



Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

December 4, 2013

The [Guidelines for Wind Energy and Wildlife Resource Management in Nebraska](http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/tools.asp#stateguidelines) have been updated. You can check them out at: <http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/tools.asp#stateguidelines>. If you have any questions, please contact me at: windwildlife@unl.edu.

Around Nebraska...

[Wind power still on NPPD's table.](#) A recent vote by the Nebraska Public Power District's board of directors doesn't mean the utility is against development of wind energy, said Pat Pope, NPPD's president. "NPPD is not anti-wind. We will continue to add wind to our portfolio as it makes sense for our customers and as we transition to a less carbon-intensive generating portfolio," Pope said Tuesday during a stop in Norfolk. (http://norfolkdailynews.com/news/wind-power-still-on-nppd-s-table/article_b4a9256c-5774-11e3-9a54-001a4bcf6878.html).

[Jefferson Co. OKs permit for wind farm.](#) The Jefferson County Commission has approved a special use permit for construction of a wind farm. Beatrice radio station KWBE reported that the commission approval was unanimous Tuesday for the Volkswind project. The permit will allow installation of 43 towers that will run along the north side of U.S. Highway 136 between Jansen and Harbine. (<http://www.omaha.com/article/20131121/NEWS/131129705/1707>).

[New Transmission May Help Nebraska Export Wind Power In Future.](#) Nebraska's wind resources could supply the state's power needs more than 100 times over—according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. So what's keeping energy companies from tapping into that resource? One reason is the lack of infrastructure—a way to get the power from point A to point B. You can think of transmission lines, or the electrical grid, like the interstate system. (<http://netnebraska.org/article/news/new-transmission-may-help-nebraska-export-wind-power-future>).

[Dixon County wind farm stalled for now](http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/state-and-regional/dixon-county-wind-farm-stalled-for-now/article_dbc53fef-8bf5-55a1-a4e7-302fd05cc7a3.html). A massive wind farm planned by a Kansas company in northeast Nebraska is a no-go, at least for now. TradeWind Energy Inc. of Lenexa, Kan., had hoped to begin construction on the Rattlesnake Creek Wind Project by the end of the year in order to qualify for federal tax benefits. But the company was unable to secure a commitment from a large power company to buy electricity generated by the project. (http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/state-and-regional/dixon-county-wind-farm-stalled-for-now/article_dbc53fef-8bf5-55a1-a4e7-302fd05cc7a3.html).

[Is this man slowing wind development in Nebraska?](http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2013/11/25/is-this-man-slowng-wind-development-in-nebraska/) Nebraska is rated third among the states for its wind-energy potential. And yet a year ago, it ranked only 26th for its actual wind-energy production. The reason for the gap? Several people familiar with the curious dynamics of wind energy in Nebraska place much of it squarely on the doorstep of one Bruce Pontow. (<http://www.midwestenergynews.com/2013/11/25/is-this-man-slowng-wind-development-in-nebraska/>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Imposes First-Ever Criminal Penalties for Bird Deaths Caused by Wind Projects](http://www.perkinscoie.com/news/pubs_detail.aspx?op=updates&publication=4613). The first criminal case ever prosecuted under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) against a wind energy company for bird deaths resulted recently in Duke Energy Renewables (Duke Energy) reaching a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). (http://www.perkinscoie.com/news/pubs_detail.aspx?op=updates&publication=4613).

[Wind energy firm pleads guilty to eagle deaths](http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/11/22/wind-energy-company-pleads-guilty-to-eagle-deaths/3681687/). The government for the first time has enforced environmental laws protecting birds against wind energy facilities, winning a \$1 million settlement from a power company that pleaded guilty to killing 14 eagles and 149 other birds at two Wyoming wind farms. (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/11/22/wind-energy-company-pleads-guilty-to-eagle-deaths/3681687/>).

[Duke Energy Fine for Bird Kills is All Show, No Substance](http://nlpc.org/stories/2013/12/02/duke-energy-fine-bird-kills-all-show-no-substance). Last week's punishment/settlement between the [Department of Justice](http://www.doj.gov) and [Duke Energy](http://www.dukeenergy.com) over bird deaths caused by its [wind](http://www.dukeenergy.com) turbines gives evidence that the [Obama](http://www.whitehouse.gov) administration needed a scapegoat, to defuse accusations that it applies a double-standard in enforcement of wildlife laws. (<http://nlpc.org/stories/2013/12/02/duke-energy-fine-bird-kills-all-show-no-substance>).

[Wind and wildlife](http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/letters/2013/12/03/Wind-and-wildlife/stories/201312030032). In response to the Post-Gazette's [Nov. 26 editorial](http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/letters/2013/12/03/Wind-and-wildlife/stories/201312030032) ("Use the Talons: Justice Must Crack Down on Eagle Deaths"), the wind power industry works hard to minimize its effects on wildlife. (<http://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/letters/2013/12/03/Wind-and-wildlife/stories/201312030032>).

[Wind energy, birds and wildlife: AWEA Statement Regarding Duke Energy MBTA Settlement](#). While we cannot speak to the specifics of this case as they are not public, based on our understanding of the settlement agreement this is a clear example of a wind company taking responsibility for unforeseen impacts to wildlife and providing conservation measures to not only offset those impacts, but also with respect to other sources of impact existing in the landscape

today. (<http://www.evwind.es/2013/11/23/awea-statement-regarding-duke-energy-mbta-settlement/38419>).

[Birds and wind turbines at a crossroads](http://www.thebeacon.net/local-news/ottawa-outdoors/item/4215-birds-and-wind-turbines-at-a-crossroads). Two environmental issues are at a crossroads here on the shores of Lake Erie. Two of our most prominent natural resources seem to be on a collision course. (<http://www.thebeacon.net/local-news/ottawa-outdoors/item/4215-birds-and-wind-turbines-at-a-crossroads>).

[Wind Farm Bird Deaths vs Fossil Fuel & Nuclear Power Bird Deaths](http://cleantechnica.com/2013/11/26/wind-farm-bird-deaths-fossil-fuel-nuclear-bird-deaths/#hcGIZ4geirowaRzs.99). It's a shame when a beautiful (or even an ugly) animal dies. It's a shame that wind turbines do indeed kill birds. However, every source of electricity we have kills some number of birds. And while solar panels may fare better than anything else, it's actually clear (and uplifting) that wind turbines fare better than nuclear or fossil-fueled power plants on this front. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2013/11/26/wind-farm-bird-deaths-fossil-fuel-nuclear-bird-deaths/#hcGIZ4geirowaRzs.99>).

[The Wind Energy Threat to Birds Is Overblown \(Op-Ed\)](http://www.livescience.com/41644-wind-energy-threat-to-birds-overblown.html). Wind energy is one of the cleanest, most abundant, sustainable — and increasingly cost-effective — ways to generate electricity. Still, wind has its detractors. (<http://www.livescience.com/41644-wind-energy-threat-to-birds-overblown.html>).

[Bats, Not Easy to Love, Dying Daily by Thousands](http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wind-turbines-kill-thousands-bats-day/story?id=20997657). These are hard days for these peculiar animals, because they face mass extinction from a disease called White Nose Syndrome and every night thousands of are killed by energy-producing wind turbines that conservationists, economists and politicians hope will reduce this nation's need for foreign oil. (<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wind-turbines-kill-thousands-bats-day/story?id=20997657>).

[Wind Turbines Kill More Than 600,000 Bats A Year. What Should We Do?](http://www.popsci.com/blog-network/eek-squad/wind-turbines-kill-more-600000-bats-year-what-should-we-do) If you comb the ground beneath a wind turbine, you may not find anything out of the ordinary. Dead birds or bats are hard to find, especially considering the huge ground footprint of a wind turbine's spinning blades. But this belies wind farms' very real danger to migratory animals. Wind turbines kill a rather staggering 600,000 to 900,000 bats every year, according to a new study. But this does not mean we should start shutting down wind farms. (<http://www.popsci.com/blog-network/eek-squad/wind-turbines-kill-more-600000-bats-year-what-should-we-do>).

[Good News for Birds as Everglades Wind Farm Scrapped](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/janegraham/everglades-wind-farm_b_4352273.html). This week, Wind Capital Group announced that it will not move forward with the Sugarland Wind Farm, a project that would have placed 124 Statue of Liberty-sized wind turbines in the Everglades Agricultural Area. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/janegraham/everglades-wind-farm_b_4352273.html).

[Golden eagle death cited by wind turbine opponents](http://www.10news.com/news/golden-eagle-death-cited-by-wind-turbine-opponents-11282013). A bizarre incident has led to the death of a golden eagle in the Boulevard area. The death was not caused by wind turbines, but some say it could be a game changer for the future of local wind projects. (<http://www.10news.com/news/golden-eagle-death-cited-by-wind-turbine-opponents-11282013>).

Wildlife

[FWS Extends Comment Period for Northern Long-Eared Bat](#). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has extended the deadline for public comments on the [proposal](#) to list the northern long-eared bat

(*Myotis septentrionalis*) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. (<http://news.wildlife.org/wpn/fws-extends-comment-period-for-northern-long-eared-bat/>).

[Wildlife Agency Adds Bird Species to Protected Migratory Bird List](#). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has revised the formal List of Migratory Birds that are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and other laws by adding 23 species to the list and removing four, bringing the total number of birds protected under those laws to 1,026. (<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/131108.html>).

[Protecting Summer Hang-Outs For Bats](#). Most people think of bats only as cave-dwelling night creatures that sometimes mistake your attic for a hideout. But bats don't spend all their time in winter hibernation or asleep in dark, dusty corners. In fact, where they spend their waking hours matters a great deal. (<http://science.kqed.org/quest/audio/protecting-summer-hang-outs-for-bats/>).

Wind

[Wind Picks Up as Coal Declines in the Midwest](#). At first glance, a new chart from the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#) suggests that coal is not just king in the Midwest's electricity mix, but still reigns with an iron grip. Look a little closer, however, and there is change in the works, as shown in a growing green strip on the top of the first graph. (<http://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/wind-picks-up-as-coal-declines-in-midwest>).

[Wind Power for a Cleaner America](#). Burning fossil fuels to generate electricity pollutes our air, contributes to global warming, and consumes vast amounts of water—harming our rivers and lakes and leaving less water for other uses. In contrast, wind energy produces no air pollution, makes no contribution to global warming, and uses no water. (<http://www.environmentamerica.org/reports/ame/wind-power-cleaner-america-0>).

Tools

The **[Western Governors' Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool \(CHAT\)](#)** will roll out to the public next week, so we want to offer you a sneak peek of this exciting new GIS tool that maps fish and wildlife habitat across 16 Western states. Please join us for a webinar at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4. WGA Policy Advisor Carlee Brown will provide a brief overview of the CHAT project and Chet VanDellen, GIS Coordinator for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, will demonstrate the tool. (<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=375c83bd-a4a5-4441-bff0-aabb2de82abb&c=e788c7d0-4298-11e3-ad53-d4ae52754dbc&ch=e8bd2920-4298-11e3-ae12-d4ae52754dbc>).

[AWEA Market Database Pro](#) is a comprehensive, interactive online database includes information on all wind energy projects and wind-related manufacturing facilities in the U.S. (<http://www.awea.org/Resources/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=5728&navItemNumber=5776#!>).

[Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines Tier 4 Post-Construction Studies and Reporting](#). The 3rd broadcast in the FWS Wind Energy Training series and accompanying materials are now available online. The live broadcast originally aired on October 30. Christy Johnson-Hughes of the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service is joined by a special presenter on fatality estimation from the USGS and leads a roundtable discussion on post-construction studies and reporting. Manuela Huso (USGS), begins the broadcast with an enlightening presentation on fatality estimators. In the second hour, Christy is joined by Jerry Roppe with Iberdrola Renewables, returning guest Jeff Everett with the USFWS, and Special Agent in Charge Jill Birchell, with the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement in the Pacific Southwest Region. The roundtable discussion covers many common questions, and some less common, that are often raised regarding Tier 4 studies and reporting. (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/wind_training/wind_training.html).

Utility Scale Renewable Energy Development – Project sitting & Conflict Resolution Webinar.

December 18, 2013 (Wednesday) 1:00 PM – Eastern Time. Registration: There is no registration and no fee for attending this webinar. To join the webinar go to <http://connect.msu.edu/ncrcrd>, “enter as a guest” is by default already chosen. Type your name into the text box provided, and click on “Enter Room”. You are now in the meeting room for the webinar.

Upcoming Events

Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference will be in Kansas City, MO January 26-29, 2014. For more information: <http://www.midwestfw.org/>.

AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar will be held in New Orleans, LA January 29-30, 2014. For more information: <http://www.awea.org/events/Event.aspx?EventID=21659&navItemNumber=5647>.

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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