The New England Aquarium made no statements supporting offshore wind before the pledged donation from Bay State Wind in 2018, but has since publicly supported offshore wind.**

### **3. Environmental League of Massachusetts**

**The Environmental League of Massachusetts**, a venerable 123-year-old environmental advocacy group, works to protect many species including the North Atlantic right whale. ELM revenues totaled \$1.3 million in fiscal year 2021. **In the same year, ELM coordinated with Vineyard Wind to establish safeguards designed to ensure that offshore wind construction wouldn’t harm right whales. Those protections are inadequate, as [detailed](#) by the Save Right Whales Coalition.**

ELM has been [advocating](#) for offshore wind energy since 2010 and lists it as a [key program area](#). Vineyard Wind donated between [\\$5,000 and \\$9,000](#) to ELM in 2020 and was a [premier sponsor](#) of the 2020 Commonwealth Leadership Awards of the Environmental League of Massachusetts. ELM’s 2020 annual report also [lists](#) a \$10,000+ donation from FirstLight Power Resources, a renewable energy and power storage company. Avangrid is also listed on [ELM’s Corporate Council](#), though it is not clear if this constitutes a financial relationship.

### **4. Mystic Aquarium**

Founded in 1973, **Mystic Aquarium** is a leading educational, conservation, and research institution based in Mystic, Connecticut. The aquarium had revenues totaling [\\$22 million](#) in 2019.



In October 2020, the aquarium made [an exhibit](#) promoting off-shore wind energy, and launched it with a discussion panel that included a representative from **Vineyard Wind**. Eight months later, on June 8, 2021, Danish wind energy company **Ørsted** and **Revolution Wind**, a wind project that includes **Ørsted**, made a [\\$1,250,000 grant](#) to **Mystic Aquarium**, including for creating a “*brand new, state-of-the-art*” [offshore wind energy exhibit](#), as well as conservation research and educational programs. In 2012, **Mystic Aquarium** created a [video](#) for its educational programs titled “[Stop Motion Film: Renewable vs NonRenewable Energy Sources](#),” which promoted wind, solar, and geothermal energies. In **November 2021**, the aquarium developed a video titled “[The Promise of Offshore Wind](#),” with **Ørsted listed** as a “supporter” in the credits.

## 5. Center for Coastal Studies

Founded in 1976, the **Center for Coastal Studies (CCS)** is a prominent research non-profit with a budget of \$4 million. The Center for Coastal Studies was involved in **preliminary state-funded surveys of offshore marine life in 2014**, early in the development and permitting process for a MassCEC offshore wind project. CCS collaborated with **Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute** and **New England Aquarium** on a [2017 report](#) that found “**consistent annual use**” of areas proposed for offshore wind projects “**by a significant portion of the *E. glacialis* [north Atlantic right whale] population, with a strong correlation between season and presence.**”

**Bay State Wind pledged** to the CCS \$5,000 a year for up to five years starting in **April of 2018, contingent on Bay State Wind being chosen as a developer on an offshore wind project**. The grants would have supported the Marine Debris Program to promote marine waste reduction and recycling initiatives, but were not ultimately received.<sup>7</sup> However, **Vineyard Wind is listed** as a corporate donor of the Center starting in 2018 and was a corporate sponsor in 2020 and 2021.

In 2019, the Center’s director of right whale ecology, **Dr. Christopher Clark**, [described](#) the Vineyard Wind mitigation agreement as “*rational and conservative.*” In a June 2020 [public comment meeting](#), the Center’s then-CEO, **Richard Delaney**, said that offshore wind was the “*absolute key*” to achieving net zero, starting “*immediately*” with the Vineyard Wind project under review.

---

<sup>7</sup> In response to our inquiry, the Center’s Director of Development confirmed by email that she spoke with Mr. Delaney regarding this pledge. He recalls that the grants were in fact conditional on Bay State’s selection for the project, and were not received.



Dr. Clark served on the Center’s Executive Committee from 2019 until 2022 when he was [engaged as a Senior Scientist](#) for Vineyard Wind. Dr. Clark remains as an adjunct staff member.

## 6. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Founded in 1984, the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** connects private donors to public projects and is dedicated to preserving wildlife and habitats. Though it was created by the federal government, it is a 501(c)(3) organization. It has worked on projects in all 50 states and US territories. In FY 2020, NFWF invested [\\$398 million](#) in more than 950 projects. NFWF [dedicates funding](#) to conserve the North Atlantic right whale, but doesn’t mention wind turbines as a threat.

Avangrid Renewables gave \$100,000 - \$499,999 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in [2019](#) and [2020](#). In 2021, NFWF announced a [partnership](#) with US-based wind company Apex Clean Energy where Apex will donate to NFWF \$1,000 per megawatt of generating capacity Apex commercializes.<sup>8</sup>

The 2019 and 2020 Avangrid donations were dedicated to conserving bats, fish, and migratory birds in the Northeast. The Apex agreement is dedicated to funding conservation efforts in areas being developed for industrial-scale renewables. Avangrid Renewables is in a 50-50 partnership with Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners to construct Vineyard Wind One, an offshore wind project to be located 14 miles south of Martha’s Vineyard, off the coast of Massachusetts.

NFWF has a [web page](#) listing the species they aim to protect. Under the heading for “North Atlantic right whale,” there is a link to a [program](#) that protects whales and other marine life from entanglement in fishing gear, but discussion of the impacts of wind energy is absent. The NFWF has not released any statement in favor of or against offshore wind.

The Shell Marine and Wildlife Habitat Program is a [partnership](#) between Shell USA and NFWF that supports the conservation of priority habitats and species in the communities where Shell USA lives and operates.

---

<sup>8</sup> Because the destination of these donations after they pass through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is unknown, we did not include them in the attached spreadsheet or in the totals in the letter. However, we decided to leave them in this report to show further examples of the NFWF taking offshore wind money. Given the size of the organization, it is likely there are many more donations we did not find.

**On November 16, 2020, NFWF [announced](#) nearly \$500,000.00 in donations to reduce threats to North Atlantic right whales and other marine life off the coast of New England.** These investments included \$427,000.00 in grants and \$71,000.00 in grantee matching contributions. At the time, James Cotter, Shell’s General Manager of Offshore Wind, stated “Shell is a proud and active member in the communities where we operate. We look forward to building on our partnerships with NOAA and NFWF to further innovate technology that enhances the sustainability of our oceans and leads to the conservation of the North Atlantic right whale.”

The funds were ultimately awarded to **Blue Planet Strategies** and the **Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries** described later in this report.

**Shell is in a 50-50 joint venture with Ocean Winds North America LLC to build the offshore wind project known as [Mayflower Wind](#) to be located in waters south of New England.** Shell Oil is also in partnership with EDF Renewables to construct the Atlantic Shores offshore wind facility off the coast of New Jersey.

## **7. Delaware Center for the Inland Bays**

The **Delaware Center for the Inland Bays (CIB)** is a federal National Estuary Program established in 1995, with an annual budget of \$1.4 million. **Ørsted [donated](#) \$50,000 to CIB in April of 2021.**

Ørsted’s donation to the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays has been slated for programs that conserve and restore local ecosystems across the Inland Bays watershed and southern Delaware, as well as educational programs and an annual fundraising event.

The CIB does not take positions on individual projects, but **after Ørsted’s April 2021 donation the Executive Director, Chris Bason, [said](#) the Center is “*very supportive of the need for renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It’s super important for our estuary, because it’s highly vulnerable to climate-change impacts. We live so close to the water, the water is rising, and we’ve got to do something about it.*”** He also [noted](#) that he did not expect pushback for accepting the donation, and implied that those who disapprove of the project “*don’t subscribe to the science of climate change.*”

**Additionally, US Wind [pledged](#) \$100,000 to CIB in December of 2021.** After the US Wind donation, Bason [said](#), “*US Wind’s commitment to clean, renewable energy and the health of our coast is tremendous.*” US Wind’s donation to the Delaware Center for the Inlands Bays is dedicated to the center’s James Farm Ecological Preserve. **The**

**Center will name a new facility in the ecological preserve the “US Wind Environmental Education Center.”**

In an [interview](#) in January 2022 with Delaware Public Radio, **Mayor Vicki Carmean of Fenwick Island, who opposes offshore wind, said she felt Ørsted was operating a “pay to play” culture and trying to build local support by donating to nonprofits such as CIB.**

## **8. National Audubon Society**

*While the Audubon Society is focused on preserving birds rather than whales, their advocacy of offshore wind poses a potential threat to both.*

With revenues over [\\$141 million](#) in 2021, the **National Audubon Society** is one of America’s premier conservation organizations and is focused on protecting birds. Created in 1905, National Audubon is named after the groundbreaking naturalist and artist John James Audubon, and has helped save water birds like egrets, terns, and herons, among many others. **But Audubon has also advocated for industrial wind energy, which threatens several threatened and endangered species, including the whooping crane, [California condor](#), and [golden eagle](#).**

The National Audubon Society has been a vocal supporter of the industrialization of the area offshore of the Eastern United States, habitat of the right whale, since 2010. **“Offshore wind, especially in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, can and must play a huge role in America’s clean-energy future,”** [reads](#) the Audubon website in a 2010 article.

**This is despite the fact that the Audubon Society has investigated the impact of offshore wind turbines on seabirds in offshore wind projects in Europe.** A 2015 [article](#) on their website highlights research findings carried out by European scientists that found that offshore wind plants cause habitat loss and likely prohibit seabirds like puffins and gannets from foraging near the turbines. While the study found that seabirds appear to avoid collision with turbines, the research was limited to just five species observed during daylight hours under calm weather conditions at wind facilities that were near-shore. Even if birds are able to avoid spinning blades, offshore wind turbines still kill thousands of birds. In the article, the scientists noted: **“if you’re getting hundreds of thousands of birds passing through a wind farm, the one percent that doesn’t avoid it is still quite a high number.”**

In **August 2020**, the **National Audubon Society** [received](#) a **\$200,000 grant** from the **New England Forest & Rivers Fund**, a granting organization receiving money from the

**Avangrid Foundation**, which is part of the company **Avangrid Renewables**. The grant is dedicated to protecting and increasing bird habitats.

**The Maine Audubon Society** is part of the National Audubon Society. **In 2020, the New England Forests and Rivers Fund [gave](#) Maine Audubon \$199,987.** The donations are dedicated to repairing and protecting streams.

**The Sharon Audubon Center** is a wildlife refuge run by the Connecticut Audubon Society, which is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The Connecticut Audubon Society has an [annual budget](#) of \$4.7 million. **The Avangrid Foundation granted Sharon Audubon an undisclosed sum coming from two \$100,000 grants awarded in December 2020 and January 2022.** The grants were to be split among several organizations. The donations are for treating injured wildlife and educational programs.

### **New Jersey Audubon Society**

Founded in 1897, the **New Jersey Audubon Society** has the same mission as the National Audubon Society but is not part of the national organization. It spent \$4.5 million on program expenses in 2020, including \$525,000 for research. The New Jersey Audubon Society has [supported](#) offshore wind since at least 2019. **Ocean Wind was the event sponsor for New Jersey Audubon’s annual World Series of Birding in the years 2020, 2021, and [2022](#).** **In May 2021, Atlantic Shores, an offshore wind project proposed off the New Jersey coast by Shell Oil and EDF Renewables, gave the New Jersey Audubon Society and Wildlife Restoration Partnerships a [grant](#) of undisclosed value.** The Atlantic Shores donation supports research of red knot migration patterns.

### **Wildlife Restoration Partnerships**

**Wildlife Restoration Partnerships** is an LLC based in New Jersey with an undisclosed budget. It does not appear to have non-profit status. Its mission statement is to support “the science and practice of restoring wildlife populations and their habitat using approaches that also meet human needs wherever possible.” Key program areas include coastal habitat restoration, horseshoe crab conservation, and shorebird conservation.

Wildlife Restoration Partnerships praised Atlantic Shores for the [grant](#) to research red knot migration patterns, but hasn’t released any other statements related to offshore wind.

## 9. The Nature Conservancy

**The Nature Conservancy**, an environmental NGO founded in 1951, has conservation projects in all 50 states and a nearly \$1 billion [annual budget](#). The Nature Conservancy has supported offshore wind since [July 2020](#). **In August 2020, the Nature Conservancy received a [\\$165,218 grant](#) from the New England Forest and Rivers Fund, a granting organization with funding from the Avangrid Foundation.** The grant was earmarked for a forest habitat management project with a focus on woodland birds.

**The Nature Conservancy released [several statements](#) in favor of offshore wind in 2021.** It also created a [tool to map marine habitats](#), which is designed to facilitate decisions about offshore wind siting and minimize the impacts on marine life. **A [TNC report](#) from November 2021 argues that turbines may provide a habitat for new coral reefs.**

## 10. World Wildlife Fund

Founded in the early 1960s and with [\\$347 million](#) in revenues in FY2020, the **World Wildlife Fund** is a prominent international nonprofit dedicated to protecting Earth's biodiversity, including whales. The WWF recognizes the important role whales have in marine ecosystems and human activities, writing in an [article](#) about right whales on its website, "Whales play a critical role in maintaining ocean health and regulating global climate impacts, thus contributing to the resilience of a global ocean economy." Despite this and other statements, **the WWF has [endorsed](#) offshore wind projects since 2021.** **Ørsted has named WWF a partner since 2019.** Its donation is allocated for climate change education and other projects.

The WWF in 2004 published a [statement](#) on offshore wind stating that offshore wind should be pursued once potential impacts are researched, given that the impacts aren't prohibitive. **By 2021 WWF [endorsed](#) offshore wind projects.**

## 11. International Fund for Animal Welfare/Whale Alert

Created in 2012, [Whale Alert](#) is a crowd-sourced app that enables sailors to document whale sightings to let other sailors know to avoid the area. The Whale Alert Project is still operated and primarily financed by the **International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)**. IFAW was founded in 1969 to protect seal pups, and was instrumental in ending the commercial seal hunt in Canada. Today, IFAW has [annual revenues](#) of over \$30 million and has expanded its mission to numerous endangered species, spending \$6.7 million in 2020 for marine conservation. **It campaigns to protect right whales from**

vehicle strikes and fishing gear entanglement but doesn't include wind turbines in its [listed threats](#) to right whales.

Bay State Wind in April 2018 [pledged](#) \$5,000 a year for up to five years to the Whale Alert Project. The pledge was contingent on Bay State being chosen as a developer on an offshore wind project.<sup>9</sup> In August 2019 IFAW Marine Campaigner C.T. Harry signed a [public comment letter](#) raising “*serious concerns about the inadequacy of Ørsted’s proposed mitigation and monitoring program*” to protect whales. However the letter also [noted](#), “It is our view that offshore wind energy can and must advance in an environmentally responsible manner to ensure that it meets ambitious climate and clean energy goals in the region, while also safeguarding vulnerable ocean habitat and wildlife.”

The IFAW website [currently states](#), “The death of even one whale could be the difference between saving North Atlantic right whales and their extinction.”

## 12. Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts

With a \$140,000 yearly budget, the **Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts** is a 501(c)(3) established in 2012 by the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association, a not-for-profit trade organization. The Foundation’s [stated mission](#) is to “sponsor scientific research and educational programs that promote sustainability and safe fishing practices, which in turn conserve and protect our marine environment and the abundant life it supports.” **Bay State Wind pledged \$250,000 to the Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts in April of 2018, contingent on Bay State Wind being chosen as the developer on an offshore wind project.**<sup>10</sup>

The donation is slated for preventing gear entanglement of right whales. However, in 2019, the Lobster Foundation used [a different grant](#) from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust to deploy fishing ropes less likely to cause whale entanglement. It is unclear whether the Bay State Wind grant was received.

The Lobster Foundation does not release press statements or otherwise promote or criticize energy technologies.

---

<sup>9</sup> The International Fund for Animal Welfare was not immediately available for comment regarding the status of this donation.

<sup>10</sup> The Lobster Foundation was not immediately available for comment regarding the status of this donation.

### 13. Assateague Coastal Trust

**Assateague Coastal Trust**, founded in 1982, is a nonprofit organization with a [mission](#) “to protect and defend the health of Delmarva’s coastal waters through advocacy, education, science and the enforcement of just and equitable clean water laws.” Its annual budget in 2019 was \$340,000. **The Trust’s Director, Kathy Phillips, [said in 2009](#) that the Trust was reassessing its views on offshore wind, because hazards to wildlife were “trumped...by the environmental and climate impacts of continuing to rely on fossil fuels for power.” In 2017 she [characterized](#) efforts to halt offshore wind construction as motivated “to appease the lobbyists of Maryland’s most polluting industry: dirty energy production through coal, oil and incineration.”**

**In September 2021, Phillips described local resistance to offshore wind as overblown, [saying](#), “twenty years from now, our offshore wind farms will be claimed proudly by new residents and tourists.” US Wind [donated](#) \$50,000 to Assateague Coastal Trust in December 2021. The gift will be used to support Assateague Coastal Trust Coast Kids Program, which will expose kids to outdoor experiences.**

### 14. Wetlands Institute

Founded in the late 1960s and based in southern New Jersey, **the Wetlands Institute** is a nonprofit organization that promotes coastal and wetland ecosystems through research, conservation, and education. Protecting shorebirds is one of their key focus areas. The Wetlands Institute had \$2 million in revenue in 2019. **Ørsted has given numerous donations to the Wetlands Institute over the course of several years. The donations are as follows:**

- [2018](#) - donation between \$1,000 - \$2,499
- [2019](#) - donation between \$25,000 - \$49,999
- [2020](#) - donation between \$25,000 - \$49,999
- [2021](#) - donation between \$25,000 - \$49,999

The institute lists Ocean Wind, an Ørsted joint venture, as a [sponsor](#) of the “reTURN the Favor” horseshoe crab rescue program.

The Wetlands Institute website re-published press releases supportive of offshore wind in [2010](#) and [2011](#), but has not made statements since.



## 15. Project Oceanology

**Project Oceanology** is a marine science educational non-profit founded in 1972 in Groton, Connecticut. The organization spends about \$1 million a year on its mission of nurturing student and public interest in marine sciences, in collaboration with universities and local school districts. **The organization accepted a [\\$950,000 grant](#) from Ørsted and other energy companies**, to be distributed in yearly installments from 2021 to 2024. **This grant is intended to support K-12 STEM educational programs that promote offshore wind along with climate change and sustainability topics.**

Currently, Project Oceanology produces curriculum materials and provides educational activities, [including](#) a “**Build-a-Blade Wind Power**” project aimed at middle and high school students. Project Oceanology’s [Ocean Explorer Academy summer camp](#) also **includes a wind power engineering component.**

## 16. Consortium for Ocean Leadership/National Ocean Sciences Bowl

The **Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL)**, a nonprofit founded in 1995, [describes itself](#) as “a community-based organization working to ensure sound science underpins ocean policy and decision-making at the federal level.” One of COL’s programs is the **National Ocean Sciences Bowl**, a high school science trivia competition first held in 1998. COL’s annual budget for the bowl is [about \\$800,000](#).

In 2017, the Bowl’s **yearly theme** was [“Blue Energy: Powering the Planet with our Ocean.”](#)<sup>11</sup> **Bay State Wind in 2018 pledged \$5,000 a year for up to five years to the National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB)**, conditional on Bay State being chosen as the developer on an offshore wind project. The donation was **dedicated in part to encourage students to enter the renewable energy field.**<sup>12</sup>

According to the NOSB’s development director Melissa Brodeur, **Ørsted has given to a number of regional NOSB competitions in areas where they have existing and developing projects**, including the Blue Lobster Bowl in Massachusetts, and total giving since 2018 has exceeded \$60,000.<sup>13</sup> **In 2019 the Blue Lobster Bowl, one of the regional divisions of the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, [listed Bay State Wind](#) as a sponsor.**

---

<sup>11</sup> Some of the [question categories](#) included “Potential impacts of marine renewable energy technologies to ecosystems and marine life,” “organizations supporting marine renewable energy projects and commercialization for a sustainable future,” and “current permitting and regulation policies relating to marine renewable energy systems.”

<sup>12</sup> The National Ocean Sciences Bowl’s [2018 Annual Review](#) lists Bay State Wind as a sponsor.

<sup>13</sup> Ms. Brodeur responded to our email inquiry on March 1, 2022.

## 17. Maryland Coastal Bays

The Maryland Coastal Bays program is a National Estuary Program. It received a \$100,000 donation from US Wind in 2021. The donation will help create a coastal resilience [position](#) at Maryland Coastal Bays.

## 18. Blue Planet Strategies

**[Founded](#) in 2019, by ocean lawyer and campaign strategist Roger Fleming, former employee of the DOJ and the EPA, and marine scientist Zack Klyver.** They work with clients to develop policies and regulations to help save the right whales from extinction. They claim that nearly all right whale deaths from ship strikes and entanglements, can be eliminated by reducing vertical fishing lines and changing shipping practices to avoid collision. **No mention of offshore wind development over right whale habitat can be found on their website.** In 2020, Blue Planet received a [\\$296,816 donation](#) from Shell through NFWF.

## 19. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries is a state [agency](#) which manages Massachusetts' commercial and recreational saltwater fisheries and oversees other services that support the marine environment and fishing communities. In 2020 they [received](#) a \$201,207.00 donation from Shell through the NFWF.

## Appendix: Key to Wind Industry Donors

- **Ørsted:** a multinational power company based in Denmark and founded in 2005. The world's [largest developer](#) of offshore wind power by amount of built offshore wind farms, with revenue of \$11 billion in 2021.
- **Bay State Wind:** a proposed 800 MW offshore wind [project](#) located 25 miles off the Massachusetts South Coast, and 15 miles off the coast of Martha's Vineyard. The project is a 50-50 joint venture between **Ørsted** and **Eversource**, a New England electric services company with revenue of \$8.9 billion.
- **Revolution Wind:** a proposed 704 MW offshore wind [project](#) located off the coast of Rhode Island. The project is a 50-50 joint venture between **Ørsted** and **Eversource**.
- **Ocean Wind:** a proposed 1,100 MW offshore wind [project](#) to be located on the Outer Continental Shelf approximately 15 miles off the coast of Atlantic City, New Jersey. The project is a joint venture between **Ørsted** and **Public Service Enterprise Group**, an electric services company.
- **Avangrid Renewables:** subsidiary of **Avangrid, Inc.**, an energy services and delivery company based in Connecticut and founded in 1852. **Avangrid, Inc.** had [annual revenues](#) of \$6.97 billion in 2021. Avangrid's principal philanthropic arm is **Avangrid Foundation**, which [describes itself](#) as "an independent 501(c)(3) organization that engages in mission-driven giving."
- **Vineyard Wind I:** an 804 MW offshore wind [project](#) under construction 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The project is a 50-50 joint venture between **Avangrid Renewables** and **Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners**, an investment firm.
- **Mayflower Wind:** an 804 MW offshore wind [project](#) proposed about 30 miles south of Martha's Vineyard and 23 miles south of Nantucket, Massachusetts. The project is a 50-50 joint venture with **Shell Oil** and **Ocean Winds North America LLC**.
- **Atlantic Shores: Shell Oil** is in a 50-50 partnership with **EDF Renewables** proposed to construct a 1510 MW offshore wind energy facility to be sited off the coast of New Jersey.
- **Ocean Winds North America LLC:** a joint venture announced in 2019 by EDP Renewables (EDPR) and ENGIE.
- **Apex Clean Energy:** a [developer](#) of commercial-scale wind and solar energy facilities, based in Charlottesville, Virginia and founded in 2009. Apex was acquired by private equity firm Ares Management in October 2021 for an undisclosed amount.
- **US Wind:** a privately-held offshore wind energy development [company](#) founded in 2011 that is a subsidiary of Italy-based Renexia SpA, part of Toto Holdings. It is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland.

- **FirstLight Power Resources:** a [renewable energy supplier](#) operating hydroelectric, energy storage, and solar projects. Its offices are in Connecticut and Massachusetts, with approximately 125 employees.
- **Equinor:** a Norwegian state-owned [energy company](#) with about 20,200 employees, formed by a merger in 2007. It had [\\$91 billion](#) in revenue in 2021.
- **Shell** is a global fossil fuel company that has recently begun investing in offshore wind. Shell Oil reported total revenues of \$261 billion in 2021 and 82,000 employees.