

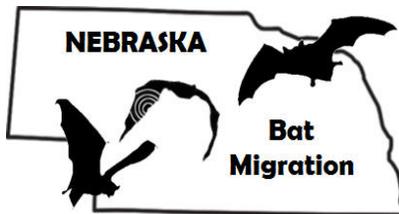


Nebraska Wind Energy and Wildlife News

May 6, 2014

Featured...

Bat Research in Nebraska - The [Nebraska Bat Migration Project](#) will be deploying over 20 ultrasonic acoustic detectors for at least four years to document the phenology and habitat use of bats in Nebraska.



Project findings and updates will be posted online. Funding for this research is being provided by a grant from the [Nebraska Environmental Trust](#) and the [Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Wildlife Conservation Fund](#). For more information, visit <http://snr.unl.edu/renewableenergy/wind/researchbat.asp>.

May is American Wetlands Month - Wetlands are rapidly decreasing across America, yet they provide important ecosystem services for humans and wildlife alike.

[Wetlands Do Triple Duty in a Changing Climate.](#) As living systems that support dense plant life, wetlands not only capture polluted stormwater, they also capture and store carbon (a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change), potentially slowing the rate of global warming.

(<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2014/05/01/wetlands-do-triple-duty-in-a-changing-climate/>).



[National Wetlands Database, interactive mapping tool completed.](#) To coincide with American Wetlands Month, which begins May 1, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is announcing the completion of the most comprehensive and detailed U.S. wetland data set ever produced, capping a 35-year effort by the Service to map the extent of the nation's wetlands. The Wetlands Inventory Mapper

(<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>) has digitally mapped and made publically available wetlands in the lower 48 states, Hawaii and dependent territories, as well as 35 % of Alaska.

(<http://www.agprofessional.com/news/National-Wetlands-Database-interactive-mapping-tool-completed--257553181.html>).

International Migratory Bird Day is May 10-11, 2014 - Initiated in 1993, IMBD was created to focus attention on the amazing journeys that some 350 bird species undertake between their nesting homes in the U.S. and Canada and non-breeding habitats in Latin America.



[New Migratory Bird Joint Venture Website Launched](http://mbjv.org/). The site highlights the conservation work of all habitat and species Joint Ventures throughout North America. (<http://mbjv.org/>).

[U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service celebrates International Migratory Bird Day](http://www.kxlo-klcm.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2864:u-s-fish-wildlife-service-celebrates-international-migratory-bird-day&catid=9:sports-news-pod&Itemid=116). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is once again a proud sponsor of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) and invites people to celebrate and support migratory bird conservation in their local communities and beyond. (http://www.kxlo-klcm.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2864:u-s-fish-wildlife-service-celebrates-international-migratory-bird-day&catid=9:sports-news-pod&Itemid=116).

Around Nebraska...

[NPPD power line plans divide Sand Hills](http://www.omaha.com/article/20140503/NEWS/140509524). The Nebraska Public Power District is moving ahead with plans to build the first 345-kilovolt line in the Sand Hills, a vast expanse of grass-covered dunes in central and northern Nebraska that's home to more cattle than people. (<http://www.omaha.com/article/20140503/NEWS/140509524>).

[Senators push for more wind energy in the state](http://www.klkntv.com/story/25175664/senators-push-for-more-wind-energy-in-the-state). An effort to encourage more wind energy development in Nebraska hit a roadblock this legislative session, but some Nebraska lawmakers are determined to capitalize on the state's wind potential. (<http://www.klkntv.com/story/25175664/senators-push-for-more-wind-energy-in-the-state>).

[Invenergy reports GE blade break](http://www.rechargenews.com/wind/americas/article1359782.ece). General Electric is investigating a blade break at the 200.6MW Prairie Breeze Wind Energy Center in Nebraska, another in a series of structural failures since 2013 and the second involving an Invenergy project. (<http://www.rechargenews.com/wind/americas/article1359782.ece>).

Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[Reconciling the Local Wildlife Risks of Wind Energy with its Global Climate Benefits](http://blog.ucsusa.org/reconciling-the-local-wildlife-risks-of-wind-energy-with-its-global-climate-benefits-507). If you care deeply about the natural world, how should you view the growing number of wind turbines across the American landscape? Two colleagues and I have published a [new paper](#) in the journal Climatic Change that seeks to reconcile concerns over risks to local wildlife with wind energy's benefits in reducing the existential risks that climate change poses for much of the world's biological diversity. (<http://blog.ucsusa.org/reconciling-the-local-wildlife-risks-of-wind-energy-with-its-global-climate-benefits-507>).

[Thinking globally and siting locally – renewable energy and biodiversity in a rapidly warming world.](#) Taber Allison, Terry L. Root, Peter C. Frumhoff, published in *Climate Change*, April 2014. (<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-014-1127-y>).

[SHARING THE AIR.](#) Wind energy is crucial to battling climate change. Can it expand without harming eagles? This collision of bird and blade presents a conservation conundrum: how to create renewable electricity—enough to meet society’s expanding needs—without harming irreplaceable wildlife. (<http://www.defenders.org/magazine/spring-2014/sharing-air>).

[Comparing the Ecological Impacts of Wind and Oil & Gas Development: A Landscape Scale Assessment.](#) by Nathan F. Jones, Liba Pejchar, published in *PLOS One*. Energy production in the United States is in transition as the demand for clean and domestic power increases. Wind energy offers the benefit of reduced emissions, yet, like oil and natural gas, it also contributes to energy sprawl. We used a diverse set of indicators to quantify the ecological impacts of oil, natural gas, and wind energy development in Colorado and Wyoming. (<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0081391>).

[Secretary Jewell Releases Landscape-Scale Mitigation Strategy to Encourage Dual Objectives of Smart Development and Conservation.](#) To advance landscape-scale, science-based management of America’s public lands and wildlife, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today [released a strategy](#) to implement mitigation policies and practices at the Department that can more effectively encourage infrastructure development while protecting natural and cultural resources. (<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-releases-landscape-scale-mitigation-strategy-to-encourage-dual-objectives-of-smart-development-and-conservation.cfm>).

[Genetic Discovery in Golden Eagle May Have Implications For Wind Turbines.](#) For the first time ever scientists have charted the genome of the golden eagle, and what they’ve found may shoot down one proposed way of making wind turbines safer for the huge birds of prey. (<http://www.kcet.org/news/define/rewild/birds-1/new-genetic-map-of-golden-eagle-may-have-implications-for-wind-turbines.html>).

[Watching the Dark: New surveillance cameras are changing bat research.](#) Successful conservation hinges on understanding bat behaviors and needs, as well as identifying and addressing the things that threaten them in the darkness. But how do we light a candle without scaring the bats away or altering their behavior? (<http://batcon.org/index.php/media-and-info/bats-archives.html?task=viewArticle&magArticleID=1166>).

[Feds List New Bird Species As Threatened - Should Wind Developers Be Worried?](#) In response to a precipitous decline of the lesser prairie-chicken (LPC), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced on March 27 that it is listing the species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). (http://www.nawindpower.com/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.12826).

[Bird Enthusiasts To Sue Feds For Allowing Wind Turbines To Kill Eagles For 30 Years.](#) The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) announced it was suing the Obama administration for finalizing a rule that would allow wind farms to kill eagles for up to 30 years. The bird group says that the new rule violates existing federal laws. (<http://dailycaller.com/2014/05/01/bird-enthusiasts-to-sue-feds-for-allowing-wind-turbines-to-kill-eagles-for-30-years/>).

[Some see proposed wind farm as a threat in Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge.](#) Every year they come — millions of migratory birds to the wetlands and fields of Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge near this small town in Holt County. Now a company wants to build Missouri's largest wind farm nearby. Element Power of Portland, Ore., says it will break ground soon for its \$400 million Mill Creek Wind Energy Project: 84 to 118 wind turbines, each nearly 350 feet tall, on 25,000 acres the company has leased just east of Squaw Creek. Several state conservation areas, such as Nodaway Valley and Honey Creek, sit around the site. (<http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/03/5000480/some-see-proposed-wind-farm-as.html>).

[Hawaii windmills take a toll on endangered animals.](#) Hawaii's push toward green energy is having an impact on flying creatures who live next to wind farms or traverse the spinning turbines, some of which stand 493 feet tall at the highest blade tips. A number of endangered birds and bats have been killed at the island's facilities. (<http://www.kitv.com/news/hawaii-windmills-take-a-toll-on-endangered-animals/25786564>).

[Decision delayed on "bird friendly" wind turbine experiment for Altamont Pass.](#) An experimental project designed to test whether a new type of wind turbine will prove less lethal to Altamont Pass birds will have to clear a few more hurdles before gaining approval of Alameda County. (http://www.contracostatimes.com/contracosta-times/ci_25637653/decision-delayed-bird-friendly-wind-turbine-experiment-altamont).

[Careful siting can make offshore wind farms safe for the birds.](#) The Center for Conservation Biology has become part of an initiative to develop wind farms off Virginia's coast. "One of the biggest concerns of wind farms is their effects on wildlife, particularly birds," Watts explained. "The careful placement of offshore wind turbines can save a whole lot of birds." (<http://www.wm.edu/news/stories/2014/careful-siting-can-make-offshore-wind-farms-safe-for-the-birds221.php>).

Wildlife

[Idaho Fish and Game begins sharp-tailed grouse study.](#) The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has started one of the largest sharp-tailed grouse studies of its kind in the foothills east of Idaho Falls. Department officials, led by Utah State University's master's candidate Matt Proett, have fitted more than 80 grouse with radio transmitters. The goal is to find where the birds nest and where they live, which will give officials an idea of the habitat challenges facing the quick-flying birds. Biologists plan to capture and collar more than 80 birds again next spring. (http://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/idaho-fish-and-game-begins-sharp-tailed-grouse-study/article_81c4edcf-9f80-5b05-bc82-c68e3a8491be.html).

[Hope for the Midwest's Greater Prairie Chicken.](#) In April, 45 greater prairie chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*) were reintroduced to sweeping grasslands in northern Missouri. The release is only the most recent conservation effort to help the threatened birds rebound in a region where they once thrived. (<http://news.wildlife.org/featured/hope-for-midwests-greater-prairie-chicken/>).

[BLM Proposes Plan to Slow Spread of WNS to Colorado.](#) The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Colorado office has proposed an [adaptive management strategy](#) and preliminary Environmental Assessment designed to slow the spread of white-nose syndrome (WNS) to bats in Colorado. (<http://news.wildlife.org/featured/blm-proposes-plan-to-slow-spread-of-wns-to-colorado/>).

[Revealed: Biologists discover longest mammal migration in Lower 48](http://america.aljazeera.com/features/2014/4/mule-deer-longestmigration.html). A new study finds that Wyoming's Red Desert mule deer trek 300 miles each year. En route, they leap over and wriggle under 100 fences, dash across five highways and scale 11,000-foot mountains. (<http://america.aljazeera.com/features/2014/4/mule-deer-longestmigration.html>).

Wind

[Chart: Wind Energy Dominates the 37GW of Power Under Construction](http://theenergycollective.com/katherineweet/373126/chart-wind-dominates-37gw-power-under-construction). When it comes to new power capacity in the U.S., it's all about renewables. Last October, [renewable energy accounted for nearly 100 percent of all new generation capacity in the U.S.](http://theenergycollective.com/katherineweet/373126/chart-wind-dominates-37gw-power-under-construction) For the first quarter of 2014, the [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](http://theenergycollective.com/katherineweet/373126/chart-wind-dominates-37gw-power-under-construction) found that renewable energy sources, primarily wind and solar, made up more than 90 percent of new installed power capacity, with natural gas making up the remainder. (<http://theenergycollective.com/katherineweet/373126/chart-wind-dominates-37gw-power-under-construction>).

[Senate approves two-year wind energy PTC extension](http://www.evwind.es/2014/04/04/senate-approves-two-year-wind-energy-ptc-extension/44579). The US Senate Finance Committee has approved a package of renewed tax breaks with a two-year extension of the production tax credit (PTC) for wind energy. (<http://www.evwind.es/2014/04/04/senate-approves-two-year-wind-energy-ptc-extension/44579>).

[U.S. Wind Power Cut Nearly 100 Million Tons of Carbon Emissions in 2013](http://ecowatch.com/2014/04/08/wind-power-carbon-emissions/). Wind energy figures from 2013 keep pouring in and they continue to impress. According to a report preview from the [American Wind Energy Association](http://ecowatch.com/2014/04/08/wind-power-carbon-emissions/) (AWEA), wind generation reduced carbon dioxide emissions in the power sector by 4.4 percent. That's good for 96 million metric tons, or the equivalent of taking 16.9 million cars off the road. (<http://ecowatch.com/2014/04/08/wind-power-carbon-emissions/>).

[80% Of US Wind Power In 2013 Generated By 12 States](http://cleantechnica.com/2014/04/18/80-us-wind-power-2013-generated-12-states/). In 2013, 12 states accounted for 80% of U.S. wind-generated electricity, according to preliminary generation data released in EIA's [March Electric Power Monthly](http://cleantechnica.com/2014/04/18/80-us-wind-power-2013-generated-12-states/) report. (<http://cleantechnica.com/2014/04/18/80-us-wind-power-2013-generated-12-states/>).

[EIA Underestimating Renewable Energy Growth, Analysis Finds](http://www.triplepundit.com/2014/04/eia-underestimating-renewable-energy-growth-sun-day-campaign-analysis-finds/). [Analysis](http://www.triplepundit.com/2014/04/eia-underestimating-renewable-energy-growth-sun-day-campaign-analysis-finds/) by the nonprofit research group Sun Day Campaign finds that renewable energy sources in the U.S. could reach or exceed 16 percent by 2018. (<http://www.triplepundit.com/2014/04/eia-underestimating-renewable-energy-growth-sun-day-campaign-analysis-finds/>).

[Supreme Court upholds EPA air pollution rule](http://www.politico.com/story/2014/04/supreme-court-epa-air-pollution-106140.html?hp=r3). The Supreme Court handed the Obama administration yet another major win for its environmental agenda on Tuesday, upholding an EPA rule aimed at preventing some states from polluting their downwind neighbors with harmful emissions from sources like coal-burning power plants. (<http://www.politico.com/story/2014/04/supreme-court-epa-air-pollution-106140.html?hp=r3>).

[Tours take hikers through wildflowers and wind turbines](http://www.dailyrecordnews.com/outdoors/tours-take-hikers-through-wildflowers-and-wind-turbines/article_b91b32f8-d22a-11e3-b5e3-001a4bcf887a.html). It's wildflower season in Central Washington, and Puget Sound Energy offered the first in a series of spring wildflower hikes on Saturday at the Wild Horse Wind and Solar Facility. (http://www.dailyrecordnews.com/outdoors/tours-take-hikers-through-wildflowers-and-wind-turbines/article_b91b32f8-d22a-11e3-b5e3-001a4bcf887a.html).

Tools

[National Wetlands Database, interactive mapping tool completed](#). To coincide with American Wetlands Month, which begins May 1, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is announcing the completion of the most comprehensive and detailed U.S. wetland data set ever produced, capping a 35-year effort by the Service to map the extent of the nation's wetlands. The Wetlands Inventory Mapper (<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>) has digitally mapped and made publically available wetlands in the lower 48 states, Hawaii and dependent territories, as well as 35 % of Alaska. (<http://www.agprofessional.com/news/National-Wetlands-Database-interactive-mapping-tool-completed--257553181.html>).

[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).

[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.

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

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.int/t/wind-energy-and-wildlife>.

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