

A NEW APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT OF BIRD CARCASS REMOVAL (SCAVENGING) TIME ON WIND FARM IN EGYPT

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ABSTRACT

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Wind farms developing rapidly in order to meet the high demand for energy from green sources. However, the impact of wind farm operation on the environment still needs to be established. The risk to wild birds is drawing the attention of stakeholders and bird conservation organizations. Carcass search is the main method used to assess the impact of wind farm operation on wild birds of various systematic groups and sizes. Assessment of the overall risk that wind farms pose to birds depends primarily on accurate calculation of carcass removal times and the detection ability of the searcher.

Most studies have assessed the carcass removal time using pet bird species, pigeons, or various local birds. In Egypt, all studies conducted in operating wind farms up to 2016 had used chickens to assess the carcass removal time and in this way to the estimate the total number of bird fatalities within wind farms.

The use of birds killed by a wind farm in carcass removal trials provides the actual time of carcass disappearance, in contrast with the use of other bird species. The removal times of carcasses of parakeets, quails, partridges and chickens were shorter than those of carcasses of White Stork, White Pelican, Honey Buzzard, Black Kites and eagles used in the current study and in another study in Australia.

The results of the present study indicate that carcasses of birds killed within the studied wind farm remain for two to three months, while the carcasses of other species in other localities remain no more than 1 to 15 days, which unquestionably influences the calculation of total fatalities and leads to overestimation of the overall risk that wind farms for birds.

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