

## Enclosure 1: Background information

### Description of the Action Area

Debris from the GE Vernova blade may potentially occur within the offshore environment extending just south of Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Lease Area OCS-A 0501 and to the Great South Channel, through Muskeget Channel, Nantucket Sound, and potentially Vineyard Sound. The precise trajectory of the debris field is challenging to predict due to the complex meteorological and physical oceanographic processes occurring in the northwest Atlantic Ocean.

Shoreline areas may be affected from the current water line to a few meters beyond the wrack line. These shorelines could include Cape Cod and the Islands. To date, GE Vernova blade debris has been identified on the southern shores of Nantucket, Tuckernuk Island, and Muskeget island. Debris fields were tracked and collected just south of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, with no debris currently documented onshore. Figure 1 below illustrates the potential area where debris may occur, and the subsequent action area included in this Emergency Consultation request.

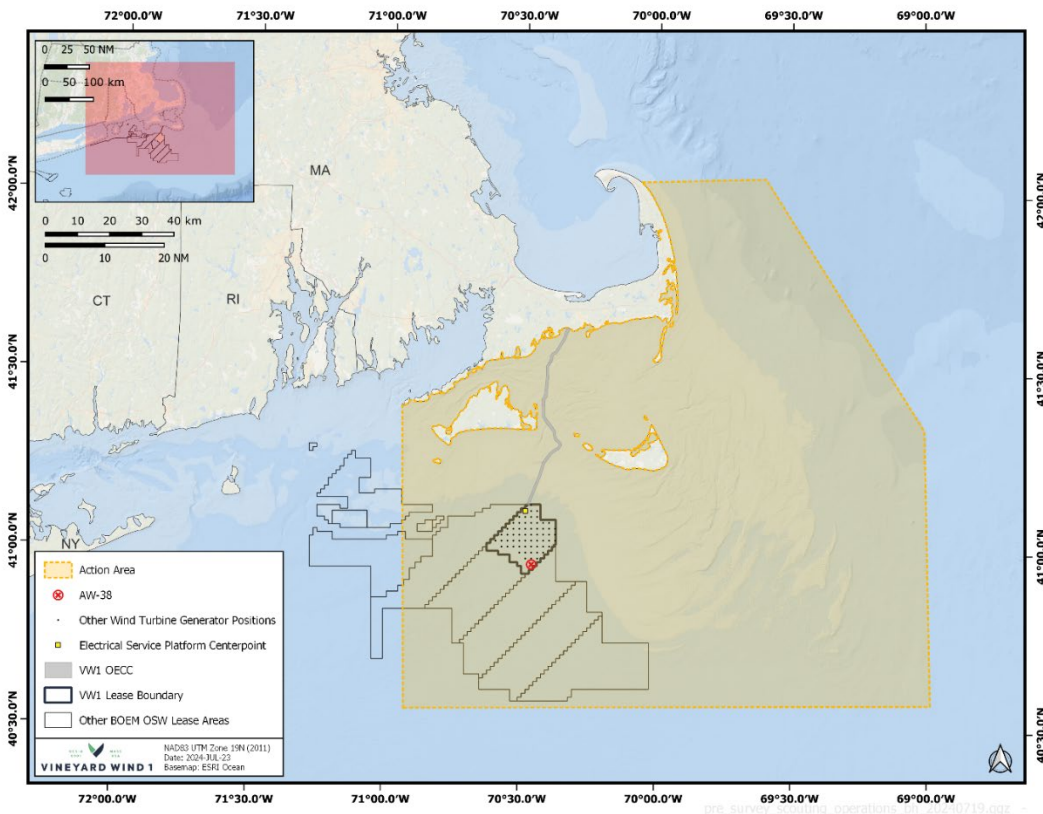


Figure 1. Action area.

## **List of Protected Bird & Bat Species in the Action Area**

- Piping Plover
- Roseate Tern
- Rufa Red Knot
- Black-capped Petrel
- Northern Long-eared bat

## **Summary of Response Activities**

A trained offshore fleet and onshore crews were mobilized to support the recovery of GE's blade debris. Offshore recovery commenced on the evening of the incident on Saturday, July 13.

Debris recovery teams were mobilized on Nantucket Island to survey the southern-facing beaches to commence recovery of debris that washed ashore. Patrol teams conduct daily inspections of the beaches, vessels offshore continue to identify and retrieve debris before it washes ashore, and twice daily aerial overflights conducted by GE aid in the debris identification efforts.

Reports of debris are directed to the cleanup contractor at this link: [Recon Survey \(NRCC\) \(arcgis.com\)](#) or reported to the Vineyard Wind Grievance Hotline at 833-609-5768.

## **Description of Onshore Debris Recovery**

Multiple teams are deployed to recover debris washing ashore on Nantucket main island. Though every effort is made to conduct debris removal by hand, Figure 2, access to certain beaches is limited and thus vehicles are used over sand to support debris removal and movement of patrols across the beaches where necessary and in compliance with the stipulations provided in the MESA Emergency Authorization, see Appendix A. When hand removal is not possible, vehicle use includes:

- Front end wheel loaders
- UTV side by sides
- Skid steers
- Passenger trucks



Figure 2. Hand removal of debris.

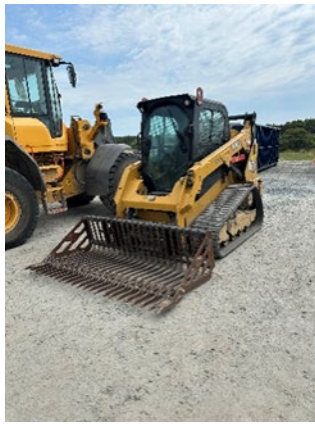


Figure 3. Vehicles used for over sand debris removal.

### **Description Blade Debris Tracking**

The track of the debris field is tracked by the onsite vessels and followed, if possible. The vessels coordinate geospatial information regarding the debris field location to the Marine Coordination Center, MCC. That information informs a trajectory analysis from the USCG SAROPS model. The MCC then communicates spatial information regarding the debris field track to the remainder of the fleet supporting recovery operations. Once ashore, ground teams patrol local beaches for debris. Additionally, the projects Grievance Hotline is available for public reporting of debris sighting. Shorebird monitors also relay debris sightings to the WhatsApp.

## Aerial Surveys

GE provides overflights twice daily, weather permitting, surveying for debris both offshore and onshore. The overflight path surveys the area from Monomoy island, Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard, an example is provided below in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Example GE overflight survey track lines.

Information from these overflight reports is provided to the Vineyard Wind Incident Management Team, IMT. The IMT reviews the overflight report and the SAROPS models to assess where qualified shorebird monitors will need to be deployed to support near real-time tracking of protected species activity.

## Description of Protected Species Monitoring and Mitigation Measures

### *Summary of State Permitting Emergency Authorization under Massachusetts Endangered Species Act*

On July 16, 2024, Vineyard Wind submitted a Request for MESA Emergency Authorization under 321 CMR 10.15 (Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program [NHESP] #23-8429) for emergency use of vehicles over sand on the southern facing beaches in Nantucket. Amy Hoenig with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage, Endangered Species Program verbally approved vehicular access on the evening of July 16<sup>th</sup>. See Appendix A. NHESP granted the Emergency Authorization via email on July 17<sup>th</sup> provided verbal confirmation and approval for continued debris reconnaissance efforts on July 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and, in response to a July 20, 2024, request issued an updated & amended MESA Emergency Authorization (321 CMR 10.15), NHESP #23-8429 (formerly #17-37398) on July 22, 2024. See Appendix A.

Conditions required for onshore debris removal include:

- 30-minutes advance monitoring by a qualified shorebird monitor in advance of equipment or vehicle use in areas where state-listed species occur and along sections of beach where state-listed species status is unknown
- Equipment escorting (by a qualified shorebird monitor) where necessary.
- Adherence to a 200-meter buffer between equipment and state-listed species
- Enhanced region-specific monitoring and mitigation (in addition to above)
  - o Eastern & Northern Shores of Nantucket – If debris too large to be removed by hand washes ashore, then in coordination with the qualified shorebird monitor, the monitoring and protection plan for equipment use will be implemented.
  - o Tuckernuck and Muskeget Islands – to date debris along these beaches has been removed by the qualified shorebird monitors responsible for these sites. Vineyard Wind will attempt boat-based debris interception and removal to minimize debris from washing ashore. Crews and Equipment will not be utilized on these beaches unless a site-specific protection plan has been developed in coordination with the qualified shorebird monitor for these sites and approved by NHESP.
  - o Wasque Point and northeast toward Cape Poge – Should equipment use for debris removal become necessary, access will be coordinate with Jason Zimmer, MassWildlife Southeast District Manager. Note, to date, no debris has washed ashore in Martha’s Vineyard.
  - o Beaches on the South Side of Martha’s Vineyard west of Norton Point – Vehicle and equipment access west of Norton Point Beach is prohibited unless a site-specific protection plan has is developed in coordination with the qualified shorebird monitor and approved by NHESP. Note, to date, no debris has washed ashore in Martha’s Vineyard.

- Cape Cod Beaches (Nantucket Sound & Atlantic Oceanside) from Barnstable east and northerly to Truro – If debris too large to be removed by hand washes ashore, Vineyard Wind will coordinate with the qualified shorebird monitor to implement the monitoring and protection plan for equipment use.

### **Onshore Shorebird Monitoring**

Qualified local and state qualified shorebird monitors conduct protected shorebird monitoring to support responsible debris removal. Table 3 below provides a list of the qualified shorebird monitors who have provided monitoring support services during the cleanup operation to date. Available shorebird monitoring reports are included in Appendix B.

| <b>Company</b>                           | <b>Role during Incident/Title</b>                   | <b>Name</b>       |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Nantucket Land Bank                      | Qualified Shorebird Monitor - Lead                  | Rachael Freeman   |
| Nantucket Land Bank                      | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Rico Schraff      |
| Tuckernuk Land Trust                     | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Ella Potenza      |
| Tuckernuk Land Trust                     | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Mikaela Neary     |
| Nantucket Natural Resources              | Team Manager - qualified shorebird monitor          | Vincent Murphy    |
| Nantucket Land Bank                      | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Anya Almeida      |
| Nantucket Natural Resources              | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Moran Nelson      |
| Nantucket Natural Resources              | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Jeff Clarson      |
| Mass Audubon / Coastal Waterbird Program | Director Mass Audubon Coastal Waterbird Program     | Lyra Brennan      |
| Mass Audubon / Coastal Waterbird Program | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Jamie Infanti     |
| Mass Audubon / Coastal Waterbird Program | Mass Audubon Islands Director                       | Suzan Bellincampi |
| Mass Audubon / Coastal Waterbird Program | Mass Audubon Islands Region                         | Caroline Baker    |
| Trustees of the Reservation              | Stewardship Manager at The Trustees of Reservations | Diane Lang        |
| Nantucket Conservation Foundation        | Qualified Shorebird Monitor                         | Danielle O'Dell   |
| National Park Service                    | Chief Ranger of Cape Cod National Seashore          | Michael Valora    |
| National Park Service                    | Chief of Natural Resources Management and Science   | Geoffrey Sanders  |
| National Park Service                    | Park Ranger (Protection)                            | Chris Anderson    |
| National Park Service                    | Biological Science Technician (Shorebirds)          | Kacey Srubas      |

|                                  |                             |   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge | Refuge Manager              | Rick Nye                                    |
| Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge | Qualified Shorebird Monitor | Six qualified shorebird monitors (name TBD) |



**Table 3.** Qualified Shorebird monitors or Protected Species Liaison

**Description of Onshore Debris Collection Restrictions in Specific Geographic Locations with high density Protected Species**

*Prohibition of vehicle use*

Over sand vehicles for debris collection are not used on the following beaches and islands to further minimize potential impacts to protected species in the area.

- Tuckernuk Island
- Muskeget Island
- Eastern shore of Martha's Vineyard
- Northern shore of Nantucket (No debris noted to date)
- Eel point, Nantucket

*Qualified Shorebird Monitor Escort*

Qualified shorebird monitors escort any on-foot or vehicular supported access on the following areas:

- Northern and Western shore of Nantucket
- Smith's point

*Qualified Shorebird Monitor Debris Removal*

Unless requested by the qualified shorebird monitor, the following locations will be monitored, and debris removed exclusively by the qualified shorebird monitor:

- Eel point (Danielle O'Dell)
- Tuckernuk Island (Ella Potenza and Mikaela Neary)
- Muskeget Island (Nantucket Land Bank qualified shorebird monitors)
- Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (No debris noted to date by the six qualified shorebird monitors patrolling the area)

## Nearshore Debris Collection

To further protect sensitive habitats (i.e., Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, Muskeget Island, Tuckernuck Island), shallow draft vessels, or similar, have been deployed in nearshore areas to collect debris that may not have been collected by the fleet further offshore. Figure 7 provides an example of the search area provided to the vessel patrolling south of Tuckernuck and Muskeget island on July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

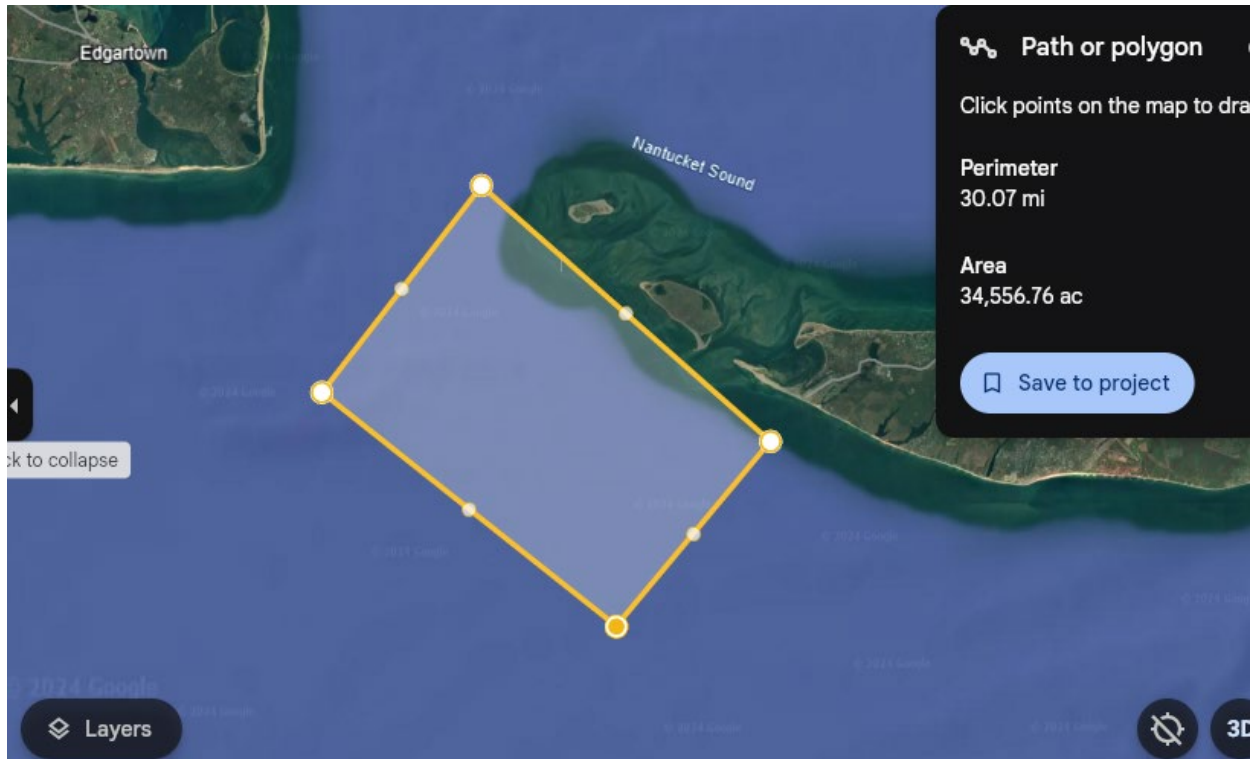


Figure 7. Example of nearshore scout area patrolled by shallow draft vessels utilizing hand held dip nets for nearshore debris recovery to minimize the quantity of debris washing ashore.

Another example of these nearshore efforts occurred on July 19<sup>th</sup> when a small fleet of fishing vessels from Chatham, Harwich Port, and Bourne joined the recovery efforts when debris was reported south of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge by a local fisherman and the Chatham Harbor master. These vessels engaged in emergency debris recovery efforts using 2' square hand dip nets to remove debris from the water. The efforts were successful in avoiding debris washing ashore on Monomoy island, as confirmed by qualified shorebird monitors patrolling the Monomoy Wildlife Refuge.

## **Description of Training**

Multiple daily planning meetings are held with Vineyard Wind and their response and clean-up teams to facilitate coordination on Nantucket Island, offshore, and at IMT. Vineyard Wind's Environmental Unit is consulting with BSEE and is responsible for providing guidance or reporting out data at each planning meeting. On Nantucket Island, there is a planning meeting each morning attended by the Harbormaster, Nantucket Land Bank, debris recovery crews, and Vineyard Wind operations leadership. During the course of the planning meeting, the Vineyard Wind Environmental Liaison provides training to all crew members inclusive of a protected species identification chart. The Vineyard Wind Environmental Liaison also coordinates with the Nantucket Land Bank and Nantucket Natural Resources Division, as well as Mass Audubon and other local landowners and shorebird monitors to coordinate rapid deployment of qualified shorebird monitors in advance of the crew's deployment to the beaches to ensure appropriate monitoring is conducted for beaches with unknown state-listed species status or for beaches where there are known state-listed species nesting.

## **Description of BSEE Coordination Across Emergency Response and Clean-Up Partners**

Close coordination with the Planning, Operations, and Logistics Chief at IMT, as well as coordination with the Vineyard Wind Environmental Liaison on Nantucket, the Environmental Unit Leader ensures that the offshore operations are conducted responsibly and in accordance with the emergency MESA authorization, Vineyard Wind project permits, and supports proactive shore monitoring for beaches with unknown state-listed species status. Active engagement with IMT also allows the Vineyard Wind Environmental Unit Leader to remain current on offshore operations, advise on environmental matters, and liaise with federal oversight officials. Engagement on island by the Environmental Liaison ensure compliant operations, is responsive to unanticipated debris removal coordination needs with the qualified shorebird monitors and provides a point of contact for all qualified shorebird monitors and local officials on island regarding environmental and protected species matters. Additionally, the Environmental Liaison works with the onshore operations team to ensure compliant operations.