

8 March, 2007

Patrick F. Noonan
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The Conservation Fund
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Dear Pat,

Thank you for taking your time earlier this week to discuss the serious conservation issue of bird mortality at communication towers and wind turbines.

As you know, up to 50 million birds die at more than 100,000 lighted towers across the country each year, and the number of towers is growing rapidly. The vast majority of collisions occur as night-migrating songbirds are attracted in large flocks to the aviation safety lights on towers. The lights interfere with the birds' celestial navigation cues, particularly during poor visibility conditions such as rain and fog. Confused, the birds fly around the towers repeatedly, crashing into the towers and their guy wires. Though wind turbines pose a much lesser threat, the anticipated proliferation of wind farms is also worthy of serious consideration to minimize their impact through considered siting.

In our 2000 report on tower collisions, ABC documented 230 species of birds that are killed in this manner, including many of conservation concern such as the Blackpoll Warbler, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. As many as 10,000 dead birds have been found under individual communication towers in a single night

Since 1998, ABC has been leading efforts by the conservation community to resolve the unnecessary deaths of millions of migratory birds due to these collisions. In October 2006, 66 major national and regional conservation and ornithological organizations joined ABC in sending a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioners requesting action to stop these bird deaths.

ABC continues to educate the FCC, the Federal Aviation Administration, and Members of Congress on this issue, and is currently leading several other national conservation organizations in direct negotiations with the wireless and broadcast communications industry to develop a 'best practices agreement' that would enhance the continued build-out of telecommunication services without adversely impacting migratory birds.

Unfortunately, while ABC has been successful in persuading the FCC to issue a 'Notice of Proposed Rulemaking' on the tower issue, no changes have been made to date by the FCC or the industry to better protect migratory birds.

ABC has the data, the partners, and most important, the winning solutions to these issues. Again, thank you for your advice and consideration on this issue. I look forward to working with you and The Conservation Fund to significantly reduce this cause of bird mortality.

Sincerely,

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