



Institute of Fisheries Management

## Position Statement on Offshore Wind Farms

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With the increasing number of offshore wind farms (OWFs) around the coast of the British Isles, the [Institute of Fisheries Management](#) (IFM) believes that we need to better understand their impact on the multiple uses of the marine space. This must include the sustainable management of fish and fisheries.

IFM recognises and is engaged in the challenges that climate change will have on fish and their habitats. Warmer temperatures will influence the abundance, migratory patterns, and mortality rates of wild fish populations. We therefore welcome, in principle, Government ambitions to produce up to 50 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind power by 2030, including 5GW of floating OSW, to support UK climate change commitments and provide greater energy security.

Knowledge of the interaction between nature and OWFs is improving. But there are still many unknowns of their impacts on ecosystems and fish and we call for investment in more studies and better monitoring to improve our understanding and create more sustainable management policies.

Changes to fish populations resulting from OWFs can be considered good or bad depending on your perspective. They can act as artificial reefs to enhance fish species, but those changes might have other ecological impacts. By becoming no-fishing zones, other natural products, e.g. fish, seaweed and shellfish could also increase. Meanwhile, the movement of fishing vessels to other zones is likely to affect fish populations elsewhere.

Investing in understanding the interactions between OWF developments and commercial and recreational fisheries is challenging. Whilst that develops, a precautionary approach that considers the whole ecosystem is essential.