

Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

September 25, 2012

Special Event



October 5, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. at Bessey Hall Auditorium (UNL city campus), the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Arcos Films would like to invite you to a FREE screening of **SWITCH**, a new award-winning documentary that moves past the politics to deliver the straight answers on energy. For more information, check out the attached pdf.

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[The Computerized Birder: Can Software Stop Bird Strikes on Wind Farms?](http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/09/the-computerized-birder-can-software-stop-bird-strikes-on-wind-farms/262725/#) Recent graduate students are keen on developing a computerized bird identification program. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/09/the-computerized-birder-can-software-stop-bird-strikes-on-wind-farms/262725/#>).

[Sensors installed on wind turbines model bat death risk.](http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2012-06/29/bats-vs-wind-turbines) Engineers and biologists are to [place microphones](#) on wind turbines in the US in order to protect bats -- which are important pest controllers -- from being killed. The ultrasonic microphones will be listening for the squeaks and clicks that bats make when navigating. That data will be fed into a predictive model that will also factor in meteorological information to model the risk to bats from the wind farm at any one time. (<http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2012-06/29/bats-vs-wind-turbines>). Note: this article is from June 2012, but I just came across it recently.

Wildlife

[USDA and Interior Reach Historic Agreement to Support Voluntary Wildlife Conservation Efforts on Working Agricultural Lands.](#) "This agreement will change the way we manage at-risk species on private lands," White said. "It will provide landowners with a mechanism to keep working lands in production while complying with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and will facilitate restoration of habitat for at-risk species. It also will help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners rest a little easier knowing their operations are protected for the long term and that they are contributing to conserving vital natural resources."

http://us.vocuspr.com/Newsroom/Query.aspx?SiteName=fws&Entity=PRAsset&SF_PRAsset_PRAssetID_EQ=130994&XSL=PressRelease&Cache=True).

[Biologists look skyward for clues to human health](#). Based on the premise that what happens to the health of bald eagles and loons might someday be what's in store for us, a small group of wildlife biologists based in Gorham is researching such species to find out how they are dealing with changes to ecosystems. (http://www.pressherald.com/news/biologists-look-skyward-for-clues-to-human-health_2012-09-17.html).

[Bats go where the food is](#). A recent [paper](#) in PLOS ONE analyzed insect DNA in bat feces. The paper suggests that bats change foraging locations to match prey abundance. It also supports previous researchers' findings that bats contribute substantially to agriculture, providing services that can amount to 12% of the value of a crop. (<http://utkeeb.blogspot.fr/2012/09/bats-go-where-food-is.html>).

For the complete study, check out the article authored by Gary F. McCracken *et al.*, "**[Bats Track and Exploit Changes in Insect Pest Populations](#)**" published in PLOS ONE (<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0043839>).

[Artificial Bat Cave Built to Combat Killer Disease](#). An artificial cave, designed to help protect bats from a fungal ailment that to date has killed more than six million of the creatures throughout North America, has been constructed by conservationists in the woods of Tennessee. The genius of the artificial cave is that it can be cleaned annually to keep the fungus from reaching lethal levels. (http://www.sci-tech-today.com/story.xhtml?story_id=101005NXAWL6).

Wind

[Limited Windfall](#). While it may seem like an infinite resource, even wind energy can be tapped out. A new estimate of the Earth's overall wind potential suggests wind farm density reaches a saturation point beyond which additional turbines yield no increase in power. The findings suggest wind farms will need sufficient space to increase efficiency and meet demand. (<http://www.conservationmagazine.org/2012/09/limited-windfall/>).

[Federal regulator: Idaho Power must buy wind power](#). Idaho Power's long-term purchase agreement with wind farms requires the utility to buy electricity from the farms even when demand for power is low, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission said Thursday. (<http://www.cnbc.com/id/49111216>).

[USA: NWF's Report Supports Offshore Wind Development](#). National Wildlife Federation (NWF) issued a new report, which says that mutual effort on building offshore wind farms in the Atlantic Ocean will help avoid climate change. Also, offshore wind turbines are estimated to create up to 300,000 overall working positions. (<http://www.offshorewind.biz/2012/09/13/usa-nwfs-report-supports-offshore-wind-development/>).

Action Items

[Midwest Wind Energy Conservation Plan in Eight States](#). To ensure conservation of federally-listed species while meeting the growing demand for rapid approval of wind energy plants, the Service and a coalition of eight states, The Conservation Fund, and representatives of the wind energy industry are preparing a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

A Notice of Intent was put into the *Federal Register* on August 30, 2012. Interested parties can submit their input, suggestions and information at this stage in the planning process. The Notice of Intent opens a 30-day public comment period that will close on **October 1, 2012**.

(<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/>).

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](#) . The Nebraska Wind Conference, organized by the Nebraska Wind Conference Committee (NWCC), will be conducted October 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.nebraskawindconference.com/index2.html>). The **Draft Agenda** has been updated! Check it out at: <http://www.nebraskawindconference.com/program.pdf?v=9>

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>). The **Draft Agenda** is available at:

http://www.nationalwind.org/assets/research_meetings/NWCC_Research_Meeting_Agenda_Draft_09-21-12_.pdf

Around Nebraska...

[Wind tower maker to close plants in Washington, Nebraska](#). Wind tower maker Katana Summit says it will close its plants in Nebraska and Washington and layoff nearly 300 people. (http://www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2012/09/wind_tower_make_to_close_plant.html).

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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