

Wind Turbines Kill More Birds Than BP Oil Spill

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It's been five years since BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded and released 5 million barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Environmentalists are highlighting the disaster by pointing to the 800,000 birds that have died because of the spill in the five years since the disaster, but activists have been eerily silent about the fact that way more birds have been killed by wind turbines — a supposedly “eco-friendly” energy source.

The liberal blog Mother Jones [reports](#) that 800,000 birds have been killed and the Pelican population in the Gulf has decreased 12 percent. While the 2010 Gulf spill was indeed a horrible disaster, the number of birds that died pales in comparison the number killed in the last five years due to wind turbines.

A 2013 [study](#) found that 573,000 birds and 888,000 bats are killed every year by wind turbines — a figure 30 percent higher than the federal government estimated in 2009. These deaths have likely increased as wind power capacity increases across the country.

“I estimated 888,000 bat and 573,000 bird fatalities/year (including 83,000 raptor fatalities) at 51,630 megawatt (MW) of installed wind-energy capacity in the United States in 2012,” [writes](#) K. Shawn Smallwood, author of the study that was published in the Wildlife Society Bulletin.

Since then, U.S. companies have only installed more wind power thanks to a now-expired tax credit for wind energy. The American Wind Energy

Association said there was nearly 66 gigawatts of installed wind capacity in the U.S. as of 2014 — 17 times higher than wind capacity in 2001.

“As wind energy continues to expand, there is urgent need to improve fatality monitoring methods, especially in the implementation of detection trials, which should be more realistically incorporated into routine monitoring,” Smallwood reported in 2013.

In the time since the 2010 BP oil spill, some 2.9 million birds have been killed by wind turbines, using Smallwood’s figures, compared to only 800,000 that have been killed by the oil spill — the oil spill deaths are based on figures compiled by the news site Climate Desk. It should also be noted that wind turbines routinely kill federally protected birds and eagles.

It’s not exactly clear if 800,000 bird deaths can be attributed directly to the BP spill. In the six months after the spill, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [collected](#) “more than 7,000 birds ... in the spill area, of which nearly 3,000 (about 40%) showed visible signs of oiling.”

How many of these birds died? The last FWS [report](#), from May 12, 2011, shows that more than 7,500 birds that were recovered were dead or died shortly after being found — this figure includes birds that had no visible signs of oil on them.

Either way, far more birds have been killed by wind turbines than by the BP oil spill.

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