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American Bird Conservancy's Policy Statement and Bird-Smart Wind Guidelines

Wind power is the fastest developing source of energy in the United States and a key solution to climate change. However, wind farms can kill birds through collisions with structures, and also harm them through the loss of habitat that birds need for survival. A recent report calls for the U.S. to generate 20% of its electricity from wind by 2030. By then, we will be killing at least one million birds each year, and probably significantly more, during the build-out. Wind farms are also expected to impact almost 20,000 square miles of terrestrial and 20,000 square miles of marine habitat by 2030, some critical to threatened species.

Some of the most iconic and vulnerable American birds are at risk from wind industry expansion that is not carefully planned and implemented. Onshore, these include Golden Eagle, prairie-chickens, and many migratory songbirds. Offshore, Brown Pelicans, Common Loons, and terns are at risk, among other birds.

American Bird Conservancy supports wind power when it is bird-smart, and believes that wind farms can co-exist if the wind industry is held to mandatory standards that protect birds.

Bird-smart wind power employs careful siting, operation and construction mitigation measures, and compensation, to reduce and redress any unavoidable bird mortality and habitat loss. The federal government should include in mandatory wind standards. For terrestrial wind farms, the address:

1. **Siting:** Bird-smart wind power (including wind farms and associated infrastructure) should be sited to avoid impacts to birds, ideally in already altered habitats such as farmland, and avoids sensitive areas that include migratory bottlenecks, wetlands, raptor concentration areas, and ridges used by migrants, key habitat or flight paths for endangered or declining species, and concentrations of species that avoid tall structures (such as some grouse species). Wind farms should avoid [Important Bird Areas](#). Maps with detailed data on wildlife are currently being developed for use by the wind industry. Pre-construction assessments should determine whether a particular site presents an especially high risk to birds. Some are required for wind development.
2. **Operation and Construction Mitigation:** Bird-smart wind power uses the best management practices to avoid and minimize harm to birds, such as by avoiding high risk areas, following [Avian Power Line Interaction Committee](#) standards for siting, using lighting that minimizes nighttime migratory bird collision mortality (such as unguayed rather than guyed meteorological towers, and restoring habitat by replanting native vegetation (or restoring the site if the wind farm is decommissioned).
3. **Monitoring:** Bird-smart wind power employs effective, federally reviewed and approved pre- and post-construction studies/assessments to assist with improved siting and to quantify impacts. Pre-construction assessments must provide sufficient data by the use of radar to detect local migration patterns), create an annual baseline of bird use. Construction studies can be evaluated, use all existing available bird study data, and employ mathematical models that best account for variations in local conditions. Post-construction studies should employ mathematical models that best account for variations in local conditions, including locating bird carcasses in different habitats, as well as any scavenging by predators.

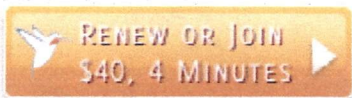
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John Moe

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number of carcasses found (for example) and run for at least two years (an efficacy of, and make needed revisions to, operational mitigation measures

- 4. Compensation:** Bird-smart wind power redresses the loss of any birds or habitat during construction and operation, including deaths caused by collisions with turbine lines, and lost or degraded habitat (e.g. areas of abandoned habitat) to a degree. Compensation could include acquiring additional land for the National Wildlife site habitat conservation projects.

Although offshore wind power is not yet operational in the U.S., an analogous set of compensatory measures need to be developed to make it bird-smart.

All wind farms should have an Avian Protection Plan which includes American Bird Conservancy principles, and a means of implementing them and tracking and reporting on this in addition to also comply with relevant state and federal wildlife protection laws such as the Endangered Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and National Environmental

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