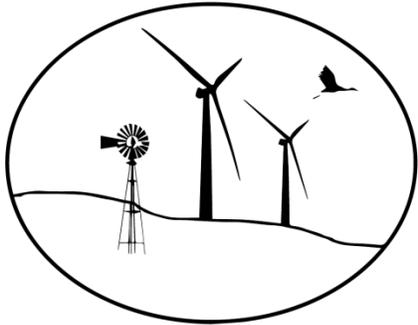


Wind Energy and Wildlife News

November 17, 2015



Around Nebraska...

[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*](#), Jocelyn O. Harris, UNL Thesis 2015. Our results suggest that greater prairie-chicken nesting, brood-rearing, and spatial ecology is not influenced by the presence of the wind energy facility in an unfragmented grassland landscape. This information will be useful as regulatory agencies develop siting and operational policies for wind energy facilities and will contribute to range-wide greater prairie-chicken management strategies. **Note: Larkin Powell's presentation at the wind conference included results from this thesis.*

[Nebraskans' quest for wind power is far from a breeze.](#) Renewable energy advocates said during a conference in Omaha on Thursday they've been heartened by some recent developments in the state. With some significant wind farms recently coming on line and others in the works, Nebraska is on track for more than 1,300 megawatts of wind energy capacity by 2017. That's still far below that of Iowa and many other states, but it's nearly triple what Nebraska had just two years ago, said John Hansen of the Nebraska Farmers Union.

[Local View: The death of opportunity by over-regulation.](#) Three members of the Lancaster County Board have signaled their intention to kill an opportunity to provide property tax revenues and economic benefits for our residents by imposing unreasonable regulations on proposed wind developments. The proposed sound regulations aren't based on facts or science but rather on fear and anecdotal speculation.

[Local View: Sensible regulations for industrial wind turbines.](#) Sen. Ken Haar includes much misleading information in "The death of opportunity by over-regulation". For example, the \$700,000 benefit the developer claimed would result from the Hallam Wind Project would not all remain in Lancaster County. It would be split between Lancaster, Gage and Saline counties. Taxes from industrial wind turbines cannot be earmarked for specific projects, such as repairing bridges or roads. County Commissioner Amundson was correct in stating it is just a drop in a very large bucket for Lancaster County.

[Letter, 11/8: Move wind farm.](#) Sen. Ken Haar's recent Local View criticizes the County Board and in particular its chairperson Roma Amundson, for fearmongering. Good, honest debate isn't fearmongering but involves the consideration of all options, including locations such as your own backyard.

[Letter, 11/11: Better than coal.](#) Currently, a polluting coal-fired power plant is located in Hallam, providing some of the energy distributed by NPPD and LES. A transition from coal to wind power in that location makes sense because transmission lines are already in place. Why in the world would anyone prefer to breathe heavy metals, soot and other damaging greenhouse gas emissions over hearing the relatively quiet sound and clean energy of wind turbines?

[Letter, 11/11: Don't stop wind development.](#) I sincerely hope that our Lancaster County Board listens to the broader interests of its constituents and supports wind development. Poll after poll has shown that strong majorities in rural Nebraska support further development of our wind resources. Public policy decisions should be based upon the best interests of all our county residents.

[County OKs more stringent wind rules; wind farm plan appears dead.](#) A nearly yearlong effort to update wind regulations in Lancaster County ended Tuesday when county leaders approved regulations that wind-energy supporters say will discourage projects in the county.

[Lancaster County Board's strict noise restrictions for wind turbines a blow to wind-farm developers.](#) In a vote that could affect wind farm development elsewhere in Nebraska, the Lancaster County Board on Tuesday adopted tough new noise restrictions on wind turbines. The restrictions prohibit wind turbines from generating more than 40 decibels of noise during the day — about what's generated by a household refrigerator — as measured at nearby residences.

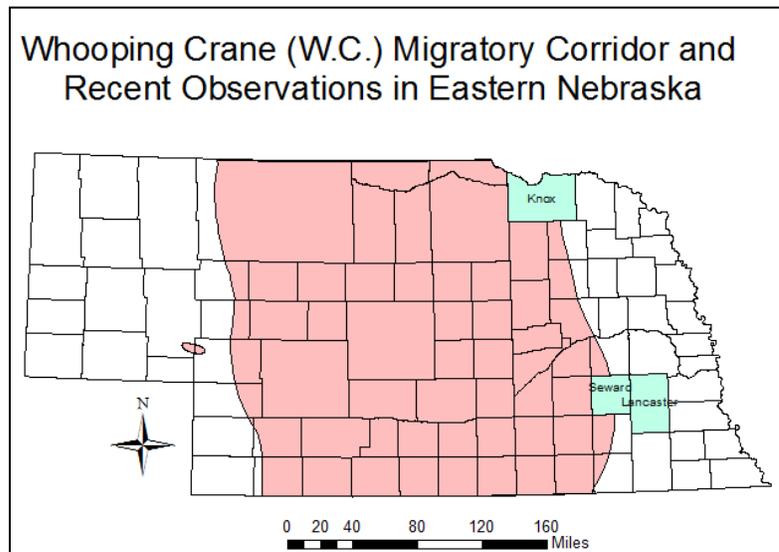
[Stricter Restrictions for Commercial Wind Energy in Lancaster County.](#) Lancaster County now has new restrictions regarding wind farms and potential wind energy projects. The Lancaster County Board voted 3-2 for more restrictive regulations on Tuesday.

[Politics vs. wind farms.](#) Wind energy seems to be a good deal for Nebraska. Let's hope it doesn't get bogged down in partisan political wrangling.

[Bat-killing Fungus Reaches Nebraska.](#) State and federal wildlife officials announced today that a bat-killing fungus that has swept across the eastern United States and Canada over the past eight years, killing millions of bats, has been confirmed by scientists in eastern Nebraska. Samples taken from bats in a mine in Cass County, Neb. at the end of last winter tested positive for the fungus that causes [white-nose syndrome](#); the bat species found with the fungus were northern long-eared bats, tricolored bats and big brown bats.

[Whooping Cranes at Branched Oak Lake.](#) Branched Oak Lake is well east of the Whooping Cranes' traditional migration corridor through central Nebraska. The strong low pressure system which brought gusty west northwest winds across our area on Wednesday and Thursday is the type of weather system that has blown Whooping Cranes east in the past, including as far east as Iowa and Missouri. Other easterly Whooping Cranes were reported in Knox and Seward County on Friday. There have also been several reports of Sandhill Cranes in eastern Nebraska the past two days. The Branched Oak 5 is only the second time Whooping Cranes have been documented in Lancaster County.

The W.C. Migratory Corridor (pink area) represents 95% of confirmed W.C. sightings through 2007.



Around the Nation & World...

Wind and Wildlife

[*The Presidential Memorandum and Interior Department policy on mitigation: their content and implications.*](#) On November 3, President Obama issued a [memorandum](#) (Presidential Memorandum) relating to mitigation of impacts to natural resources stemming from the activities, including issuance of permits or approvals, by the Department of Defense, the Department of the Interior (DOI), the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. On the heels of the President's action, the Department of the Interior issued a new [Departmental Manual section](#) (DOI Policy) on the implementation of landscape-scale mitigation, which directs agency officials to use compensatory mitigation to offset impacts to public lands and to tailor mitigation actions to anticipate and address the impacts of climate change.

[*PSC Considers Bald Eagle Issues with Wind Farm Plan.*](#) Are bald eagles at risk from wind turbines likely to be erected south of Rolette? That's a question that sparked a second hearing by the Public Service Commission today regarding a wind farm proposal. PSC member Brian Kalk says a bald eagle was killed at a wind farm in southwest North Dakota this spring.

[*What can be done to make sure that wind energy and Africa's vultures co-exist? : news.*](#) Many people see wind energy as one of the key solutions to meeting Africa's growing energy demand and mitigating climate change. As a result, wind farms are already under construction or are being planned in many countries across sub-Saharan Africa. But wind farms can pose real threats to bird species, and they have the potential to jeopardise threatened bird populations.

[*Wind project generates concerns about birds.*](#) Wildlife conservationists have raised concerns for a proposed wind farm in Atchison County that could impact the migration of birds into Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

Wildlife & Habitats

[*Use of multiple modes of flight subsidy by a soaring terrestrial bird, the golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, when on migration.*](#) Katzner et al. 2015, Journal of the Royal Society Interface. Golden eagles responded to the variable local-scale meteorological events they encountered by switching flight behaviour to take advantage of multiple modes of subsidy. Orographic soaring occurred more frequently in morning and evening, earlier in the migration season, and when crosswinds and tail winds were greatest. Switching between flight modes allowed migration for relatively longer periods each day and frequent switching behaviour has implications for a better understanding of avian flight behaviour and of the evolution of use of subsidy in flight.

[*'Sonic Net' could reduce bird-plan collisions.*](#) Scientists have come up with a promising new technique called a "[sonic net](#)". The idea is simple: Play sound that overlaps with the frequencies that birds use to call to each other. When the birds can't communicate, they tend to stay away — and out of the path of planes.

[*9 animals that are feeling the impacts of climate change.*](#) Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We are already seeing its effects with rising seas, catastrophic wildfires and water shortages. These changes are not only having a dramatic impact on diverse ecosystems but also on the wildlife that call these places home. Here are 9 species that are already being affected by climate change.

Wind

[*Wind Vision: A New Era for Wind Power in the United States.*](#) Wiser et al. 2015, The Electricity Journal. Despite near- to medium-term cost barriers, a future U.S. electricity system in which wind plays a major role is technically

feasible; could result in enduring benefits globally, nationally, and locally; and could result in consumer and system cost savings in the long term.

[America's leaders should support, not obstruct, our largest clean energy projects.](#) Last month, America's business leaders and investors met in Washington to discuss the [American Business Act on Climate Change](#). Now more than ever, we need an electric grid that is up to the task of delivering low-cost wind and solar energy from the resource areas to locations with a demand for clean power.

[Federal report clears route of wind power electric lines.](#) The federal Energy Department released its final environmental report Wednesday on a proposed high-voltage, direct-current transmission line from the Oklahoma Panhandle to Tennessee.

[B.I. Wind Farm foundations completed.](#) Deepwater Wind announced that it had completed its first major phase of construction by sending out a Tweet on Monday, Oct. 26, stating: "Pile driving is complete at the #BlockIslandWindFarm! #JourneytoFirst"

[A Texas Utility Offers a Nighttime Special: Free Electricity.](#) In Texas, [wind farms](#) are generating so much energy that some utilities are giving power away.

Other

[Interior, State of California Announce Innovative Strategy for Renewable Energy and Conservation on Public Lands in California Desert.](#) The final environmental review of an innovative landscape-scale blueprint to support renewable energy development and conservation on 10 million acres of federal public lands, managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the California desert was announced. The release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Phase I of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is a major step forward, and a key part of the collaborative effort to streamline renewable energy while conserving unique and valuable desert ecosystems and promoting outdoor recreation opportunities.

[Bobolinks losing ground to solar.](#) The bobolinks that nested in Vermont hayfields and grasslands this past summer are already winging their way toward winter homes in Argentina and Brazil. Environmentalists warn that when the birds return next spring some of their nesting habitat may have been swallowed up by the spread of solar arrays. - See more at: <http://mountaintimes.info/bobolinks-losing-ground-to-solar/#sthash.lg4h828s.dpuf>

Tools

[RE-Powering's Electronic Decision Tree.](#) Developed by US EPA's RE-Powering America's Land Initiative, the RE-Powering Electronic Decision Tree tool guides interested parties through a process to screen sites for their suitability for solar photovoltaics or wind installations. EPA encourages renewable energy on already developed or degraded land instead of green space.

[US EPA Decision Tree Tool Webinar.](#) The recording of the webinar is available.

Upcoming Conferences & Trainings & Webinars

[Wildlife Monitoring and Wind Energy.](#) Scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2015 from 4 to 5:30 pm UTC (8:00 am PT/11:00 am ET) developed as part of International Energy Agency's Wind Task 34 (also known as WREN – Working Together to Resolve Environmental Effects of Wind Energy).

[Renewable Energy on Public Lands Webinar](#), Thursday, December 3, 2015, 1-2:30 p.m. (ET). Paul Hastings LLP, Department of the Interior, Defenders of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management of California and B2BWebinars.com are pleased to announce the upcoming webinar, [Renewable Energy on Public Land](#)

[Adaptive Management in the Marine Renewable Energy Industry Webinar](#). The webinar begins at 8:30 AM Pacific Time on December 10, 2015. It will delve into the concept of Adaptive Management (AM), and how it can be used as an effective decision making process in the face of uncertainty for the marine renewable energy industry. Basic principles of Adaptive Management will be discussed, as well as its benefits, drawbacks, how this concept has been utilized thus far, and its potential role in the future.

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>.

To unsubscribe to this listserv:

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In the Message Field (NOT Subject): UNSUBSCRIBE wind_wildlife