

# Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

August 14, 2012

## Around the Nation & World...

**[Migrating geese avoid offshore wind farms, says study](#)**. By monitoring the movement of the birds over four years, researchers were able to detect changes in flight patterns around two newly erected wind farms. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19208400>).

The authors, Pawel Plonczkier and Ian C. Simms, said in their article, "**[Radar monitoring of migrating pink-footed geese: behavioural responses to offshore wind farm development](#)**," recently published in the Journal of Applied Ecology, that migratory geese responded to offshore wind farms by adopting strong horizontal and vertical avoidance behaviour (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2012.02181.x/abstract>).

**[Small wind turbines said affecting bats](#)**. Increasing use of small wind turbines for domestic and farmland electricity is causing a drop in bat numbers where they are erected, a British study has found. ([http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/2012/08/01/Small-wind-turbines-said-affecting-bats/UPI-93701343858992/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2012/08/01/Small-wind-turbines-said-affecting-bats/UPI-93701343858992/)).

**[Vt. Wind Facility Seeks Permit for Bat Deaths](#)**. The company that owns and operates a Vermont wind power project in Sheffield is asking the state for permission in advance in case endangered bats are killed by spinning turbine blades. (<http://www.fox44abc22yourvoice.com/story/19157155/vt-wind-facility-seeks-permit-for-bat-deaths>).

**[North Dakota wind farm still watching for whooping cranes](#)**. A North Dakota wind farm may have to monitor the area for whooping cranes for years to come, even though the endangered big birds haven't been spotted since the facility began operating in 2010, federal regulators said. (<http://www.wday.com/event/article/id/67660/>).

### **[NWCC Sage-Grouse Research Collaborative Awards \\$533,500 in Funding for Research in 2012](#)**.

After a successful year of research at three sites to examine the potential impacts of wind energy development on sage-grouse, the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative (NWCC) Sage-Grouse Research Collaborative has awarded a total of \$533,500 to continue the research in 2012. (<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/nwcc-sage-grouse-research-collaborative-213000157.html>).

**[Are wind farms affecting the lives of Swainson's Hawks?](#)** Swainson's Hawks are native birds of prey to the Texas Panhandle, but the construction of wind turbines in the raptors' natural environment could be driving them away. [Pantex](#) has teamed up with [West Texas A&M](#) and [Texas Tech](#) to conduct a study in hopes of finding out the effects wind farms have on the migrating, nesting and hunting habits of the hawks. (<http://www.connectamarillo.com/news/story.aspx?id=786143#.UCq7Fj1ISGI>).

**[Massive wind farm axed because it would kill 22 golden eagles](#)**. Plans for a controversial mega-wind farm on the Isle of Lewis have been dropped following fears that golden eagles and other birds of prey

would be killed by massive turbine blades. (<http://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/massive-wind-farm-axed-because-it-would-kill-22-golden-eagles-1-2457516>).

**[Can Wind Energy and Endangered Species Coexist?](#)** A Maryland wind farm could be the first in the Northeast to receive an approved habitat conservation plan. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service just released a draft plan, open for comment, for the 70 megawatt facility near Oakland. Conservation concerns include potential danger to the endangered Indiana bat. (<http://magblog.audubon.org/can-wind-energy-and-endangered-species-coexist>).

## Tools

**[Free online tool helps identify bat calls](#)**. A freely available online tool that can identify the calls of bat species found in Europe could help improve knowledge of the mammals, a study has suggested. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19147545>). The new tool, **[iBatsID](#)**, (Europe) is a classification tool which uses ensembles of artificial neural networks (eANN's) to classify time-expanded recordings of bat echolocation calls from 34 European bat species (<https://sites.google.com/site/ibatsresources/iBatsID>).

For details and methods used in constructing the classification tool, check out the article authored by Charlotte L. Walters *et al.*, "**[A continental-scale tool for acoustic identification of European bats](#)**" published in the Journal of Applied Ecology (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2012.02182.x/abstract>).

**[Automated Acoustic Bat ID Software Programs](#)**. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is currently evaluating the following software programs for possible inclusion in the revised summer survey guidelines for Indiana bats. Bat surveyors should bookmark this site and check it regularly to ensure that you are using the most current version of each program. (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>).

## Wind

**[American wind power reaches 50-gigawatt milestone](#)**. American wind power has blown through an historic milestone: 50 gigawatts of electric generating capacity, the American Wind Energy Association announced, just as Congress works to extend a critical federal policy and continue the growth of wind power in the United States. ([http://www.awea.org/newsroom/pressreleases/50\\_GW\\_milestone.cfm](http://www.awea.org/newsroom/pressreleases/50_GW_milestone.cfm)).

**[NREL Study Shows Renewable Energy Potential in Every State](#)**. A new study of renewable energy's technical potential finds that every state in the nation has the space and resource to generate clean energy. (<http://www.nrel.gov/news/press/2012/1948.html>).

**[Interior and Defense Departments Join Forces to Promote Renewable Energy on Federal Lands](#)**. As part of President Obama's 'all-of-the-above' strategy to responsibly develop America's domestic energy resources, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense are teaming

up to strengthen the nation's energy security and reduce military utility costs.

(<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/Interior-and-Defense-Departments-Join-Forces-to-Promote-Renewable-Energy-on-Federal-Lands.cfm>).

### Upcoming Events

**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...**

Don't forget to register for the Fifth Annual Nebraska Wind Conference. We are lining up wind-wildlife presentations by industry and conservation experts. I look forward to seeing you there.

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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