



Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>

Help with apparent misinformation in PolitiFact fact check?

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
To: djenkins@conservativestewards.org

Mon, Aug 23, 2021 at 1:47 PM

Dear David Jenkins,

I am an independent fact checker, trying to keep fact checkers accountable.

I am writing about your role in a deeply flawed PolitiFact fact check from [Aug. 17, 2021](#). PolitiFact juxtaposes a quotation from you with backing material that very poorly (if at all) backs what you said.

Here's the passage:

"It is wrong to single out solar and wind (power) as having bird mortality issues," said David Jenkins, president of Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship. "The estimated number of birds killed by fossil fuel power plants through collisions, electrocution and poisoning actually dwarfs those attributed to solar and wind."

A 2016 [study](#) found that solar power plants cause 37,800 to 138,600 annual avian deaths in the U.S., compared with 14.5 million attributed to fossil fuel power plants.

The 2016 study PolitiFact references actually gets its estimate of avian mortality attributed to fossil fuel power plants from [a 2009 paper by Benjamin Sovacool](#). The great bulk (over 96 percent) of Sovacool's annual avian fatalities are attributed to the future effects of climate change, not "collisions, electrocution and poisoning."

(See figure 3 as well as footnote No. 6)

Of course it's not your fault that PolitiFact backed your statement inappropriately (making it look to readers like the 14.5 million bird deaths came from collisions, electrocutions and poisoning).

As I am writing up an article explaining the provenance of Sovacool's annual avian death estimates--the media struggle to report them with adequate context--I would like to obtain your comment as well as any source you would name that properly supports the claim PolitiFact used from you.

Thanks!

Please be advised that the Zebra Fact Check approach to fact-checking strongly emphasizes transparency. I will [make available](#) to readers the text of my inquiry (minus salutations) as well as your full reply (minus salutations and the like). I often publish the outreach regardless of whether it garners a reply.

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Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
editor
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