Biological and Ecology

Data and Information Synthesis

- Synthesis studies and data integration should cast as wide of a net as possible beyond BOEM
- Long-term studies such as MARINe and Flower Garden Banks, should be considered for independent external program review and synthesis
- We support all BOEM data should being available from a common portal

Consolidate Study Efforts

- BOEM should look at the efficiencies and consistencies of having similar studies in different regions managed in one location
- Examples:
  - Avian Modeling Studies
  - EMF
  - Marine Mammals

Climate Change

- With a rapidly changing climate and concomitant ecological change there is a need to establish permanent reference sites for comparison to allow assessment of impacts

Where is the Benthos?

- Proposed studies focus on higher trophic levels such as Birds and Mammals

Alaska Region

- Make efforts to ensure regional priorities are cross-walked with IARPC

Data Interface Tools to Support Environmental Analyses: Interpretation of Existing Marine Mammal Data

- Concern that the data set is being too restrictive; should include non-BOEM data

Genomics of Arctic Cod: A Sentinel Species in a Changing Environment

- This is a valuable study and has been needed for a long time, consider higher ranking
- Include archiving of tissue material from current collections for genetic and other future analyses

Ecological Processes in Lower Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay: A Partnership

- Good collaboration with existing studies

Benthic Invertebrate Habitats in Cook Inlet

- Project seems overpriced for only epifauna and megafauna
- Need to consider the entire benthic system (e.g. infauna)

Polar Bear Habitat Use, Ecology

- Perhaps should be ranked higher
- Price seems appropriate

Baleen Whale Distribution, Abundance, and Ecology in Cook Inlet and Shelikof Strait

- Ranking is appropriate

Pacific OCS Region

- Consider an explicit strategic planning process to develop a more comprehensive vision (e.g. Atlantic Strategy), additional funding may be needed
- Coordinate among regions to develop consistent analytical approaches for leasing decisions, e.g., avian predictive modeling
- Build partnerships with existing oceanographic infrastructure along the coast (OOI, glider programs, C-CAN, CALCOFI)

Data Synthesis and High-resolution Predictive Modeling of Marine Bird Spatial Distribution on the Pacific OCS

- Important to do in context of future renewable energy development – cold spot identification a valid conceptual approach
- Work with other regions for consistent analytical approaches

Predicting and Detecting the Effects of Climate Change and Ocean Acidification Using Long-term Ecological Data

- We ranked this project lower given questions about relevance to BOEM needs
- Being cognizant of climate change on effects analysis is important and a clearer statement of how this study's relevance could help us support a higher ranking

Collecting and Archiving Invertebrates from MARINe Sites for Deposition in the Smithsonian Institute with Local Replicate

- Make sure that tissues are collected for future genetic analysis
- We agree with its relative ranking

Year-round and Diel Patterns in Habitat Use of Seabirds off Oregon

- If leasing is imminent consider making this a higher priority
- Merge with “Data synthesis and predictive modeling”

Strategic Resampling of Biodiversity Surveys at MARINe Sites: Completion of the Decadal Assessment

- We agree with the ranking of this project.

Gulf of Mexico

- Challenging time to plan studies
- Explore leveraging other sources of funding for all Gulf projects

Investigation of Pre-Riser Discharge from Wells within Proximity to Deepwater Benthic Communities for Plans with “Zero Discharge” Mitigation

- Understanding buffer zones is an important issue, however, we’re not convinced that this study will address the issue

Long-Term Monitoring at the East and West Flower Garden Banks:2014-2017

- Continued monitoring is important, and a program review and synthesis would provide recommendations on future sampling frequency

Long-Term Ecosystem Monitoring of the Deep Gulf of Mexico, Phase 1: Deep

- This is an important study; BOEM funds used for this study should avoid connections to the NRDA process
- To be an effective study, control sites are needed
- Is this appropriate for RESTORE Act funding?

Comprehensive Nearshore and Offshore Avian Surveys in the Gulf of Mexico (FY2015)

- Use comparable survey methodology, coordinating with Atlantic efforts

Atlantic OCS Region

- Applaud the well-coordinated collaborative efforts
- Coordinate renewable energy efforts with other regions, as mentioned for other regions

Atlantic Marine Assessment Program for Protected Species

- Important, well-coordinated effort
- Well-leveraged with other Partners
- Good coordination with other study in region
- Directly supports renewable energy development assessment collecting important data on birds, turtles, and mammals

Trawl Surveys in the Mid-Atlantic

- Consider archiving specimens/tissue for reference and assessment of future impacts
- Consider adding a pathology assessment
- Recognize that there may be additional cost
- Question arose about presence of shipwrecks in sample area

Determining Offshore Use by Marine Mammals and Ambient Noise Levels Using Passive Acoustic Monitoring

- Particularly important for activity assessment when visual detection is difficult, e.g., winter
- Can also detect other sources ambient noise
- Recommend leveraging financial support from state partners as appropriate

EMF (Electromagnetic Field) Impacts on Elasmobranchs and American Lobster Movement and Migration

- Suggest coordinate with similar Pacific study in project design recognizing differences (species/electrical current)
- Suggest eliminating lab studies
- Consider adding a “cognitive anthropological component”

Movement Ecology of Terns in New England

- Low-cost test proof of concept; good partnering
- Hopefully, get migration route information – perhaps most useful data
- Explore technologies that provide accurate/precise flight height information for local movements
- Programming battery life to maximize useful data