

Osprey and NB Power

Usually birds can interact with utility poles without any harm coming to them, but there is always a risk of the birds coming in contact with the energized equipment- this can be dangerous for both the birds and our equipment, as it can cause harm to the birds and cause power outages for our customers. When possible, NB Power removes the sticks dropped on poles before the nest is constructed to encourage nest building in a safer location.



What NB Power is doing to protect birds

NB Power has developed an Avian Protection Plan for mitigating migratory birds, including osprey.

When active osprey nests are encountered on structures and/or poles, the first action is to determine if the nest poses an immediate threat to the reliability of the system. If this is the case, NB Power notifies the Biologist at Natural Resources and Energy Development before any steps are taken to move nests.

Every attempt is made to avoid disturbing or destroying an active osprey nest during the nesting season. Training is provided to field staff on the osprey nest procedure.

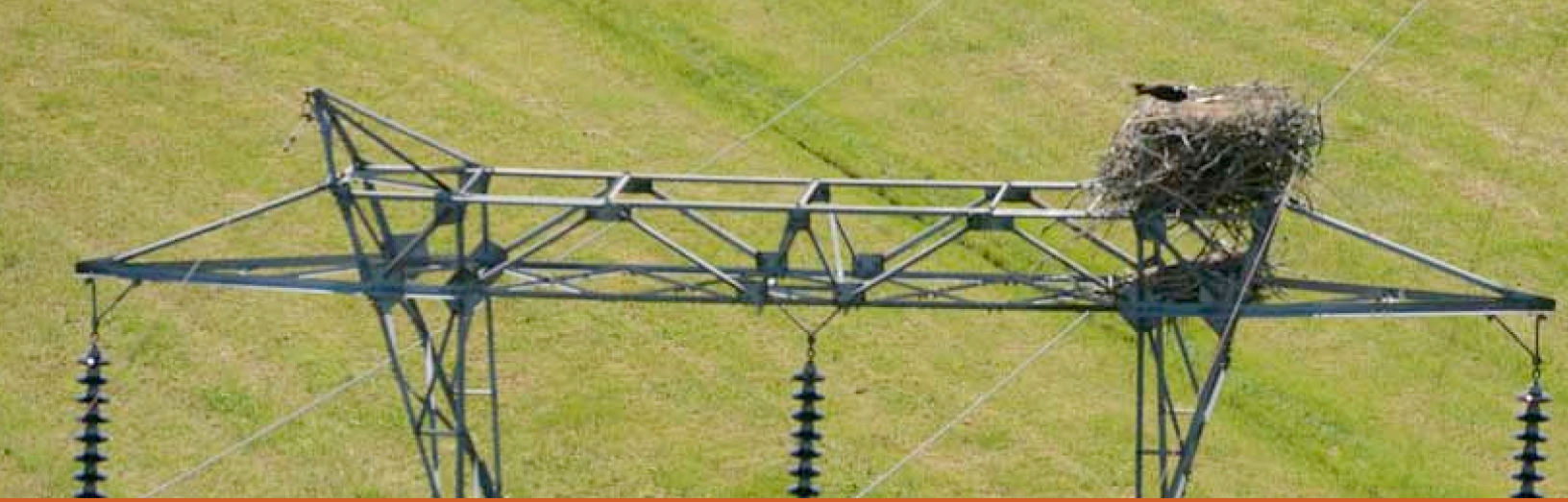
Status

Osprey is a locally common bird in New Brunswick. Like all birds of prey in New Brunswick, the osprey is protected.

In the 80's, NB Power and Department of Natural Resources (now NRED) signed a Corporate Stewardship Agreement to trim osprey nests and/or relocate "problem" nests to platforms.

Today, over 300 active nests are found on the electrical system or on platforms installed by NB Power.

NB Power continues to work closely with Natural Resources and Energy Development when situations arise where an active nest must be relocated due to safety or reliability concerns.



Facts about Osprey¹

Nest Description

Osprey nests are built of sticks and lined with bark, sod, grasses, vines, algae or marine debris.

The male usually fetches most of the nesting material and the female arranges it.

After generations of adding to the nest year after year, osprey can end up with nests 3 to 4 meters (10 to 13 feet) deep and 1 to 2 meters (3–6 feet) in diameter (easily big enough for a human to sit in).

Nest Placement

Osprey require nest sites in open surroundings for easy approach, with a wide, sturdy base and safety from ground predators such as raccoons.

Nests are usually built on treetops, crotches between large branches/trunks or other structures such as power poles or towers.

Usually the male finds the site before the female arrives.

Habitat and Biology

Osprey have a preference for rivers, lakes and coastal bays, where they feed on a variety of fish.

On rare occasions, osprey have also been recorded preying on small mammals, birds and snakes.

By mid-May, osprey have laid their two, or occasionally three, buffy white and brown blotched eggs.

Incubation lasts about 35 days, and by mid-August most young are on the wing.

Young osprey still depend on their parents for food for at least 10 to 20 days following first flight.

Juvenile osprey remain south for two or three years, after which they will have reached sexual maturity and will fly north to breeding areas such as New Brunswick.

Migration

Osprey are migratory. In the spring, osprey first return to New Brunswick in mid-April (April 15th), appearing first in Charlotte County and along the lower St. John River. Gradually, birds move up the Saint John River valley and along the coast. Within about a week, osprey start to appear in central New Brunswick and in about 10 days in the eastern counties.

On the North Shore, birds sometimes arrive in advance of those in the central and western parts of the province. This may be because they migrate on a broad front, entering New Brunswick in the north and inland as well as along the coast.

Most osprey have left New Brunswick by the end of September, but stragglers may remain into October or November, or even December.

Questions

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding Osprey, please contact Angie Wilhelm at awilhelm@nbpower.com

¹ Reference: Chickadee Notes – A Series on the Natural History of New Brunswick No 3. A Publication of the New Brunswick Museum, 277 Douglas Avenue, Saint John, NB