



Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

February 26, 2013

Around Nebraska...



The Spring Migration is Almost Here!

Every spring, millions of birds funnel through the central portion of Nebraska on their northward migration. Viewing **Sandhill Cranes** has become a popular tourist activity and for good reason. More than 500,000 Sandhill Cranes congregate in the Platte River valley where they rest and replenish their energy before continuing north. If you have observed Sandhill Cranes in the cornfields along I-80, the sheer number of birds may have impressed you, but not wowed you. Some tourist destinations are not worth the trip, but viewing Sandhill Cranes along the Platte River is worth it. As you wait quietly at dusk along the river, hearing the distant cacophony of the ancient birds grow louder as they fly over your head and then settle in the river, you will know why people from all over the world come to Nebraska to experience this migration spectacle. If you are an early riser, you can view the cranes as they leave the river in search of foraging grounds.

To learn more about Sandhill Cranes, check out the [Nebraska Game and Parks Commission](http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/conservation/wildlife-viewing/SandhillCranes/sandhill.asp) webpage (<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/conservation/wildlife-viewing/SandhillCranes/sandhill.asp>) and the [Crane Trust](http://www.cranetrust.org/sandhill-cranes/) webpage (<http://www.cranetrust.org/sandhill-cranes/>). [The Nebraska's Crane Festival – Rivers & Wildlife Celebration](http://nebraskacranefestival.org/) is March 21-24, 2013; check it out at: <http://nebraskacranefestival.org/>.

Cranes are not the only birds to migrate through Nebraska in the spring. The **Rainwater Basin**, located in 21 counties in the south-central part of Nebraska is known internationally for its significance for migratory birds. White-fronted geese, mallard ducks, pintails, yellowlegs, egrets, and many more rely on the Rainwater Basin as an area to rest and feed. For more information about birding in the Rainwater Basin, check out the [Rainwater Basin Joint Venture](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Rainwater_Basin_WMD/visit/visitor_activities/birding.html) webpage (http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Rainwater_Basin_WMD/visit/visitor_activities/birding.html) and the [Nebraska Game and Parks Commission](http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/conservation/wildlife-viewing/Birds/basin.asp) webpage (<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/conservation/wildlife-viewing/Birds/basin.asp>).



Nebraska Legislative Bills related to renewable energy, wind energy, and/or transmission, are listed below. Please let me know if I have missed any relevant bills.

Top 5 Nebraska Birding Trails. With a fabulous system of well-organized trails, Nebraska is one of the nicest and easiest hotspot destinations for bird lovers from around the country. (<http://allbestbinoculars.com/nebraska-birding-trails/>).

Florida firm will build wind farm in Jefferson, Gage counties. The Steele Flats Wind Project, to be built by NextEra Energy Resources of Juno Beach, Fla., would generate nearly 75 megawatts of electricity from 44 turbines, said Steve Stengel, a company spokesman. The project will be centered near Nebraska 8 in the southern part of Jefferson and Gage counties. On Friday, the Nebraska Public Power District Board authorized its management to sign an agreement with the Florida company to buy all of the electricity from the project over the next 20 years, NPPD spokesman Mark Becker said. (http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/florida-firm-will-build-wind-farm-in-jefferson-gage-counties/article_ec6b4b06-3735-5aaf-867c-fb078105b4df.html).

Proposed Nebraska incentives for wind energy up in the air. Gov. Dave Heineman's call for a tax study could be bad news for wind energy interests. The governor and State Sen. Brad Ashford of Omaha on Monday urged state lawmakers to hold off on passing new tax exemptions while they work on overhauling the whole tax system. (<http://www.omaha.com/article/20130219/NEWS/702199931/1694>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

Wildlife fears over Hampshire wind farm. FUR and feather could be in danger from the proposed wind farm in Hampshire, campaigners have warned. The proposed location of 14 turbines at Bullington Cross is on the main flight line of birds migrating south from Scotland and Scandanavia. (http://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/10221094.Wind_farm_wildlife_fears/).

Antrim Wind Farm Gets Thumbs Down From SEC. For the first time New Hampshire has rejected an application to construct a wind farm. The Antrim wind project would have put 30 megawatts of wind turbines on a ridge-top overlooking the Audubon Society's Willard Pond Sanctuary; it's part of 10,000 acres of protected land that has been dubbed a "super-sanctuary". (<http://www.nhpr.org/post/antrim-wind-farm-gets-thumbs-down-sec>).

Wildlife

Horseshoe bats talk over and around background noise, study finds. Just as conversationalists at a loud cocktail party may raise their voices to be heard over the din, so do echolocating bats, according to a new study released Monday by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

(<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-lombard-effect-horseshoe-bats-pitch-frequency-background-noise-20130218,0,1564610.story?track=rss>).

Check out the article by Steffen R. Hage et. al in PNAS, [Ambient noise induces independent shifts in call frequency and amplitude within the Lombard effect in echolocating bats](http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/02/13/1211533110.full.pdf+html?sid=9864cc64-7ed8-48ae-8ec9-a28aa1553209). (<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/02/13/1211533110.full.pdf+html?sid=9864cc64-7ed8-48ae-8ec9-a28aa1553209>).

[Vampire Bats Suck Blood of Baby Penguins](http://news.discovery.com/animals/vampire-bats-draw-blood-from-penguin-chicks-130222.htm). How could I not include this article?! Researchers have for the first time captured footage of [vampire bats](#) attacking [Humboldt penguin](#) chicks. As the bat's name suggests, the predators bite right into their victims and gulp down blood. (<http://news.discovery.com/animals/vampire-bats-draw-blood-from-penguin-chicks-130222.htm>).

Check out the footage from the documentary and more details in the BBC article by Ella Davies, [Vampire bats attack penguin chicks](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/21534299). (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/21534299>).

Wind

[Rethinking Wind Power](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/02/130225121926.htm). The latest research in mesoscale atmospheric modeling suggests that the generating capacity of large-scale wind farms has been overestimated. (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/02/130225121926.htm>).

Check out the research article by Amanda S. Adams and David W. Keith, [Are global wind power resources estimated overstated?](http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/8/1/015021/pdf/1748-9326_8_1_015021.pdf) The article was published on February 25, 2013 in Environmental Research Letters. (http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/8/1/015021/pdf/1748-9326_8_1_015021.pdf).

[Wind farms will create more carbon dioxide, say scientists](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/windpower/9889882/Wind-farms-will-create-more-carbon-dioxide-say-scientists.html). Thousands of Britain's wind turbines will create more greenhouse gases than they save, according to potentially devastating scientific research to be published later this year. Wind farms are typically built on upland sites, where peat soil is common. Peat bogs contain and absorb carbon in the same way as trees and plants — but in much higher quantities. (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/windpower/9889882/Wind-farms-will-create-more-carbon-dioxide-say-scientists.html>).

[NEXT UP: ROTOR-FREE WIND GENERATORS?](http://green-energy-news.com/arch/nrgs2013/20130022.html) Wind turbines are like any other technology: They become obsolete. Old ones go out of date to be replaced with better machines. An effort is underway to dramatically change wind turbines: Remove the blades and rotor altogether and leave the generation equipment on the ground where it belongs. (<http://green-energy-news.com/arch/nrgs2013/20130022.html>).

Transmission

[Unlocking Iowa's Wind Energy Potential Means Bigger Transmission Lines](http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/30985-1). The Upper Midwest is the most wind-rich area of the country. But a new [report](#) by the Center for Rural Affairs shows that almost none of the current high-voltage transmission lines capable of carrying wind-generated electricity are built here. (<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/30985-1>).

Action Items

[The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is inviting input on draft guidelines and protocols](#) for determining whether endangered Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*) are present or likely absent at a given site during the summer, from May 15 to August 15. **Deadline for comments has been extended to March 11, 2013.** The Federal Register information is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-02-08/pdf/2013-02889.pdf>.

Other

[Policy Matters: The Future of U.S. Clean Energy](#). Pew believes that advanced clean energy technologies can strengthen America's economic and environmental future as well as its security. This detailed infographic shows where the U.S. can harness new opportunities in order to create a strong strategy for future energy policy. (<http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/data-visualizations/policy-matters-the-future-of-us-clean-energy-85899450414>).

Upcoming Events

[AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar](#), February 20, 2013, Portland, OR. The AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar provides a deep examination of the development of wind energy facilities, the potential for impacts to both the natural and human environments resulting from these activities, and ways to avoid and minimize any adverse effects. (<http://www.awea.org/events/AWEA-Wind-Project-Siting-Seminar.cfm>).

[The Nebraska Chapter of the Wildlife Society Annual Meeting](#), March 14, 2013, Chadron, NE (<http://joomla.wildlife.org/Nebraska/>).

Nebraska Legislative Bills

LB 43 – [Change provisions relating to a property tax exemption](#). **Notice of hearing for March 1, 2013.** Introduced by Cook on January 10, 2013; Referred to the Revenue Committee on January 14, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-202, 2 Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to change 3 provisions relating to a property tax exemption; and to repeal the original section. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18546).

LB 104 - [Provide tax incentives under the Nebraska Advantage Act for renewable energy projects](#). Introduced by Lathrop on January 10, 2013; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 14, 2013; Notice of hearing for February 14, 2013. **Statement of Intent:** The purpose of LB 104 is to amend the Nebraska Advantage Act by adding a Tier 7 which would apply to investments in renewable energy. Two options would be created within Tier 7: projects with \$75 million or more in investment for renewable energy projects, and projects with less than \$75 million in investment. Under LB 104, companies with

qualifying projects would be eligible to receive partial or full refunds of their sales tax based on the level of investment in the project, the source of their capital investment for the project, and the level of ownership by Nebraska residents of the project. **Fiscal Note:** refer to website.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=17967).

LB 184 – Appropriate funds for the Nebraska Wind Applications Center. **Notice of hearing for March 19, 2013.** Introduced by Haar on January 14, 2013; Referred to Appropriations Committee on January 16, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to appropriations; to state intent; and to appropriate funds for the Nebraska Wind Application Center.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18633).

LB 237 – Change provisions relating to a property tax exemption. **Notice of hearing for March 1, 2013.** Introduced by Karpisek on January 15, 2013; Referred to the Revenue Committee on January 17, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-202, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to change provisions relating to a property tax exemption; and to repeal the original section. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18417).

LB 283 – Eliminate the Limited Liability Company Act. Introduced by Conrad on January 16, 2012; Referred to Banking Commerce and Insurance Committee on January 18, 2012; Notice of hearing for February 5, 2012; Placed on General File on February 6, 2013; Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial on February 12, 2013; Placed on Select File on February 19, 2013. **Statement of Intent:** LB 283 repeals terminated statutes regarding limited liability companies (LLCs) and also repeals internal references to those terminated statutes...LB 283 is the final housekeeping step in that process in that it would simply remove already terminated provisions from statutes. **Fiscal Note:** No fiscal impact.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=17857).

LB 388 – Change provisions relating to public power and provide for construction of certain transmission lines. Introduced by Natural Resources Committee on January 18, 2013; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 23, 2013; Notice of Hearing for February 1, 2013. **Statement of Intent:** LB 388 would provide incumbent electric transmission owners, who belong to a Regional Transmission Organization, the "right of first refusal" to complete transmission projects in Nebraska that have been approved by the Regional Transmission Organization. The purpose is to clarify that public power entities in Nebraska have the first right to construct, own, and maintain an approved transmission line. The bill also standardizes the definition of "electric supplier" in several statutes. **Fiscal Note:** No fiscal impact.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18236).

LB 402 – Change power purchase agreement provisions relating to rural community-based energy development. **Notice of hearing for March 1, 2013.** Introduced by Mello on January 22, 2013; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the rural community-based energy development; to amend section 70-1904, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 70-1903 and 77-2704.57, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to redefine terms; to change provisions relating to power purchase agreements; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18295).

LB 411 – Change a renewable energy tax credit. **Notice of hearing for March 6, 2013.** Introduced by Nordquist on January 22, 2013; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-27,235, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to change a renewable energy tax credit; and to repeal the original section.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18625).

LB 419 – Change provisions relating to nameplate capacity tax. **Notice of hearing for March 6, 2013.** Introduced by Hadley on January 22, 2013; Referred to Revenue Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend section 77-6203, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to change provisions relating to the nameplate capacity tax; and to repeal the original section. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18810).

LB 475 – Change the Angel Investment Tax Credit Act and the Business Innovation Act. **Notice of hearing for March 5, 2013.** Introduced by Carlson on January 22, 2013; Referred to the Revenue Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to economic development. **Fiscal Note:** refer to website. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18129).

LB 501 – Redefine a term in the Nebraska Advantage Act. Introduced by Hadley on January 23, 2013; Referred to the Revenue Committee on January 24, 2013; Notice of hearing for February 14, 2013. **Statement of Intent:** LB501 was introduced for the purpose of adding a definition for renewable energy under the Nebraska Advantage Act as a qualifying business under a tier 2, tier 3, tier 4 or tier 5 project: The production of electricity by using one or more sources of renewable energy to produce electricity for sale. Sources of renewable energy means wind, solar, geothermal, hyroelectric, and biomass. **Fiscal Note:** refer to website. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18930).

LB 567 – Change provisions relating to approval of electric generation facilities and transmission lines. **Notice of hearing for March 1, 2013.** Introduced by Haar on January 23, 2013; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public power; to amend section 70-1014, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to change provisions relating to approval of facilities and lines as prescribed; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original section. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18704).

LB 577 – Change provisions relating to net metering and authorize community solar gardens. **Notice of hearing for March 5, 2013.** Introduced by McGill on January 23, 2013; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to net metering; to amend sections 70-2002 and 70-2003, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to provide for community solar gardens; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections. **Fiscal Note:** refer to website. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18365).

LB 598 – Change provisions relating to net metering. **Notice of hearing for March 5, 2013.** Introduced by Larson on January 23, 2013; Referred to Natural Resources Committee on January 24, 2013. **Statement of Intent:** LB598 would raise the rated capacity limits for qualified facilities that are permitted to participate in Nebraska's net metering program from at or below 25 kilowatts to at or below 100 kilowatts. **Fiscal Note:** No fiscal impact. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=17829).

LB 606 – Adopt the Nebraska Technology Entrepreneur Act to provide sales and use tax refunds to certain businesses. **Notice of hearing for March 7, 2013.** Introduced by Pirsh on January 23, 2013; Referred to the Revenue Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to adopt the Nebraska Technology Entrepreneur Act; to provide sales and use tax refunds to certain businesses as prescribed; and to provide an operative date. (http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18913).

LB 622 – Change provisions relating to a report filed with the Nebraska Power Review Board. Introduced by Haar on January 23, 2013; Referred to the Natural Resources Committee on January 24, 2013; Notice

of hearing for February 6, 2013. **Statement of Intent:** LB 622 adds a requirement to an existing report by the Nebraska Power Association to the Nebraska Power Review Board. The report will now include areas of the state where renewable energy projects of less than twenty megawatts could be added without major transmission upgrades. **Fiscal Note:** No fiscal impact.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18487).

LB 651 – Eliminate property tax levy and provide for state funding for community colleges. **Notice of hearing for March 5, 2013.** Introduced by Davis on January 23, 2013; Referred to Education Committee on January 24, 2013. A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to community colleges.

(http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=18781).

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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