



Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

February 20, 2014

The **Interior Least Tern** (*Sternula antillarum athalassos*), is one of three **federally endangered bird species** found in Nebraska. This past week, Interior Least Terns were highlighted on the USFWS Endangered Species Calendar (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/ESDaily/>). Interior Least Terns migrate to Nebraska for the summer to nest along portions of the Missouri, Platte, Niobrara, Loup, and Elkhorn Rivers and were one of the species included in the development of the Wind Energy and Nebraska's Wildlife map <http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/tools.asp#map>. To learn more about Interior Least Terns, check out the **Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership** website: <http://ternandplover.unl.edu/>.

Around Nebraska...

Nebraska's wind energy future. Wednesday afternoon, Nebraska Public Power District CEO and President, Pat Pope spoke at a symposium discussing wind energy development in our state. (<http://www.knopnews2.com/story/nebraska-s-wind-energy-future-20140212>).

Wind turbines within city get council approval. Regulations for wind turbines — including the smaller variety operated by homeowners and businesses — were approved by the Kearney City Council Tuesday. (http://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/wind-turbines-within-city-get-council-approval/article_dae98c4a-9413-11e3-8f60-001a4bcf887a.html).

Siting of Wind Energy in Nebraska Symposium was held on February 12, 2014 in North Platte, NE. The Symposium was attended by ~200 participants, including many landowners, student, and resource professionals. Materials from the symposium are available online at: <http://www.extension.unl.edu/wind-energy>.



(<http://www.calamusoutfitters.com/2014-nebraska-prairie-chicken-festival.htm>).

Image: Snow geese, Funk Lagoon, NE, USFWS.

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Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[USGS Assesses Wind Energy Impacts on Wildlife](http://dailyfusion.net/2014/02/usgs-assesses-wind-energy-impacts-on-wildlife-26662/). USGS has recently undertaken a project to develop a methodology for assessing wind energy impacts on wildlife at a national scale. A tutorial for the new map tool is available. (<http://dailyfusion.net/2014/02/usgs-assesses-wind-energy-impacts-on-wildlife-26662/>).

[Reducing Bat Fatalities From Interactions with Operating Wind Turbines](http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy14osti/60427.pdf). Recent NREL research has shed some new light on what may be causing these bat fatalities, and such information could help solve the mystery and reduce turbine related deaths. (<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy14osti/60427.pdf>).

[Summary of Wind-Wildlife Interactions](http://awwi.org/resources/summary-of-wind-wildlife-interactions/). This fact sheet summarizes what is known about the adverse impacts of land-based wind power on wildlife in North America and the status of our knowledge regarding how to avoid or minimize these impacts. (<http://awwi.org/resources/summary-of-wind-wildlife-interactions/>).

[Wind Turbine Interactions with Wildlife and their Habitats: A Summary of Research Results and Priority Questions](http://awwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/AWWI-Wind-Wildlife-Interactions-Factsheet-01-22-14.pdf) was released January 2014 by American Wind Wildlife Institute. For the complete factsheet: <http://awwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/AWWI-Wind-Wildlife-Interactions-Factsheet-01-22-14.pdf>.

[Modelling flight heights of marine birds to more accurately assess collision risk with offshore wind turbines](#), by Johnston et al. was published in the most recent issue of Journal of Applied Ecology. The methods presented here for modelling continuous flight height distributions provide measures of uncertainty and enable comparison of collision risk between different turbine designs. This approach will improve the accuracy of impact assessments and provide estimates of uncertainty, allowing

better evidence to inform decision making. (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2664.12191/pdf>).

[Maine wind project wins support of conservation groups](#). A proposed wind power project in Somerset and Piscataquis counties won the support of Appalachian Trail conservation groups after a subsidiary of the company proposing the project created a \$700,000 land conservation fund. (http://www.pressherald.com/news/Wind_project_wins_support_of_conservation_groups.html).

[London Array expansion plans ditched](#). Plans to extend the London Array, the world's largest wind farm, to 1GW of capacity have been dropped amid concerns over the project's potential impact on wildlife. (<http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2329710/london-array-expansion-plans-ditched>).

[Leading Bird Group Identifies Concerns with Chesapeake Bay Wind Project](#). American Bird Conservancy (ABC), a leading U.S. bird conservation group, has identified numerous concerns in a letter to federal officials in connection with the proposed wind power development on the Chesapeake Bay—an important breeding and foraging habitat for birds such as Bald Eagles and waterfowl—that may feature around two dozen 600-foot tall wind turbines with blade sweeps longer than a football field. (<http://www.surfbirds.com/community-blogs/blog/2014/02/19/leading-bird-group-identifies-concerns-with-chesapeake-bay-wind-project/>).

[Waders, woodland and other wildlife to see wind boost](#). PART of Perthshire will see its wildlife enriched if a wind farm project is approved. Wind energy specialist, [Banks Renewables](#), has laid out detailed enhancements which would be carried out if its Bandirran Wind Farm near Balbeggie goes ahead. (<http://www.allmediascotland.com/media-releases/60695/waders-woodland-and-other-wildlife-to-see-wind-boost/>).

[Giant Wind-Farm Plan Raises Alarm About Eagle Deaths](#). Two conservation groups are urging federal regulators to slow down on approval of what would be the nation's largest wind farm until more efforts are made to mitigate the impact on eagles. (<http://www.nationaljournal.com/energy/giant-wind-farm-plan-raises-alarm-about-eagle-deaths-20140212>).

[Google's Makani: From Regulatory To Technical To Wildlife Challenges](#). Almost a year ago, Google took a 100% ownership position in Makani, an airborne wind energy company. It had previously held a 10% position in the company, but after the tragic death of one of its founders, Makani's future was less certain. Now it has deep pockets in Google X, the division devoted to breakthrough technologies. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2014/02/19/googles-makani-regulatory-technical-wildlife-challenges/>).

Prairie Chickens

[Effects of wind energy development on survival of female greater prairie-chickens](#), Winder et al., Journal of Applied Ecology 2013. (<https://www.k-state.edu/bsanderc/2013japplecol.pdf>).

[Space use by female Greater Prairie-Chickens in response to wind energy development](#), Winder et al., Ecosphere, January 2014. (<https://www.k-state.edu/bsanderc/2014ecosphere.pdf>)

Wildlife

[Identifying Bats By Sound: Following White-Nose Syndrome, Acoustic Method Best for Sampling Bats](#). Recording bats' echolocation "calls" is the most efficient and least intrusive way of identifying different species of bats in a given area, providing insight into some populations that have been decimated by white-nose syndrome. This new research by scientists from Virginia Tech, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Army is published in the *Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment*. (http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=3801&from=rss#.UwUhi_lr58G).

[Effect of passive acoustic sampling methodology on detecting bats after declines from white-nose syndrome](#) by L.S. Coleman, W.M. Ford, C.A. Dobony and E.R. Britzke, is published in the *current issue of the Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment*. (http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1390909570_Coleman%20et%20al.pdf).

Wind

[Iowa bill gives landowners more power in fighting wind project](#). A House panel on Tuesday moved legislation that would make it easier for landowners to fight a proposed cross-state power line project. A Sioux City company is making equipment for the project. (http://siouxcityjournal.com/news/local/state-and-regional/iowa-bill-gives-landowners-more-power-in-fighting-wind-project/article_4213c638-cff4-5287-92d4-0b6b249779ef.html).

[Climate risk from wind farms is minimal, study says](#). Concerns that giant wind farms aimed at easing climate change in fact aggravate the problem are misplaced, a scientific study said on Tuesday. (<http://phys.org/news/2014-02-climate-farms-minimal.html>).

[The Plan To Power The US With 100 Percent Clean Energy Is Almost All Wind](#). If the U.S. gets 100% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, there's an actual, feasible plan you can follow. (<http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/the-plan-to-power-the-us-with-100-percent-clean-energy-is-almost-all-wind>).

Tools

[USGS Interactive Windfarm Mapper](#). The USGS created this publicly available [national dataset](#) and [interactive mapping application](#) of wind turbines. This dataset is built with publicly available data, as well as searching for and identifying individual wind turbines using satellite imagery. The locations of all wind turbines, including the publicly available datasets, were visually verified with high-resolution remote imagery to within plus or minus 10 meters. (<http://eerscmap.usgs.gov/windfarm/>).

[Developing a Research Framework for Increasing Understanding of Interactions between Eagles and Wind Energy](#). In this document, we outline a framework for a national, hypothesis-driven research program on eagles and wind energy. The principal goals of this framework are to guide research that improves our ability to predict and estimate take of eagles at wind energy facilities, to develop measures intended to avoid and minimize the take of eagles at operating wind energy facilities, and to compensate for, or offset, remaining eagle take. (http://awwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/AWWI-Eagle-Research-Framework_Final-01-23-14.pdf).

[Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines Webinar Series](#). The USFWS has offered a number of webinars related to the Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines. Recordings of the webinars, presentations, and transcripts are available at: http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/wind_training/wind_training.html.

[**2014 Range-wide Indiana Bat Summer Survey Guidelines**](#), January

2014. (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/surveys/pdf/2014IBatSummerSurveyGuidelines13Jan2014.pdf>).

[**Northern Long-eared Bat Interim Conference and Planning Guidance**](#), January 6, 2014. On October 2, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposed the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*; NLEB) for listing as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The purpose of this document is to address the immediate information needs for section 7 conferences and conservation planning for the NLEB should it be listed. (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba/pdf/NLEBinterimGuidance6Jan2013.pdf>).

The Wildlife Society Renewable Energy Working Group – LinkedIn. Connect with other resource professionals involved in renewable energy – wildlife work. To join, go to: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4433729&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v, click Join.

Upcoming Events

Transportation uses of new Crucial Habitat tool webinar will be broadcast on **February 25, 2014** at **2 p.m. (MT)**. Find the webinar westerngovernors.webex.org, Participant Code: 665 490 919, Password: chat. The webinar will be recorded and available [on the WGA website](#), where more information is available about the CHAT. Contact Carlee Brown at cbrown@westgov.org or (303) 623-9378.

EPRI Webcast: Bat Detection and Shutdown System for Utility-scale Wind Turbines will be broadcast on **March 4, 2014**, at **2 p.m. (eastern)**. Join EPRI's John Goodrich-Mahoney, Normandeau Associates, Inc.'s Christine Sutter and We Energies's Susan Schumacher for a presentation and discussion summarizing EPRI research related to the Bat Detection and Shutdown System for Utility-scale Wind Turbines. (http://nationalwind.org/ai1ec_event/epri-webcast-bat-detection-and-shutdown-system-for-utility-scale-wind-turbines/?instance_id).

Upcoming NWCC Webinar – Eagle Mitigation and Research will be broadcast on **March 5, 2014** at **1:00 p.m. (eastern)**. The presentation will focus on AWWI's work on eagles, including the recently released Eagle Research Framework and the development of a voluntary lead abatement model as an option for mitigation of eagle take. The webinar will be hosted by NWCC/AWWI and will include time for questions after the presentation. (<http://nationalwind.org/upcoming-nwcc-webinar-eagle-mitigation-and-research/>).

AWEA Wind Project Siting Seminar will be held in New Orleans, LA, **March 19-20, 2014**. For more information: <http://www.awea.org/events/Event.aspx?EventID=21659&navItemNumber=5647>.

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AWEA WINDPOWER Conference & Exhibition will be in Las Vegas, Nevada—**May 5-8, 2014**. WINDPOWER is the annual conference and exhibition for the U.S. wind industry, hosted by AWEA. For more information: (<http://www.windpowerexpo.org/index.aspx?&RDtoken=57901&userID=>).

Wind Wildlife Research Meeting X will be in Broomfield, CO, week of **December 1, 2014**. Dates TBD. The biennial Wind Wildlife Research Meeting provides an internationally recognized forum for researchers and wind-wildlife stakeholders to hear contributed papers, view research posters, and listen to panels that synthesize the most recent wind power-related wildlife research. (<http://nationalwind.org/save-the-date-wind-wildlife-research-meeting-x/>).

Conference on Wind energy and Wildlife impacts will be in Berlin, Germany, **March 10-12, 2015**. (<http://www.cww2015.tu-berlin.de/>).

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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