



Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

September 24, 2013

[The effects of a large-scale wind farm on breeding season survival of female mallards and blue-winged teal in the Prairie Pothole Region.](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jwmg.583/abstract) C. Tanner Gue and co-authors present the results to their two-year study in the Prairie Pothole Region in North Dakota. Female mallard and blue-winged teal were radio-marked at a wind energy facility and survival rates were compared to a reference site. (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jwmg.583/abstract>).

Around Nebraska...

[NPPD decision on wind energy coming.](http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/nppd-decision-on-wind-energy-coming/article_e9021902-bf85-5228-aab4-e8196cdbbb54.html) Nebraska Public Power District's board of directors won't be wasting any more time talking about wind energy. They plan to make a decision next month on whether the electric utility needs to purchase more wind power or stick with the current renewable energy goal. (http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/nppd-decision-on-wind-energy-coming/article_e9021902-bf85-5228-aab4-e8196cdbbb54.html).

[Proposed line could spark wind energy boom.](http://www.mccookgazette.com/story/2005449.html) Citing increased consumer demand and an aged grid, the Nebraska Public Power District is developing plans for a new transmission line spanning 220 miles across north-central Nebraska. NPPD said the line would relieve congestion and open the door for expansion of renewable energy. (<http://www.mccookgazette.com/story/2005449.html>).

[TONKIN: To compromise clean power for lower costs would be unethical, immoral.](#) A report released this week by the Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences has stated that renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind, are cheaper than fossil fuels. This is the real deal, folks. Lincoln Electric System could spearhead an economic renaissance for Nebraska by developing renewable energy production. Nebraska is in a prime position to become an energy leader and establish

a permanent economic boom and, more importantly, literally save the world.
(http://www.dailynebraskan.com/opinion/article_e351377a-200a-11e3-bcdf-0019bb30f31a.html).

Could wind power be Kimball's next boom? with the rail spur project completely stagnant and many new businesses failing to keep their doors open during tough economic times, many are pondering the question of just what has the potential to revitalize Kimball and bring new faces to the community? (<http://www.westernnebraskaobserver.net/story/2013/09/19/news/could-wind-power-be-kimballs-next-boom/735.html>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

Eagles and Wind Energy: In the past two weeks, a study was released that documented the number of bald and golden eagles that have been found dead at wind energy facilities. In response to the results of that study, many articles have been published. Below I have included a sample of those articles, each of which has a different take representing a range of views and opinions on the topic.

Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Mortalities at Wind Energy Facilities in the Contiguous United States. Joel Pagel, et al., Journal of Raptor Research, Sep 2013, pg(s) 311-315. This is the study the newspaper articles are based on. (<http://www.bioone.org/doi/abs/10.3356/JRR-12-00019.1>).

Study: Wind farms killed 67 eagles in 5 years. Wind energy facilities have killed at least 67 golden and bald eagles in the last five years, but the figure could be much higher, according to a new scientific study by government biologists.
(http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_WIND_ENERGY_EAGLE_DEATHS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT).

California Leads Nation in Wind Turbine Eagle Deaths. A new study released Tuesday indicates that California may have more wind turbine facilities responsible for killing eagles than any other state. The study, conducted by six U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff biologists, showed that at least 27 golden eagles perished at 13 California wind turbine facilities between 1997 and June 2012, with a startling rise in reported mortalities in 2011. (<http://www.kcet.org/news/rewire/wind/california-leads-nation-in-wind-turbine-eagle-deaths.html>).

Wind Industry Responds To Troubling Report On Eagle Deaths. Wind energy proponents are hoping people will look more broadly at the issue and more closely at the reported numbers of a recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service study that found wind-energy farms directly caused the deaths of hundreds of eagles since the late 1990s. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/13/wind-farms-eagle-deaths_n_3915629.html).

Wind Energy Gets Away With Murder. I'm not sure what all the fuss is about. So Wind Farms kill eagles. It's not like we don't kill beautiful endangered animals all the time. True, these are federally-protected and they're an iconic symbol of our democracy. But hey, who minds using taxpayer dollars to

kill a few icons? (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2013/09/22/wind-energy-gets-away-with-murder/>).

[Letter: Federal study ignores bird slaughter.](#) From the Obama administration, Washington, D.C., the AP reporter rightly states that the study excludes the Altamont Wind farms in northern California. No wonder the government report ignored Altamont. (<http://www.chieftain.com/opinion/letters/1837202-120/wind-kills-farms-bird>).

[Wind Turbines Kill Nearly 600,000 Birds a Year — and No One's Doing Anything.](#) Eagles have been revered throughout American history and culture, but when it comes to protecting them against wind turbines, there is minimal protection for these esteemed avians. Wind turbines have been responsible for the deaths of [85 eagles since 1997](#), according to a new study investigating wind farms in 10 states. One of the eagles was electrocuted by the wind turbine in the study, as [Fox News](#) reports. These are concerning findings to say the least, but what about the thousands of other birds who are killed by wind turbines? They deserve to be recognized as well. (<http://www.policymic.com/articles/63497/wind-turbines-kill-nearly-600-000-birds-a-year-and-no-one-s-doing-anything>).

[Federal Study Highlights Spike in Eagle Deaths at Wind Farms.](#) A newly published study by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researchers says that wind energy facilities have killed at least 85 golden and bald eagles between 1997 and 2012—and that eagle fatalities possibly may be much higher. (<http://energyblog.nationalgeographic.com/2013/09/12/federal-study-highlights-spike-in-eagle-deaths-at-wind-farms/>).

[What AP left out of its latest story on eagles and wind power.](#) As with previous coverage by [Associated Press's Dina Cappiello on eagles and wind energy](#), critical context about wind power and wildlife went missing from her report today. It is concerning that Ms. Cappiello again minimizes wind power's perspective despite an abundance of important information made available to her. (<http://aweablog.org/blog/post/what-ap-left-out-of-its-latest-story-on-eagles-and-wind-power>).

[Bats:](#)

[WVa wind farm could kill dozens of endangered bats.](#) The operator of a southern West Virginia wind farm estimates that several dozen endangered bats could be killed by flying into turbine blades during a 25-year period, according to a federal review of the risks to the flying mammals. (<http://www.sfgate.com/business/energy/article/WVa-wind-farm-could-kill-dozens-of-endangered-bats-4814750.php>).

[FWS issues final EIS for Invenergy's W.Va. wind power project.](#) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Sept. 13 published a notice of availability in the Federal Register for a final environmental impact statement associated with [Beech Ridge Energy LLC's](#) and [Beech Ridge Energy II LLC's application](#) for an incidental take permit for the Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project in West Virginia. (<http://www.snl.com/Interactivex/article.aspx?CdId=A-25064988-12580>).

[Vt, utility reach deal on bats deaths.](#) Vermont's largest electric utility is working to reduce the number of bats killed by a wind power project on Lowell Mountain and will make regular contributions to a

program designed to address concerns that some property owners have about bats in their buildings, the Agency of Natural Resources said Thursday. (<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20130920/NEWS03/709209961>).

Other W&W News:

[In Minnesota, looking for lessons from Goodhue wind fight](#). The developers of an embattled wind project in southeastern Minnesota finally pulled the plug this week, telling the state on Tuesday they would no longer be pursuing the controversial project. (<http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2013/09/20/in-minnesota-looking-for-lessons-from-goodhue-wind-fight/>).

[Osage County Wind Development Sale Raises Concerns](#). Wind Capital Group has announced it is selling its controversial Osage County Wind development project to TradeWind Energy and its foreign parent company, raising additional questions about the future of the proposed project. The sale raises serious concerns as to whether the new owners will attempt to move forward before required federal environmental and cultural studies are completed. (<http://www.finanznachrichten.de/nachrichten-2013-09/28062042-osage-county-wind-development-sale-raises-concerns-008.htm>).

[Fed guidelines for wind farms aim to reduce bird killing](#). The average wind turbine kills three to four birds a year. Operators can face penalties if their turbines kill bald and golden eagles, endangered species and some migratory birds. (http://trib.com/business/energy/fed-guidelines-for-wind-farms-aim-to-reduce-bird-killing/article_c342552a-a5ac-5d5b-83d6-13eb3ea3670b.html).

Wildlife

[Service Announces Draft Economic Analysis and Draft Environmental Assessment for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse](#). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today the availability of a draft economic analysis and draft environmental assessment on a proposal to designate 1.7 million acres of critical habitat for the Gunnison sage-grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) in southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah. (http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pressrel/2013/09182013_gunnisonSageGrouse.php).

Wind

[Renewable energy is America's cheapest option, study finds](#). In a landscape marred by entrenched political and business interests that prefer the status quo, any prospect of shifting towards renewable energy sources can at times seem the purview of idealists. But, according to a new study that aims for a more holistic count of energy costs, a switch to renewables by the U.S. wouldn't only be good for the planet -- it would actually make better sense financially. (<http://www.treehugger.com/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-americas-cheapest-option.html>).

[*The social cost of carbon: implications for modernizing our electricity system.*](#) Laurie T. Johnson et al., Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences, Sep 2013. (<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13412-013-0149-5>).

[*This Week at Interior September 20, 2013.*](#) This week: Secretary Jewell tells CNN that Interior is "uniquely placed" to prepare public lands for climate change. Wind energy portion of the video starts at 1:11. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyLT3-Lb2y0>).

[*Wind-energy 'turbine cowboys' will train in Orlando.*](#) Thousands of wind-energy workers will soon conquer their fear of heights and learn how to service the giant turbines that churn out electricity across the Western Hemisphere by first training in Orlando, a city where the wind is all but useless as a source of power. (<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/business/os-siemens-wind-energy-orlando-20130914,0,5566102.story>).

Upcoming Events

The Wildlife Society Annual Conference will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin October 5-10, 2013. For more information: <http://wildlifesociety.org/>.

AWEA Wind Energy Fall Symposium 2013 will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado November 6-8, 2013. For more information: <http://www.awea.org/Events/Event.aspx?EventID=15940&navItemNumber=652>.

Sixth Annual Wind Conference will be held in Lincoln, NE on November 13-15, 2013. This year's theme is "Harvesting Nebraska's Potential." There will be a wind-wildlife session featuring Nebraska-based research and findings. For more information and to register: <http://nebraskawindconference.com/>.

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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