

SMALL WIND FACTSHEETS



Do Small Wind Systems Kill Birds?

Birds can and do collide with a wide variety of man-made structures, from cars to lighted television or cellular phone towers to windows. Structures such as smokestacks, power lines, and radio and television towers have been associated with far larger numbers of bird kills than have wind farms. Other sources of bird fatalities, such as motor vehicles and pollution, are responsible for a much higher proportion of total bird deaths. Even cats (domestic and feral) account for an estimated 100 million bird deaths per year.¹

Most of the reports of birds being killed or injured by wind turbines come from the Altamont Pass in California, one of the largest developed wind resource areas in the world. Altamont Pass has thousands of large, industrial-scale wind turbines, and is also habitat for Golden Eagles and other protected species.

By contrast, reports of residential-scale wind turbines killing birds are very rare. Statistically, a sliding glass door is a greater threat to birds than a small, unlighted wind turbine. (The Federal Aviation Administration does not require lighting on towers less than 200 feet tall.)

References

1. National Wind Coordinating Committee (NWCC), *Permitting of Wind Energy Facilities: A Handbook, 2nd ed., scheduled for publication in 2002.*

Other Fact Sheets Available on Small Wind Energy:

- What is Small Wind?
- How Much Noise Do Small Wind Turbines Make?
- What About Visual Impact?
- Small Wind Systems and Public Safety
- How Do Small Wind Systems Affect Property Values?



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