



## Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

March 4, 2014

### Around Nebraska...

**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>.

**[Wind firm pitches proposal to Loup Power](http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/wind-firm-pitches-proposal-to-loup-power/article_f99342cc-0b75-5ef2-b56a-dad8a77a73ed.html)**. Ever increasing wholesale power rates have Loup Public Power District looking to the wind for answers. Omaha-based Bluestem Energy Solutions pitched a proposal to the Loup board last week that would allow the local utility to lock in a wind energy rate for 25 years. ([http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/wind-firm-pitches-proposal-to-loup-power/article\\_f99342cc-0b75-5ef2-b56a-dad8a77a73ed.html](http://columbustelegram.com/news/local/wind-firm-pitches-proposal-to-loup-power/article_f99342cc-0b75-5ef2-b56a-dad8a77a73ed.html)).

**[500,000 Cranes Are Headed for Nebraska in One of Earth's Greatest Migrations](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/500000-cranes-are-headed-nebraska-one-earths-greatest-migrations-180949816/?no-ist)**. Every year 400,000 to 600,000 Sandhill cranes—80 percent of all the cranes on the planet—congregate along an 80-mile stretch of the central Platte River in Nebraska, to fatten up on waste grain in the empty cornfields in preparation for the journey to their Arctic and subarctic nesting grounds. This staging is one of the world's great wildlife spectacles, on a par with the epic migrations of the wildebeest and the caribou. (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/500000-cranes-are-headed-nebraska-one-earths-greatest-migrations-180949816/?no-ist>).



Photo by: TJ Fontaine

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The 2014 **Nebraska Prairie Chicken Festival** will be held **April 4-6, 2014** and will be hosted by Calamus Outfitters and the Gracie Creek Landowners. The festival will kick off with a tradeshow featuring local arts and crafts, educational displays, locally raised beef, live birds and more. (<http://www.calamusoutfitters.com/2014-nebraska-prairie-chicken-festival.htm>).

## **Around the Nation & World...**

### *Wind and Wildlife*

**[How bad are wind turbines for Golden Eagles?](http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/24219/20140303/how-bad-are-wind-turbines-for-golden-eagles)** Scores of birds of prey, including eagles, have died in the birthplace of the U.S. wind power industry, California's Altamont Pass. As New York's wind industry expands, researchers are spending the winter tracking the East Coast's Golden Eagle population, hoping to help keep them out of harm's way. (<http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/24219/20140303/how-bad-are-wind-turbines-for-golden-eagles>).

**[Offshore Wind Industry Slowed by Birds, Bombs, Sharks](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-02-20/offshore-wind-industry-thwarted-by-birds-bombs-sharks.html)**. Birds, sharks and unexploded bombs from World War II are being blamed for holding up offshore wind farms, raising doubts about the costs of the technology. (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-02-20/offshore-wind-industry-thwarted-by-birds-bombs-sharks.html>).

**[Ontario citizens want wildlife protected from wind power plants](http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1749874)**. Ontario citizens expect government to protect wildlife, according to a recent poll. Results of an online public poll hosted by Wind Concerns Ontario showed that 97.38 percent of the more than 1,300 people responding said they did not support the killing of birds and animals for wind power development. (<http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1749874>).

### *Wildlife*

**[Bats in the Burns: Studying the impact of wildfires and climate change](http://batcon.org/index.php/media-and-info/bats-archives.html?task=viewArticle&magArticleID=1154)**. Preliminary evidence suggests that, not surprisingly, bats prefer unburned areas for travel, foraging and drinking. Roost selection was a different story: bats of some species chose roosts in completely charred tree trunks, including some surrounded by burned-over forests. (<http://batcon.org/index.php/media-and-info/bats-archives.html?task=viewArticle&magArticleID=1154>).

### *Wind*

**[GE, Sandia National Lab discover pathway to quieter, more productive wind turbines](#)**. GE Global Research, the technology development arm of the General Electric Co., has announced research that could significantly impact the design of future wind turbine blades. Using the power of high-performance

computing (HPC) to perform complex calculations, GE engineers have overcome previous design constraints, allowing them to begin exploring ways to design reengineered wind blades that are low-noise and more prolific power-producers. (<http://www.windpowerengineering.com/design/mechanical/blades/ge-sandia-national-lab-discover-pathway-quieter-productive-wind-turbines/>).

**[Offshore Wind Farms Could Knock Down Hurricanes](#)**. Hurricanes are unstoppable, right? Apparently not. An intriguing new computer simulation shows that 78,000 large wind turbines spread across 35,000 square kilometers of ocean outside of New Orleans would have cut Hurricane Katrina's category 3 winds at landfall by 129 to 158 kilometers per hour (80 to 98 miles per hour) and reduced the storm surge by 79 percent. (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/offshore-wind-farms-could-knock-down-hurricanes1/>).

**[Wind Turbines Generate "Upside-Down" Lightning](#)**. Lightning strikes have been known to incapacitate wind turbines by destroying their blades. But while most tall structures are prone to lightning strikes, wind turbines seem to be especially susceptible. Recently scientists captured high-speed footage of these strikes, and they discovered that the wind turbines may in fact be the architects of their own demise: the nature of the turning turbine helps to cause these strikes. (<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/2014/03/03/wind-turbines-generate-upside-down-lightning-video/>).

**[Rail, energy companies plan massive wind farm equipment clearinghouse](#)**. A powerhouse railroad and a growing wind development company have teamed to make a clearinghouse for wind energy equipment east of Plainview. (<http://amarillo.com/news/local-news/2014-03-03/rail-wind-companies-plan-massive-energy-clearinghouse-hale-county-kevin>).

## **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](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](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](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4433729&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v), click Join.

### **Upcoming Events**

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

**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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