

Happy Endangered Species Day! (a little late)

In May 2010, The U.S. Senate declared the third Friday of every May, Endangered Species Day. The resolution "encourages the people of the United States to become educated about and aware of threats to species, success stories in species recovery and the opportunity to promote species conservation worldwide and to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities." (<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/may2010/2010-05-10-092.html>)

In celebration of Endangered Species Day, I wanted to highlight a few of Nebraska's endangered and threatened species (please see attached document for species information).

Nebraska has 14 federally and 27 state plant or animal species that are listed as threatened or endangered. Populations of animals or plants can decline due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, habitat loss or degradation, invasive species, disease, and human-related mortality.

Because this listserv is about wind energy and wildlife...

The potential impacts of wind energy development on Nebraska's endangered or threatened species could be direct and/or indirect. Not all impacts have been identified or are fully understood; research is a valuable tool to learn more about how wildlife and habitats may be impacted by wind energy development.

Direct impacts or mortality occur when birds and bats collide with wind turbines, towers, or transmission lines servicing wind farms. Mortality of terrestrial species may also occur during construction of wind energy facilities.

Indirect impacts of wind energy development to wildlife can be from habitat loss and/or degradation from wind farm and the associated infrastructure and/or from changes of wildlife behavior that result in them avoiding the area around the wind farm. Indirect impacts represent an environmental cost that may be greater than direct impacts.

Because a species that is listed as endangered is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, it may be more susceptible to direct and/or indirect impacts of wind energy developments. These potential impacts can often be avoided or minimized during the wind energy facility siting process, construction timing, and other measures. Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) and the U.S Fish

and Wildlife Service (USFWS) review development projects and recommend ways to avoid and minimize potential impacts to Nebraska's wildlife and habitats.

For inquiries regarding proposed projects, questions about the environmental review process, and requests for environmental reviews, please contact:

Michelle Koch, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
michelle.koch@nebraska.gov, (402) 471-5438.

Martha Tacha, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
martha_tacha@fws.gov, (308) 382-6468, extension 19.

For questions about wind and wildlife research and interactions, the Nebraska Wind and Wildlife Working Group, and Guidelines for Wind and Wildlife Resource Management in Nebraska, please contact:

Caroline Jezierski, Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
windwildlife@unl.edu, (402) 472-8188.



Photo by Doug Backlund (www.wildphotography.com)

American Burying Beetle

(*Bicrophorus americanus*)

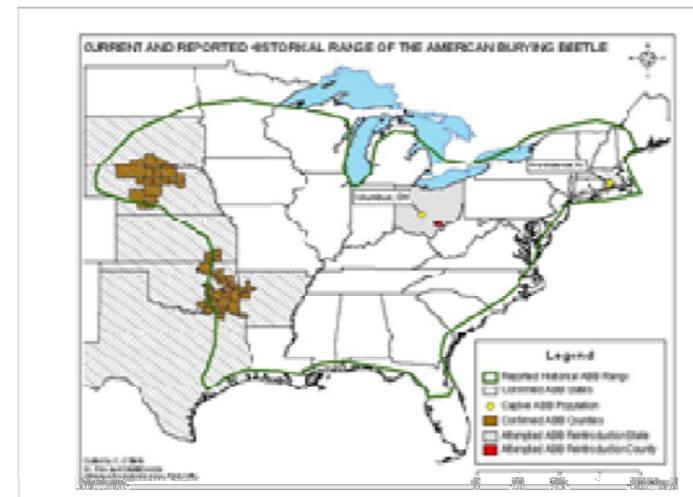
Federal Status: Endangered.

State Status: Endangered.

Populations have been extirpated from 90% of their original range; restricted mostly to areas undisturbed by humans.

Nebraska Information: Nebraska is one of five states with a known population; the beetles lay their eggs in the carcass of a small animal.

Wind Energy Considerations: Direct & indirect impacts.





Whooping Crane

(*Grus americana*)

Federal Status: Endangered.

State Status: Endangered.

Only about 16 birds were alive in 1941; after great conservation efforts, there are now about 300 in the migratory flock.

Nebraska Information: Rest & feed along the Platte River during the annual migration which is 2,500 miles long and in a narrow band 300 miles wide.

Wind Energy Considerations: Direct & indirect impacts.





Photo by Marlin Bowles.

Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

(*Platanthera praeclara*)

Federal Status: Threatened.

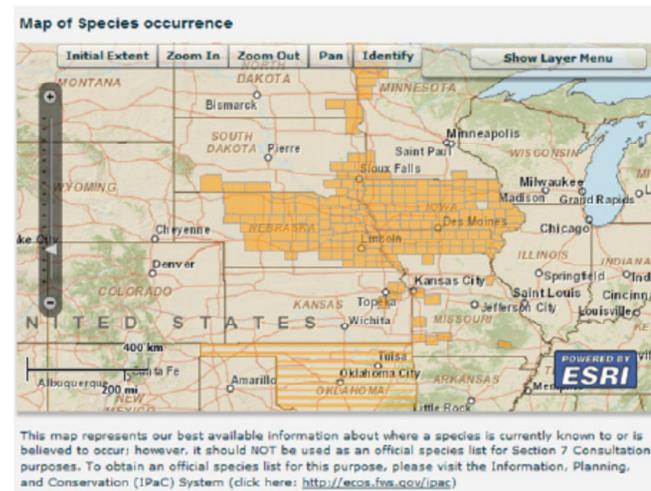
State Status: Threatened.

This species is listed wherever it is found.

Threats to the orchids are habitat loss (e.g. conversion to croplands, fire suppression, overgrazing, filling of wetlands, intensive hay mowing) and competition with invasive plants.

Nebraska Information: Range in NE is the Tallgrass Prairie and Sandhills ecoregions.

Wind Energy Considerations: Direct & indirect impacts.



USFWS map.



USFWS image.

Swift Fox

(*Vulpes velox*)

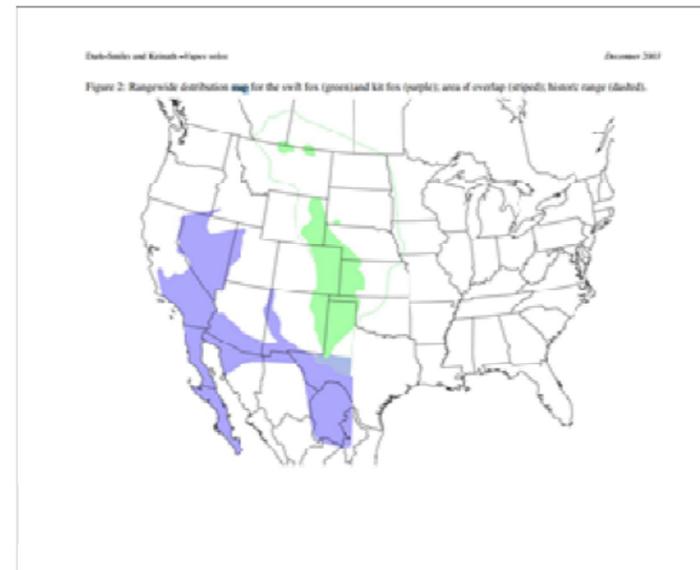
Federal Status: Not listed.

State Status: Endangered.

Reduced across much of its current range with viable populations occurring in 40% of the historical range (outlined in green on map).

Nebraska Information: Found in western Nebraska in the northern mixed grass prairie.

Wind Energy Considerations: Direct & indirect impacts.



Swift fox range in green.
Dark-Smiley and Keinath, 2003.



Interior Least Tern

(*Sternula antillarum athalassos*)

Federal Status: Endangered.

State Status: Endangered.

Listed due to loss of nesting and over-wintering habitat attributed to changes in natural water flows and gravel bars.

Nebraska Information: Use mid-channel sandbars and sand and gravel mines for nesting sites.

Wind Energy Considerations: Direct & indirect impacts.



<http://ternandplover.unl.edu/birds/interiorleاستtern.asp>



Bat Conservation International Image.

Northern Long-eared Myotis

(*Myotis septentrionalis*)

Federal Status: In Review.

State Status: Not listed.

The USFWS is currently reviewing whether or not this bat should be listed in all or part of its range.

Nebraska Information: Year-round residents of eastern Nebraska and the Niobrara and Republican River corridors.

Wind Energy Considerations: Direct impacts.

