

7th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brussels, Belgium, 15 – 17 September 2014

Draft Resolution 7.5

Wind Turbines and Bat Populations



The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter “the Agreement”),

Noting the importance that wind energy has in the implementation of the Kyoto protocol to reduce CO₂ emissions in the context of combatting climate change;

Recalling Resolution 2.2 on Consistent Monitoring Methodologies, which recommends the adoption of consistent monitoring methods for bats across Europe;

Recalling the Conservation and Management Plan of the Agreement, which recognises the importance of international information exchange and cooperation in developing monitoring strategies for bats;

Recalling further the Agreement Conservation and Management Plans, which recognise the conservation of bat habitats in all cases of land management and development especially when foraging areas or commuting routes are affected;

Recalling CMS Resolution 7.5 on Wind Turbines and Migratory Species, which calls upon the Parties of the Convention, to implement proper impact assessments of wind turbines on migratory species, to assess the cumulative environmental impacts of installed wind turbines on these species and to take full account of the precautionary principle in the development of wind turbine plants;

Recalling the Council Directive No. 2011/92/EU on the assessment on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment and the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2001/42/EC of June 27 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, both of which state that the scope of information required for the purposes of impact assessments should be consistent with the current state of knowledge and methods of such assessments;

Recalling the EU guidance document on Wind Energy development and Natura 2000 (2010);

Noting the growing scientific evidence of bat fatalities at wind turbines and the predicted negative consequences for populations of resident and migratory bat species;

Recognising that several bat species forage and migrate offshore and that as a result offshore wind farms may negatively affect bat populations;

Taking into account the cumulative environmental impact of the renewable energy sector through the increasing number and size of wind turbines;

Noting the work of the Advisory Committee in revising Guidelines for the planning process, monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of wind turbines on bats;

Recognising the importance of standardised methods to be able to develop effective avoidance and mitigation measures, as well as statistically robust ways to evaluate mortality rates and their impact on bat populations;

Noting that the use of blade feathering¹, higher turbine cut-in wind speed² and shutting down turbines are the only mitigation measures which so far proved to be effective in reducing bat mortality at wind turbines;

Recognising also the necessity of implementing research and monitoring;

Urges Parties and Range States, if not already done so, to:

1. Take into account the impacts that onshore and offshore wind turbines have on bat populations at different geographical scales;
2. Raise awareness and take into account that some habitats and areas are unsuitable for the construction of wind turbines where a major impact on bats is predicted;
3. Recommend that developers of wind energy plants become involved in research on the best methods for mitigating bat mortality at turbines for mutual benefit.
4. Promote continued dialogue between all stakeholders in the search for best practice to avoid or minimise the impact of wind energy generation on bat populations;
5. Ensure that pre-construction strategic and environmental impact assessment procedures and post-construction monitoring, including mortality rates derived from carcass surveys, are undertaken and that the data are made available for independent scientific analysis;
6. Develop and ensure implementation of national guidance following the most recent version of the EUROBATS Advisory Committee generic Guidelines annexed to the Resolution;

7. Use blade feathering, higher turbine cut-in wind speeds and shutting down turbines temporarily to reduce or avoid bat mortality respectively.

Requests the Advisory Committee to:

1. Keep the generic guidelines updated;
2. Continue to compile relevant information, including methods to assess the impact of wind power generation on bat populations.

Decides to repeal Resolution 6.11.

1 – blade feathering means preventing turbines from freewheeling or only spin at very low rpms, generally less than 1 rpm.

2 – Cut-in speed is the minimum wind speed at which the wind turbine will generate usable power.