

# News and Comment

## Upcoming Meetings and Workshops

### American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting

The 146<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society to be held 21–25 August 2016 at the Sheraton Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri. The theme of the conference is: ‘Fisheries Conservation and Management: Making Connections and Building Partnerships’. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://2016.fisheries.org/>.

### 2016 Moose Conference and Workshop

The 2016 Moose Conference and Workshop to be held 6–10 September 2016 at the Victoria Inn Hotel and Conference Centre, Brandon, Manitoba. The theme of the conference is: ‘21st Century Moose Management and Human Dimensions’. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://mwf.mb.ca/2016MooseConference/>.

### 2016 XXV International Congress of Entomology

The 2016 XXV International Congress of Entomology, hosted by the Entomological Society of America, to be held 25–30 September 2016 in Orlando, Florida. The theme of the conference is: ‘Entomology without Borders’. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://ice2016orlando.org/>.

### The Wildlife Society’s 2016 Annual Conference

The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference of the Wildlife Society to be held 15–19 October 2016 at the Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, North Carolina. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://www.twsconference.org/>.

### 2016 Raptor Research Foundation Conference

The 2016 Raptor Research Foundation Conference, hosted by the New Jersey Audubon Society’s Cape May Bird Observatory and the Cape May Raptor Banding Project, to be held 16–20 October 2016 at the Grand Hotel, Cape May, New Jersey. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference/>.

### Student Conference on Conservation Science – New York (SCCS-NY)

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual Student Conference on Conservation Science – New York to be held 20–22 October 2016 at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York. Registration is currently open. More information is available at <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/center-for-biodiversity-conservation/convening-and-connecting/conferences-and-symposia/2016-sccs-ny>.

## Ontario’s Environmental Review Tribunal upholds the decision to halt the Ostrander Wind Farm Project on the grounds of serious and irreversible harm to the Blanding’s Turtle

Last year we reported on the landmark decision to halt the Ostrander Wind Farm Project on the grounds that the project would cause serious and irreversible harm to a threatened wildlife species: the Blanding’s Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*). This was the first time that a renewable energy project, approved under the *Ontario Green Energy Act* and *Environmental Protection Act*, was stopped because it could endanger an at-risk species (Canadian Field-Naturalist 129: page 214). The Ostrander Wind Farm Project was initially halted in July 2013, when its Renewable Energy Approval was revoked by the Environmental Review Tribunal. In February 2014, the Divisional Court set aside the Tribunal’s decision, and reinstated the Renewable Energy Approval. The Ostrander Wind Farm Project was halted again in April 2015, when the Court of Appeal for Ontario restored the Tribunal’s decision.

However, this is not the end of the story. The decision to halt the Ostrander Wind Farm Project was fur-

ther reviewed by the Environmental Review Tribunal from September 2, 2015 to January 15, 2016. The Prince Edward County Field Naturalists continued to oppose this project, with support from the Prince Edward County South Shore Conservancy, while the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and Ostrander Point GP Inc. wanted the Renewable Energy Approval reinstated. Among other items, the Tribunal reviewed Ostrander’s proposed measures to mitigate the project’s impact on the Blanding’s Turtle population found at the intended wind farm site, which focused on reducing mortality associated with development of access roads as part of the wind farm infrastructure. There were two sets of road mitigation measures proposed: (1) measures to keep turtles off the road, including exclusionary fencing, underground passages at high-frequency crossing locations, and creation of artificial nesting sites to discourage use of roads for nesting and (2) measures to limit traffic on these roads, through an ‘Access Road

Control Plan' that would prevent public vehicles from using the access roads. The Tribunal found these measures to be insufficient to mitigate the negative effects of road mortality on the resident Blanding's Turtle population.

The Tribunal issued its decision to revoke the Renewable Energy Approval for the Ostrander Point Wind Farm on June 06, 2016. Interestingly, this decision to halt the Ostrander Point Wind Farm falls in line with the goal of the recently proposed Recovery Strategy for the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence population of the Blanding's Turtle: to reverse the population's decline by addressing threats to it. Both land conversion for development and road networks have been identified as significant threats to the Blanding's Turtle, and thus managing threats from these sources has been ranked as high concern. Additionally, this decision provides precedent for

future renewable energy projects, suggesting that companies must seriously consider the potential risks their projects pose for wildlife species. The benefits of renewable energy generation do not take precedence over other environmental concerns, including wildlife protection.

Article based on information obtained in:

**Environment Canada.** 2016. Recovery Strategy for the Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), Great Lakes/St. Lawrence population, in Canada [Proposed]. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

**Environmental Review Tribunal.** 2016. Prince Edward County Field Naturalists v. Ontario (Environment and Climate Change). Case No. 13-003. Accessed 16 June 2016. <http://elto.gov.on.ca/ert/decisions-orders/>.