



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Feb. 5, 2012

## Wind farms to wipe out California Condor

### Kern County blinded by greed

**Save the Eagles International (STEI)** issues a biodiversity warning concerning the California Condor. Having spent tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to recuperate the species, politicians are now allowing its habitat to be invaded by hundreds of wind turbines, of the kind that are killing 2,000 vultures a year in Spain (1). But if Spain has a population of 40,000 vultures, there are only 400 California condors, most of them likely to have close encounters with Kern County's projected wind turbines at some point in their long lives - unless the birds are kept captive, as many presently are. **The North-American Platform against Windpower (NA-PAW)** and the **World Council for Nature (WCFN)** hereby join STEI in this warning.

As reported by Forbes Magazine last month, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologists have alerted Kern County officials to the fact that most of the wind projects on their drawing board, as well as at least one existing wind farm, are a threat to the Condor. “The service requests that the county of Kern exercise extreme caution in developing wind energy within the Tehachapi area **because it falls within the range of the California condor**,” has warned senior biologist Raymond Bransfield (2). But county officials are now poised to approve lethal wind turbines where condors fly. Humans are not treated differently: health and other adverse effects on local residents are also being overridden to meet Sacramento’s green energy targets.

“Condors can travel **200 miles in a day**”, said Jesse Grantham, the California condor coordinator for the Fish & Wildlife Service, “as the bird forages for food or takes a road trip on a whim to satisfy its curiosity. The condor has evolved to be **attracted to novel objects and activity** as it must constantly scour vast landscapes for its dinner” (2). Adds Mark Duchamp, president of STEI: “in view of this, it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to predict they will be attracted to wind turbines, and die in their arms as do golden eagles. Dead birds under the turbines will be another fatal attraction.

**Vultures and other raptors do perch on wind turbines**, even when the blades are moving claims Duchamp: “we have pictures and a video documenting the fact. Condors will be likely to perch as well, and accidents will inevitably happen. Even if they did not attempt to perch, they are likely to get struck while looking down for food: a world-famous video shows a griffon vulture being hit by a blade while circling above a wind farm in Greece.” (3)

The Fish & Wildlife Service has opposed many projects in Kern County, **but county officials deny that condors fly where FWS biologists say they do**. Through denial of expert advice, they have given the green light to dangerous projects. Forbes Magazine gives the Catalina wind farm as an example: “We do not agree with your conclusion that California condors are ‘absent’ from the project area,” wrote Diane K. Noda, a field supervisor, in a letter to the county” (2). Yet the project was approved, and others just as nefarious, not to speak of a mega power line across condor habitat, laments Save the Eagles International. Last October the Sierra Club and two other environmental groups sued Kern County over its approval of a 300-megawatt NextEra Energy Resources wind farm that state and federal officials warn poses a high risk to condors (2).

Duchamp warns that golden eagles too are at risk in Kern County, as many wind turbines will be placed in their breeding ranges and dispersion areas, the latter being hunting grounds shared by young eagles, like Altamont Pass in Northern California. “The cumulative effect on California’s golden eagle population will be disastrous”, he says.

When asked how come no condor deaths have ever been reported at the existing Tehachapi wind farm, Mark is quick to reply: “the fact that none were reported does not mean that none have been killed. It is no secret that, in the wind business, some employees are making embarrassing evidence disappear. Even the renowned **Spanish Ornithological Society** recognized the fact.” (4)

### **Contacts:**

Mark Duchamp  
President, STEI  
[save.the.eagles@gmail.com](mailto:save.the.eagles@gmail.com)  
tel: +34 693 643 736  
[www.savetheeaglesinternational.org](http://www.savetheeaglesinternational.org)  
Chairman  
World Council for Nature  
[www.wcfn.org](http://www.wcfn.org)

Sherri Lange tel: 1 - 416-567-5115  
CEO, NA-PAW  
[kodaisl@rogers.com](mailto:kodaisl@rogers.com)  
[na-paw.org](http://na-paw.org)

Jim Wiegand  
Vice President STEI, United States  
[jim@jimwiegand.com](mailto:jim@jimwiegand.com)  
[www.savetheeaglesinternational.org](http://www.savetheeaglesinternational.org)

### **References:**

(1) – An estimated 2,000 vultures are killed annually by wind turbines in Spain.  
[www.iberica2000.org/Es/Articulo.asp?Id=2968](http://www.iberica2000.org/Es/Articulo.asp?Id=2968)

(2) – **Forbes Magazine**, January 16, 2012, "Wind VS. Bird".  
<http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2012/0116/feature-mark-tholke-wind-farm-california-tehachapi-mountains.html>

Among other quotes: “**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologists**, meanwhile, have told county officials and developers that most of the multibillion-dollar projects on the drawing board, as well as at least one existing wind farm, threaten the condor, according to **agency records FORBES obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request.**”

(3) – **Video** of a turkey vulture perched on a moving turbine:

<http://www.epaw.org/multimedia.php?lang=en&article=b3>

- **Video** of a griffon vulture struck as it circles:

<http://www.epaw.org/multimedia.php?lang=en&article=b2>

- **Pictures** of birds of prey perched on wind turbines: attached

(4) - **The Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO/Birdlife)** wrote (translation): we were able to verify the occulting of bird carcasses by wind farm employees, who perhaps thought that their jobs depended upon the number of birds being killed in their wind farms, and that behaviour reduces the mortality rate shown in monitoring studies.

Original in Spanish: "Se ha podido comprobar la ocultación de cadáveres por parte de trabajadores de los parques eólicos, tal vez pensando que su puesto de trabajo dependa de las aves que mueren en el parque, disminuyendo la tasa de mortalidad obtenida en los planes de vigilancia". [http://www.seo.org/media/docs/Manual\\_molinos.pdf](http://www.seo.org/media/docs/Manual_molinos.pdf) see page 11 – 2