

Contents

SUMMARY	1
1 INTRODUCTION	10
Generating Electricity from Wind Energy	10
The Present Study	14
Developing an Analytical Framework	15
Temporal and Spatial Scales of Analysis	16
Understanding and Assessing Cumulative Environmental Effects	17
Organization of the Report	18
2 CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS OF WIND-POWERED ELECTRICITY GENERATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE MID-ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS	20
Estimating the Environmental Benefits of Generating Electricity from Wind Energy	20
Wind Energy Globally	28
Quantifying Wind-Energy Benefits in the United States and the Mid-Atlantic Highlands	29
Conclusions	46
3 ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF WIND-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT	48
Chapter Overview	48
Introduction	49
Bird Deaths in Context	50
Turbines Cause Fatalities to Birds and Bats	51
Bird and Bat Fatalities	52
Wind-Energy Projects Alter Ecosystem Structure	72
Projected Cumulative Impacts of Bird and Bat Fatalities: A Working Hypothesis	85
Conclusions and Recommendations	90
4 IMPACTS OF WIND-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON HUMANS	97
Introduction	97
Aesthetic Impacts	98
Cultural Impacts	106
Impacts on Human Health and Well-Being	108
Local Economic and Fiscal Impacts	112
Electromagnetic Interference	117
Conclusions and Recommendations	120
5 PLANNING FOR AND REGULATING WIND-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT	125
Guidelines for Wind-Energy Planning and Regulation	126
Regulation of Wind-Energy Development	132

Contents

Framework for Reviewing Wind-Energy Proposals.....	144
Conclusions and Recommendations	147
REFERENCES	150
APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE AUTHORS	150
APPENDIX B: EMISSION RATES FOR ELECTRICAL GENERATION.....	155
APPENDIX C: METHODS AND METRICS FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES	158
APPENDIX D: A VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSEMENT PROCESS FOR EVALUATING WIND-ENERGY PROJECTS.....	207

Environmental Impacts of Wind-Energy Projects

