



The Western Section of The Wildlife Society and Wildlife Research Institute

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Symposium
Sponsors



February 8 – 03:40-03:55 pm Session: Department of Interior Eagle Session

Wind Energy Compliance with the Eagle Act in the Mojave Desert

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Implementation of new regulations and protocol standards for protection of golden eagles is not easy. Bureaucratic policy as well as golden eagle biology in the Mojave Desert confound the decision making process. Territory size is large, occupancy is sporadic, nesting success varies, and most eagles have a large number of alternate nest sites. BLM records go back over fifty years for many nest sites; most are still present today. Approximately 150 territories are known. Seventy wind energy developments are proposed in the California Desert, none have been approved. None of the proposals are farther than ten miles from a golden eagle nest, and some are within one-half mile. In the western Mojave, occupancy of 27 known territories in a three-year period ranged from 22%-59%, and nest success varied from 4-16%. Two closely monitored territories contained 9 and 14 alternate nest sites. Permitting is based on proximity to nesting territories, but absence of nesting in one year does not equate to a safe wind energy project. Wintering use of the desert by northern-nesting golden eagles is undefined. No distinct migratory pathways have been identified in the southern portion of the golden eagle's range. The BLM and FWS are operating without adequate knowledge to make definitive conclusions on population impacts to the golden eagle in the Mojave Desert.

*** NOTE: PowerPoint not posted online per author request**

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