



Osprey Nest Platform Installation and Monitoring



Project Status

Project Year: 2018

Status: Ongoing **Category:** Migratory Bird

Location: Terrebonne Parish

Project Partners: Apache Louisiana Minerals and Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation

Background and Problem Addressed:

The Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*, formerly known as the “fish hawk”, is one of the most widely distributed birds in the world and its preference for fish makes it a top predator within aquatic systems. Ospreys feed almost exclusively on fish throughout their entire life cycle and therefore are an excellent indicator species that can be used to monitor habitat conditions, fish populations, and the overall health of our estuaries.

Osprey populations in the 1950s and 1960s suffered from the negative effects of the pesticide DDT. After DDT was banned in the U.S. in 1972, populations rebounded; however there are still many risks this unique bird of prey must face in their daily lives. Contamination in rivers, bayous, and lakes; habitat loss; and electrocution from attempting to nest on utility poles are some of the challenges the species face today throughout its range.

Ospreys are patchily distributed throughout much of the United States. Louisiana’s aquatic ecosystems provide important wintering and breeding habitat for the species. They have increased dramatically as a breeding bird in Louisiana, especially in southeast Louisiana and along some of the larger rivers and inland reservoirs. The 2015 Louisiana Wildlife Action Plan lists the Osprey as a “Species of Greatest



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Conservation Need.” The plan states nest platform structures for Osprey can provide important nesting habitat improvements to increase the species nest success. Ospreys living near coastal areas can have a difficult time finding suitable nest sites and often use man-made structures not intended for nesting such as oil and gas structures or electric utility poles.



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Project Description:

In February 2018, BTNEP, in partnership with Apache Louisiana Minerals and the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation (BTEF) installed ten nest platform structures for Osprey to increase suitable nesting sites within Apache Louisiana Minerals owned land located in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana. BTNEP and Apache are partnering together to monitor the nest platforms to determine usage and productivity throughout the breeding season. The main goals of this project are to construct and install suitable nesting platforms for Osprey to successfully raise their young and to increase awareness and stewardship of the species and the habitats they depend on to complete their life cycle.

BTNEP and its partners support conservation measures that maximize available natural habitats that maintain healthy populations of migratory and resident birds across the Barataria Terrebonne estuarine system. BTNEP strives to educate the public about bird issues, monitor bird populations, and encourage private, corporate, and government landowners to protect critical areas and manage land under their care in such a way as to maximize its suitability as habitat for migratory and resident birds. Setting up a nesting box or platform can provide an essential nesting area for many species of birds.

CCMP Action Items Addressed:

Protection of Habitat for Migratory and Resident Birds (Ecological Management #15)

