



## Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

March 21, 2014

### Around Nebraska...

**[Butler and Polk counties targeted for wind farm](http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/butler-and-polk-counties-targeted-for-wind-farm/article_48343e21-3746-5c51-aa5c-435f799569b3.html)**. A wind development company has its eye on building a wind farm in Polk and Butler counties. "We are in the extremely early stages right now," said Dennis Stout, development manager for E.On, the fourth largest wind farm operator in the U.S. ([http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/butler-and-polk-counties-targeted-for-wind-farm/article\\_48343e21-3746-5c51-aa5c-435f799569b3.html](http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/butler-and-polk-counties-targeted-for-wind-farm/article_48343e21-3746-5c51-aa5c-435f799569b3.html)).

**[Northeast Nebraska project is latest to harness state's wind](http://www.omaha.com/article/20140305/MONEY/140309398/1707)**. Construction is underway on a wind farm in northeast Nebraska that would host 47 to 50 turbines generating 80 megawatts of wind power by the time it is completed. Verdigre Land and Wind Partners LLC is leading the project, which is expected to be finished by the end of 2015 or shortly thereafter. The organization is a collaboration between the Verdigre Landowners Association of Verdigre, Neb., and Plymouth, Mich.-based Windlab Developments USA. (<http://www.omaha.com/article/20140305/MONEY/140309398/1707>).

### Around the Nation & World...

#### *Wind and Wildlife*

**[Enforcement of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act & Migratory Bird Treaty Act](http://naturalresources.house.gov/oversight/wildlifelaws/)**. For nearly ten months, the Committee on Natural Resources has been conducting oversight into the enforcement policies and practices of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service ("FWS") and the Department of Justice ("DOJ") concerning the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act ("BGEPA") and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act ("MBTA"). The Committee has been reviewing the Obama Administration's policies for enforcing these historic laws in order to understand their impact on current and future domestic energy. (<http://naturalresources.house.gov/oversight/wildlifelaws/>).

**[Researchers to study how likely birds are to fly into wind turbines](http://news.stv.tv/scotland/268311-researchers-to-study-how-dangerous-wind-turbines-are-to-birds/)**. Dr Elizabeth Masden, an environmental researcher from the University of the Highlands and Islands, will head up the year-long investigation into the probability of birds colliding with the energy-generating apparatus. (<http://news.stv.tv/scotland/268311-researchers-to-study-how-dangerous-wind-turbines-are-to-birds/>).

**[Green Energy: Can We Save the Planet and Save Birds?](http://www.audubonmagazine.org/articles/climate/green-energy-can-we-save-planet-and-save-birds/)** Wildlife-smart wind power may be as close as it gets to "green energy." But over vast swaths of America, the "smart" part is still more hot air than reality--especially when it comes to raptors. (<http://www.audubonmagazine.org/articles/climate/green-energy-can-we-save-planet-and-save-birds/>).

**[Nantucket Sound Wind Farm Challenge Resolved](http://www.courthousenews.com/2014/03/19/66299.htm)**. Two violations of environmental law require further analysis of a massive wind farm planned for the Nantucket Sound, a federal judge ruled. (<http://www.courthousenews.com/2014/03/19/66299.htm>).

**[How we can protect wildlife, while meeting our energy needs](http://www.edf.org/blog/2014/03/19/how-we-can-protect-wildlife-while-meeting-our-energy-needs/)**. A common misperception is that responsible energy development cannot coexist with vibrant wildlife. And it's counterintuitive for some to contemplate that a bird population could get healthier after an oil well is drilled or a wind turbine is built. (<http://www.edf.org/blog/2014/03/19/how-we-can-protect-wildlife-while-meeting-our-energy-needs/>).

**[Proposed Lake Erie wind farm catches a new breeze, secures key green support: The Mix](http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/03/proposed_lake_erie_wind_farm_c.html)**. Lake Erie Energy Development Corp. is expressing relief and gratitude that its plans to erect the [first wind farm on the Great Lakes](http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/03/proposed_lake_erie_wind_farm_c.html) has won the endorsement of leading environmental groups. ([http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/03/proposed\\_lake\\_erie\\_wind\\_farm\\_c.html](http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/03/proposed_lake_erie_wind_farm_c.html)).

**[LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Wind power less harmful to wildlife](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/mar/12/letter-to-the-editor-wind-power-less-harmful-to-wi/)**. In its zeal to denigrate wind energy, The Washington Times editorial board seems to have ignored some key facts about the threat posed by coal and other traditional energy sources to wildlife. (<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/mar/12/letter-to-the-editor-wind-power-less-harmful-to-wi/>).

**[Proposed measure would halt wind farm development east of Interstate 35 in Oklahoma](http://www.therepublic.com/w/OK--XGR-Wind-Farms)**. Critics of legislation proposing a moratorium on wind farms in Oklahoma east of Interstate 35 say the proposal will have a chilling effect on the new industry, but supporters say it's necessary because the industry is unregulated and needs more study. (<http://www.therepublic.com/w/OK--XGR-Wind-Farms>).

## **Wildlife**

**[New WGA Sage-Grouse Inventory details conservation work in 11 Western states](http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/603-new-sage-grouse-inventory-details-conservation-work-in-11-western-states)**. WGA just published the third annual [Sage-Grouse Inventory](http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/603-new-sage-grouse-inventory-details-conservation-work-in-11-western-states), which highlights new sage-grouse conservation activities in 2013, along with the [Sage-Grouse Appendix](http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/603-new-sage-grouse-inventory-details-conservation-work-in-11-western-states), which contains all initiatives reported by the relevant states and counties between 2011 and 2013. (<http://westgov.org/news/298-news-2014/603-new-sage-grouse-inventory-details-conservation-work-in-11-western-states>).

## Wind

**[Vestas Unveils Taller Wind Turbine For Low Wind Locations](#)**. Wind energy company Vestas has launched their new Large Diameter Steel Tower, which increases the tower height of 2 MW turbines to over 140 metres, which should boost annual energy production on low wind sites by up to 8%. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2014/03/10/vestas-unveils-taller-wind-turbine-low-wind-locations/>).

## Tools

**[National Wind Coordinating Collaborative \(NWCC\) Webinars on the Latest Wind-Wildlife Research and Tools](#)**. NWCC/AWWI hosts quarterly webinars on the latest research and tools related to the interactions of wind energy, wildlife, and wildlife habitat. The webinars include time for questions after each presentation. To receive the access information for upcoming webinars, please sign up. If you are interested in sharing your work on a webinar, please contact [Ian Evans](#). (<http://nationalwind.org/research/webinars/>).

**[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**

**Wind Energy Training Series: Broadcast #5, April 23, 2014.** The final broadcast of the series is scheduled for April 23, 2014, 2 to 4 pm ET, and will focus on the latest and greatest in research. Host Christy Johnson-Hughes will be joined by Cris Hein of Bat Conservation International and Chad Le Beau and Wally Erickson of WEST, Inc. to share research results and conclusions related to bats, grassland birds, and sage grouse. E-mail [windbroadcast@fws.gov](mailto:windbroadcast@fws.gov) with the subject "register" to register for this broadcast.

The 44th Annual **Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival** will be held **March 20-23, 2014** in Kearney, NE. Witness tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes and millions of waterfowl migrating through central Nebraska during March, culminating in a festival hosted by [Audubon Nebraska](http://nebraskacranefestival.org/) to celebrate their arrival. (<http://nebraskacranefestival.org/>).

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>).

**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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