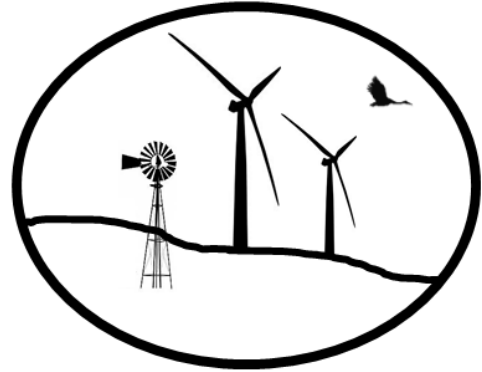


Wind Energy and Wildlife News

July 21, 2015



Around Nebraska...

[Jocelyn Oleny Harrison to defend master's thesis](#), "Assessment of disturbance effects of an existing wind energy facility on greater prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*) breeding season ecology in the Sandhills of Nebraska." **Friday, June 24, 2015, 1 p.m.**, Hardin Hall (UNL East Campus), Room 901. Her complete abstract is available at: <http://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/snr/4419/25149>.



[Glossy Ibis nesting – a Nebraska first](#). The population increase and range expansion of the Glossy Ibis is one of the more interesting avian stories of the last quarter century. Nebraska claimed its first documented record not that long ago in 1999. In less than two decades since, Glossy Ibis have essentially become regular (annual) in occurrence in our state. It is not unusual nowadays for multiple birds to be reported in a single season.

[Use of opportunistic sightings and expert knowledge to predict and compare Whooping Crane stopover habitat](#). Hefley et al.

2015. Conservation Biology. We developed a species distribution model (SDM) that could be used to inform habitat management actions for Whooping Cranes within the state of Nebraska (U.S.A.). Our expert-informed modeling approach could be applied to opportunistic presence-only data when sampling bias is a concern and expert knowledge is available.

[Presence and movement of swift fox \(*Vulpes velox*\) and other wildlife along the heartland expressway corridor in western Nebraska](#).

Sara Elaine Ray, M.S. University of Nebraska at Kearney, 2015, 192 pages. The swift fox (*Vulpes velox*) is a small canid classified as endangered within the state of Nebraska. Future construction of the Heartland Expressway Corridor (HEC), a 300 km road expansion project in the panhandle of the state, may impact the resident swift fox population.

[Overwintering Biology and Tests of Trap and Relocate as a Conservation Measure for Burying Beetles](#).

Hoback and Conley. 2015. NDOR Research Project. Overwintering biology and trap and relocation were studied to determine how this beetle survives freezing temperatures and to find whether trap and relocation could be a suitable conservation management measure.

[White House names Morrow 'Champion of Change'](#). The White House has recognized Kim Morrow, climate change resource specialist in UNL's School of Natural Resources, and 11 others as "Champions of Change" for their efforts in protecting the environment and communities from the effects of climate change.

[Wind Turbines Threaten Bats Here](#). Study shows they kill about 1 million per year and Wisconsin has some of region's largest bat hibernation sites. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering requests from the wind energy industry to exempt wind turbines in Wisconsin and nationwide from new rules to protect threatened bats, even as a fungal disease [has killed millions of the creatures](#). Because of the disease, white-nose syndrome, the federal agency listed the northern long-eared bat as threatened. The temporary rule to list the bat as threatened exempted some activities, but not wind energy generation. The agency is now considering a final rule, including potential exemptions for wind turbines.

[The Nature Conservancy Installs Bird Safe Wind Power](#). The Nature Conservancy has completed its first phase of installation of SheerWind's INVELOX funnel-based wind power technology. Because Palmyra is home to a national wildlife refuge and more than a million nesting seabirds, conventional wind turbines were not an option due to the risk of bird strikes. What's more, the low wind speeds on the island would provide little to no energy production with traditional turbines.

[Controversial Highlands wind farm plan rejected](#). A controversial wind farm proposed for the Flow Country in the Highlands – a vast expanse of “globally important” peatland – has been rejected by the Scottish Government.

[Trump shows mussels to win battle against wind farm](#). US billionaire [Donald Trump](#) has finally won his battle against plans for a giant wind farm near his Doonbeg golf course – thanks to a little-known fresh water pearl mussel.

Policy

[Senate panel set to consider 2-year renewables PTC extension](#). The renewable electricity production tax credit would be extended through the end of 2016 under a broad tax incentives bill slated to be considered by the Republican-led Senate Finance Committee on July 21. The tax credit, the core incentive responsible for development of the wind industry, last expired in 2014 after it was briefly reinstated at the very end of that year. Only projects that can show they started construction, or met a financial safe harbor, by that date are currently eligible for the incentive.

[Senate panel advances \\$95B tax break package](#). Senate tax writers cleared a hodgepodge of expired tax breaks on Tuesday, as lawmakers insisted they don't want to wait until year's end to restore a group of incentives that historically have had bipartisan support. The Finance Committee voted to extend the \$95.2 billion collection of tax breaks, known as “extenders” in Washington-speak, through 2016 by a 23-3 vote, in the latest example of Congress's stop-and-start approach to the preferences.

[Migratory Bird Permits; Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#). We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, us, or we), intend to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a proposal to authorize incidental take of migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. **To ensure consideration of written comments, they must be submitted on or before July 27, 2015.**

[BirdReqs.org](#). An open, public conversation about the incidental take of migratory birds.

Wildlife & Habitats

[Observation of Sandhill Cranes' \(Grus canadensis\) Flight Behavior in Heavy Fog](#). Kirsch et al. 2015. The Wilson Journal of Ornithology. The observed behavior of cranes circling and lingering in an area while flying in poor visibility conditions suggests that such situations may increase chances of colliding with natural or anthropogenic obstacles in the vicinity.

[Citizen science reveals trends in bat populations: The National Bat Monitoring Programme in Great Britain](#). Barlow et al. 2015. Biological Conservation. We model population trends of bats in Great Britain from volunteer survey data. Trained citizen scientists can be successfully used to monitor bats. Ten species or groups show stable or increasing trends from at least one survey.

[Is part-night lighting an effective measure to limit the impacts of artificial lighting on bats?](#) Azam et al. 2015. Global Change Biology. Overall, no significant difference in activity between part- and full-night lighting sites were observed in 5 of the 8 species studied, suggesting that current part-night lighting schemes fail to encompass the range of activity of most bat species. We recommend that such schemes start earlier at night to effectively mitigate the adverse effects of artificial lighting on light-sensitive species, particularly along ecological corridors that are especially important to the persistence of biodiversity in urban landscapes.

[The ecological impact of city lighting scenarios: exploring gap crossing thresholds for urban bats](#). Hale et al. 2015. Global Change Biology. We believe that this is the first study to demonstrate how lighting may create resistance to species movement throughout an entire city. That connectivity in urban areas is being disrupted for a relatively common species raises questions about the impacts on less tolerant groups and the resilience of bat communities in urban centres. However, this mechanistic approach raises the possibility that some ecological function could be restored in these areas through the strategic dimming of lighting and narrowing of gaps.

[Coyotes Ensure Cat-free Refuges for Birds](#). In old cartoons, coyotes and roadrunners are arch-enemies. But in present-day ecosystems, a coyote may be a bird's best friend, carving out areas of habitat where birds can sing in safety because pussy cats fear to tread.

[UPDATE: Migratory Bird Treaty Act Safe For Now](#). Congressman Jeff Duncan (R, SC) had the opportunity to include his amendment during floor debate on an Interior Department Appropriations Bill and he did not do so. This means that the appropriations bills move forward without the Duncan amendment concerning the MBTA. For now, that amendment appears to be dead.

Wind

[Strategic energy planning for large-scale energy systems: A modelling framework to aid decision-making](#). Girones et al. 2015. Energy. Presentation of a new large-scale energy system modelling approach for public decision-making support. Assessment of advantages and drawbacks of a sequential model structure. Focus on monthly resolution to highlight seasonality issues of the energy system. Detailed description of sub-models to allow reproducibility.

["Abnormal" New Wind Farm System Chops Months Off Timeline](#). A team of researchers at MIT has come up with an out-of-the-ordinary method for accurately predicting wind speeds for proposed wind farms. The new system uses only 3 months of data, compared to the 8- to 12-month period typically required to select a site for new wind farms. That's a huge deal in the wind industry.

[Working in wind power: a day in the life of an environmental scientist.](#) The UK renewable industry is a growth sector that is both “rewarding” and “sociable” to work in, says Rosie Vetter, a senior environmental scientist at AECOM. Vetter shares her experiences project managing environmental assessments for UK wind farms and tells us why she wants to encourage more people to join the sector.

Other

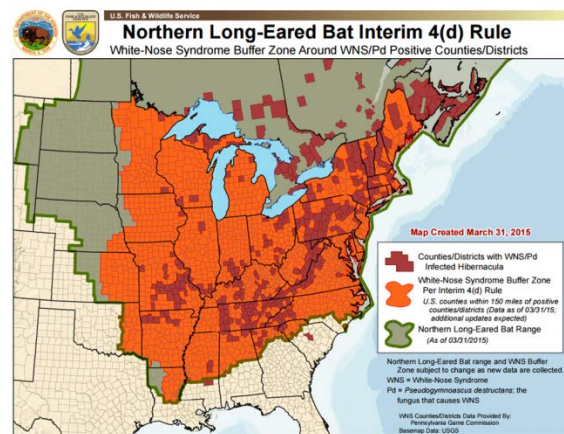
[New coal plants 'most urgent' threat to the planet, warns OECD head.](#) Governments urged to rethink plans for new coal-fired power plants as study estimates they will release more than 500bn tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2050.

Announcements

[Service Protects Northern Long-eared Bat as Threatened Species under Endangered Species Act with Interim 4\(d\) Rule.](#) The listing becomes effective on May 4, 2015, 30 days after publication of the final listing determination in the Federal Register.

[USFWS Approved Automated Acoustic Bat ID Software Programs.](#) Specified versions of the programs identified below are approved by the Service for use in 2015 and beyond for presence/probable absence surveys for Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*). These programs have been independently tested by USGS researchers and passed the Service’s standardized test/validation process.

1. BCID Program (version 2.7b or newer)
2. EchoClass (version 3.0 or newer)
3. Kaleidoscope® Pro (version 2.2.2 or newer)



Upcoming Conferences & Trainings

[Northern Long-Eared Bats & the Potential Impacts on Wind Energy Projects in New England.](#) Webinar presented by the Maine Ocean & Wind Industry Initiative (MOWII). July 29, 2015, 10:00 a.m. ET. [Register](#) for free.

[The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life.](#) The fourth International Conference on "The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life" will take place in Dublin, Ireland, July 10-16, 2016.

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.

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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