

## Wind Turbines and Their Negative Impact on Wildlife

### **Birds and Bats**

It has been hypothesised that wind turbines can have a negative impact on various species of wildlife. Most notably affected are members of the avian family. Birds are found to be at risk due to collision with the turbines. The CEBC found a reduction in the abundance of bird species at wind-farm sites. This is a matter of concern as four of the proposed wind-turbines would border on a wood. The CEBC found that Anseriformes (Ducks) were the worst effected (possibly as a result of their migratory habits) which contributes to the growing concern for ducks that make use of the local ponds.

Examples where bird populations can / have been impacted upon:

The blade tip velocity of a big machine often exceeds 150mph. A bird that finds itself in the path of the blades will have only 1-1.5 seconds to avoid the blades.

“We believe this wind farm proposal is not just bad for birds but bad for the development of renewable as well”

*Ann McCall, RSPB Planning and Development Manager*

By January 2006, 69 Red Kite as well as 56 Buzzards had been killed by turbines in Germany.

*Brandenburg State Environmental Office 2006*

In Wales two-Red-Kite, have been confirmed fatalities as a result of Wind-farming.

If birds are under threat from Wind Farms then Bats are at a greater risk. The Country Guardian states that scientists claim the number of bat kills to be “alarming” and “surprising”. Continuing... “Right now, the picture that’s emerging is that bat populations are at more risk from wind turbines than birds

Little to nothing is known of bats migratory patters, or what it is that draws them to the turbines. But we can speculate that their hunting habits may be a factor as the sound from the turbine movement may affect their sonar.

UK law states that it is illegal to... "Set and use articles capable of catching, injuring or killing a bat" or to "Possess articles capable of being used to commit an offence or to attempt to commit an offence."

These laws are put in place to protect a species which features on the conservation list.

## Horses

Local equine enthusiasts may be wary of how their horses might react to the intrusion of a wind-farm. According to *The British Horse Society* horses are "spooked" by a strobe effect, which is created when the turbines work at high speed. In a statement put out, they indicate their stance on the positioning of wind-farms. In this you will find that the proposed wind farm contravenes the BHS' advice, as three turbines will be within 480m of a bridle way used by horses. (The turbines will be 120m tall, multiplied by four...)

The Board of Trustees, at the meeting on 21 March, approved the new BHS guidance on wind farms.

*"As guidance to developers and planners, the Society recommends that, as a starting point when assessing a site and its potential layout, a separation distance of four times the overall height should be the target for any road or right of way that is part of a National Trail or Ride UK route, as these are likely to be used by equestrians unfamiliar with turbines, and a distance of 3 times overall height from all other routes, including roads, with the 200m recommended in the technical Guidance to PPS 22 being seen as the minimum, where it is shown in particular case that this would be acceptable. The negotiation process recommended above should indicate whether, in the particular circumstances of each site, these guidelines can be relaxed or need strengthening to minimise or eliminate the potential difficulties."*

[www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

## Wind Turbines and Negative Effects on People

### **Noise Pollution and Health**

An important, negative aspect of the wind farm is the noise which they emit. Far from the obvious impact the noise would have on the local wildlife, it has been noted that the human inhabitants at a number of sites have suffered a variety of ailments. These include an increase in headaches and insomnia. The symptoms are thought to be mainly stress related due to the constant bombardment of sound emitted from the moving turbines.

- *“One survey found that all but one of 14 people living near to Bears Down wind farm at Padstow, Cornwall, where 16 turbines were put up two years ago, had experienced increased numbers of headaches, and 10 said they had problems sleeping and suffered from anxiety.”*

Catherine Milner. *Telegraph.co.uk*. 25/01/2004

- *“People demonstrated a range of symptoms from headaches, migraines, nausea, dizziness, palpitations and tinnitus to sleep disturbance, stress, anxiety and depression. These symptoms had a knock-on effect in their daily lives, causing poor concentration, irritability and an inability to cope.”*

Dr Amanda Harry GP. *Telegraph.co.uk*. 25/01/2004

- *“I’m as green as the next man and the developers assured us that the windmills would cause hardly any disturbance. but once they began operating I couldn’t work in my garden any more – the noise was unbearable. It was as if someone was mixing cement in the sky”*

Dr Stephen Riggs (From Llangwryfron) *Telegraph.co.uk* 25/01/2004

### **House Prices**

- A study of its members’ opinions by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS 2004) concluded that.

*60% of the sample suggested that wind farms decrease the value of residential properties where the development is in view.*

- A district judge awarded substantial compensation to a family from Marton in Cumbria, because a vender failed to disclose a wind farm proposal.

*The Times, Jan 10, 2004*

The fact that any compensation was awarded indicates that the property was affected by the building of a wind farm. In the eyes of the judge it was found that in order to rectify the matter money must be reimbursed, further testimony to the fact that **wind farms do affect the monetary value of a property.**

- A vender in mid – Wales has suggested a probable **25% reduction** in house value caused by a proposed wind farm.

*Remax E.A 2005*

For further insight into the effect that wind farms have on house prices please visit the *Country Guardian* website. Here you will find (under *Property values and House prices*) a collection of letters from Estate agents to clients. The letters report on sales that have fallen through when the potential buyer has received news that a wind farm is proposed near by. In one case the Estate agents actually is informing the client that they are taking the property off the market. I believe this is a clear indicator of the irrevocable damage a wind farm will inflict on the value of any residential property in close proximity.