

# Maine Audubon Wind Power Siting Guidelines



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MAINE   
AUDUBON

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**MAINE AUDUBON** works to conserve Maine's wildlife and wildlife habitat by engaging people of all ages in education, conservation and action.

## MAINE CAN HAVE WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY WIND POWER

RECOGNIZING THAT PROPERLY SITED wind-power projects can become a long-term clean energy solution in Maine, Maine Audubon formed a group in 2005 to look at ways to streamline the state's wind-power approval process. With input from energy developers, environmental advocates, and representatives of state and federal agencies, we have produced a set of guidelines that identify types of sites that have a high potential for being turned down in the permitting process because of adverse wildlife impacts.

### GUIDELINES CAN ASSIST POLICY MAKERS AND PROTECT WILDLIFE

WITH THE GROWING MARKET for wind power, Maine needs standards in place that help protect wildlife. But Maine's regulatory bodies don't have those standards.

The Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine, formed in 2007, is addressing this need.

Maine Audubon is represented on the task force by Maine Audubon wildlife ecologist Jody Jones, who has submitted the siting guidelines to the task force so that the state can consider them when making policies.

Maine Audubon also is making the guidelines available to wind-power developers, to assist them in choosing appropriate sites for turbines in Maine.



*"We hope state regulators adopt these guidelines and that wind-power developers use them to avoid project sites that threaten high-value wildlife habitat."*

MAINE AUDUBON ECOLOGIST JODY JONES

### THE GUIDELINES IDENTIFY:

**IMPORTANT WILDLIFE THEMES FOR CONSIDERATION:** unique natural communities, large blocks of undeveloped habitat, significant wildlife habitat, endangered, threatened and special concern species, and bird and bat migration;

**POTENTIAL CONFLICTS WITH WIND POWER,** for each wildlife theme;

**CRITERIA FOR SITES WITH HIGH LIKELIHOOD OF PROJECT DENIAL:** areas with high potential for unreasonable adverse impact on wildlife;

**WHAT WIND POWER DEVELOPERS SHOULD RESEARCH:** state and federal agency wildlife studies, maps, and programs to consult, and site surveys to perform before choosing a site; and

**DATA GAPS:** information and studies that are still needed to help make responsible wind power decisions for Maine's wildlife.



## MAINE AUDUBON WIND POWER SITING GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

WILDLIFE THEMES	DESCRIPTION	SIGNIFICANCE	POTENTIAL CONFLICTS WITH WIND POWER DEVELOPMENT	AREAS WITH SUBSTANTIAL LIKELIHOOD OF PROJECT DENIAL
<i>Unique natural communities</i>	Rare natural communities or examples of common communities in outstanding condition.	Wildlife or plants in these habitats are specialized.	Forest clearing, road construction, habitat fragmentation. Erosion, especially on alpine and sub-alpine environments, is a significant concern.	Communities identified as exemplary or imperiled, either statewide or globally, by the Maine Natural Areas Program.
<i>Large blocks of undeveloped habitat</i>	Areas of high conservation value including areas identified by state's Beginning with Habitat program, and LURC areas with 5,000 or more acres of forested land, low road density and mostly mature or semi-mature forest.	Certain wildlife, like pine marten, are dependent on large blocks of mature forest, and others, like upland sandpipers, on large grasslands.	Large undeveloped blocks are less common in southern and central Maine. Cumulative impacts to large blocks in Northern Maine could become a problem. Due to steep slopes, undeveloped blocks at higher elevations are less prone to fragmentation.	Focus Areas of the state conservation program Beginning with Habitat, and Land Use Regulation Commission unfragmented areas.
<i>Significant wildlife habitat</i>	Land and water areas critical for the survival of populations of certain native fish or wildlife.	Some species require these specialized habitats for one or all of their life stages.	Habitat loss and fragmentation, mortality from roads, and damage to unique vegetation from erosion in alpine and sub-alpine areas.	Areas identified by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) as high or moderate value significant wildlife habitat.
<i>Endangered or threatened animals and species of special concern</i>	Habitats associated with specific species formally designated as at risk of extinction or in serious decline.	Species depend on these habitats—that are typically rare or in decline—for their continued existence.	Collisions for bird and bat species, and habitat destruction due to road building or vegetation clearing.	Areas with presence of at-risk species, and Essential Habitats, as identified by DIFW, for endangered or threatened species.
<i>Bird and bat migration</i>	Migratory concentrations of native birds and bats.	Variability in mortality associated with wind power sites indicates the need to site facilities away from migratory concentrations.	Some migratory animals are at risk from collisions at wind power sites since they travel at night using wind currents; migrating bats have low reproductive rates and unique risks associated with wind power; some nocturnal migrants are facing significant declines which cumulative impacts could exacerbate.	More data needed to make a determination on any given site; pre- and post-construction studies may be needed.

\*This table is a summary of the guidelines. For the full text, e-mail [conserve@maineaudubon.org](mailto:conserve@maineaudubon.org) or call (207) 781-2330, ext. 222.