

# Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

July 31, 2012

## Around the Nation & World...

**[Wind and Wildlife in the Northern Great Plains: Identifying Low-Impact Areas for Wind Development.](#)** Fargione, et al., PLoS ONE. The Northern Great Plains (NGP) is home both to some of the world's best wind resources and to remaining temperate grasslands, the most converted and least protected ecological system on the planet. Thus, appropriate siting and mitigation of wind development is particularly important in this region. Steering energy development to disturbed lands with low wildlife value rather than placing new developments within large and intact habitats would reduce impacts to wildlife. (<http://links.visibli.com/f13175188cf85b66/?web=07fd5b&dst=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.plosone.org%2Farticle%2Finfo%3A%2Fdoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0041468>).

**[Bats and Wind Energy – A Literature Synthesis and Annotated Bibliography.](#)** This recent report by Laura E. Ellison is divided into three sections: (1) a literature synthesis; (2) an annotated bibliography; and, (3) additional references. The literature synthesis and annotated bibliography focus on North America and on refereed journal publications. (<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2012/1110/OF12-1110.pdf>).

**[Synthesis of wind energy development and potential impacts on wildlife in the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington.](#)** This report synthesizes the available scientific literature on potential wind energy facility impacts to wildlife with a focus on the Pacific Northwest, and summarizes the current best management practices recommended in federal and state guidelines for wind energy development. (<http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/40988>).

**[Bats & blades: More research needed on bat, wind farm fatalities.](#)** When it comes to preventing wildlife fatalities at wind farms, scientists are learning that bats are indeed a whole different animal than large birds. (<http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2012/07/30/bats-blades-more-research-needed-on-bat-wind-farm-fatalities/>).

**[Western Maryland wind project faces limits to protect bats, birds.](#)** Maryland's first industrial-scale wind energy project would be required under a federal plan issued Monday to slow down its turbines at certain times of the year to reduce the number of endangered bats that might be killed by the long, spinning blades. (<http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/green/blog/bs-gr-wind-bats-20120730,0,3703363.story>).

**[DNR, Fish & Wildlife critical of proposed Fillmore County wind project.](#)** The largest wind project ever permitted in Minnesota could soon become the second project in the state to pursue an incidental take permit to kill bald eagles. Last week, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources filed paperwork designating the proposed wind project a "high risk" for bats and birds. (<http://www.wind-watch.org/news/2012/07/28/dnr-fish-wildlife-critical-of-proposed-fillmore-county-wind-project/>).

**[Clean Line Energy, Oklahoma's wildlife conservation department team up on lesser prairie chicken habitat studies.](#)** Plains and Eastern Clean Line Oklahoma LLC and the Oklahoma Department

of Wildlife Conservation said they would team up to minimize and offset habitat impacts when the company selects sites for wind farm and transmission line development. (<http://newsok.com/clean-line-energy-oklahomas-wildlife-conservation-department-team-up-on-lesser-prairie-chicken-habitat-studies/article/3693597>).

## Wildlife

**[Bats eavesdrop on the sound of copulating flies](#)**. In a recent *Current Biology* article, Siemers, et al. experimentally demonstrated that wild bats pick up on acoustic cues emanating from copulating flies showing an elevated predation risk for flies during mating. In regards to wind energy (which was not addressed in the article), this begs the question, 'what other acoustic clues are bats picking up on?' (<http://www.cell.com/current-biology/retrieve/pii/S0960982212007063>).

## Wind

**[Energy Department Breaks Ground on Turbine Test Facility](#)**. The Energy Department joined with Texas Tech University and the department's Sandia National Laboratories on July 17 to break ground on a new state-of-the-art wind turbine test facility in Lubbock, Texas. ([http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wind/news\\_detail.html?news\\_id=18492](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wind/news_detail.html?news_id=18492)).

**[New Method to Encourage the Formation of Virtual Power Plants for Efficient Renewable Energy Production](#)**. In a new study, University of Southampton researchers promote the formation of 'cooperative' Virtual Power Plants (CVPPs) using intelligent and multi-agent software systems. (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/07/120725090929.htm>).

## Action Items

The Wildlife Society **[Renewable Energy Working Group](#)** is soliciting candidates who would like to run for office. The Renewable Energy Working Group will focus on wildlife and ecological issues associated with the siting, construction, and operation of renewable energy generating facilities. As the U.S. moves toward energy independence the growth of wind, photovoltaic, and other solar technologies will require large areas for energy production. Along with the growth, comes multiple issues for wildlife management. If you are interested in running for an officer position, contact Brenda Beatty ([Brenda.Beatty@nrel.gov](mailto:Brenda.Beatty@nrel.gov)). If you are interested in the working group, check out: <http://www.wildlife.org/subunits/working-groups>.

## Upcoming Events

**[2012 American Renewable Energy Day Summit](#)** is taking place in Aspen, Colorado, August 16-20, 2012. This year's summit is entitled "Leadership for America's Energy Future." (<http://www.areday.net/>).

[The Wildlife Society Annual Conference](#) is taking place in Portland, Oregon, October 13-18, 2012. There are two symposia dedicated to wind-wildlife studies: 1) Mitigating Impacts of Wind Energy Development on Golden Eagles, 2) Bats and wind energy: Ecology, behavior, and methodology. Registration for the conference is open. (<http://wildlifesociety.org/>).

[Fifth annual Nebraska Wind Conference set for October](#). The Nebraska Wind Conference, the fifth annual wind conference organized by the Nebraska Wind Conference Committee (NWCC), will be conducted Oct. 22-23, 2012 in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel. The two-day conference will focus on Nebraska's future wind energy development challenges and opportunities. ([http://www.theindependent.com/news/ag\\_news/fifth-annual-nebraska-wind-conference-set-for-october/article\\_ff928fd5-bc66-5b66-988e-00bde5e50a13.html](http://www.theindependent.com/news/ag_news/fifth-annual-nebraska-wind-conference-set-for-october/article_ff928fd5-bc66-5b66-988e-00bde5e50a13.html)).

The [Wind Wildlife Research Meeting](#) will be held on November 27-30, 2012 in Denver, CO. Topics of interest for the meeting include assessing direct and indirect effects on wildlife and their habitats, evaluating approaches used to avoid and minimize impacts, testing the efficacy of mitigation and conservation measures, and considering the context of wind energy development among other energy choices. (<http://www.nationalwind.org/issues/wildlife/researchmeetingix.aspx>).

### **Around Nebraska...**

This issue, I would like to highlight a recent article by Fargione, et al., [Wind and Wildlife in the Northern Great Plains: Identifying Low-Impact Areas for Wind Development](#). Nebraska was one of the areas reviewed for this article. The authors looked at wind speeds at 50 m, maps of disturbed lands and wildlife resources ([Wind Energy and Nebraska's Wildlife map](#)), and determined where wind energy and wildlife may be able to co-exist. The authors also reviewed current and proposed wind energy development locations to see if they fell within their "low-impact" areas. (<http://links.visibli.com/f13175188cf85b66/?web=07fd5b&dst=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.plosone.org%2Farticle%2Finfo%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0041468>).

Check out the **Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife Project website** at: <http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/> and **Wind Energy and Wildlife news** at: <http://www.scoop.it/t/wind-energy-and-wildlife>.

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