

2010 Nest Monitoring Report

2010 was a good year for Ospreys and for Georgian Bay Osprey nest monitoring. We received reports on 77 sites, up from 73 reported last year. 50 sites were occupied this year, an 8% increase. Those nests produced 65 chicks, and 56 of the young survived and matured to leave the nest in late July and August. These numbers are all somewhat better than the 15 year average.

Nest site occupancy was 65 %, that is, out of 77 nest locations monitored, Ospreys used 50 for mating, nest building and incubation of eggs. The others remained empty or were used as perches or for occasional visits. Our newly installed replacement pole in Tiny Marsh was an immediate success with adults adding sticks in the first week in April and two feisty young birds were seen feeding in July. Both young fledged and the success was reported in all the local papers.

Some traditionally productive areas such as the West Coast of Parry Island (Tranquility Shoal) and another near Delos Island lacked nesting platforms this year. Happily, through the efforts of Jim Badger and Ontario Hydro, a new pole was installed late in the season in the Amanda/ Delos area and we are hopeful for the return of the Osprey next year.

In September, a new pole and platform was installed in Matchedash Bay at the southern end of the Bay near Waubashene. This pole and platform was a partnership of GBOS with MTM Conservation, and their representative, Dan Middleton will be monitoring the results next year. We are also hoping for a new platform in the productive Honey Harbour area in partnership with the Oak Bay Golf club.

Over all, Georgian Bay had very good occupancy percentages. For those who watched a nest site with “no takers”, we extend our hopes for better luck next year. Thank you for reporting, as it provides continuity in the data. As happens every year, we had several nests that were occupied and even produced chicks, but were abandoned in late June or early July. We had two nests where two large young were found dead in the nest in August. This may have been starvation, disease or dehydration in the hot weather – we don't know. However, over all, 86 % of the chicks survived to fledge or 1.12 fledglings per nest occupied. This result was very similar to the success rate we have seen over the past fifteen years.

Monitors sometimes find new nests. This Spring, Brian Ferguson discovered a nest platform with an Osprey in residence on a pole near Methodist Island off Victoria Harbour. This site was added to our roster, and other sites on the Eastern shore of Georgian Bay are welcome. We know there are Osprey's nesting north of Franklin Island, but we do not yet have the monitors to find and report on nesting success. Hopefully that will change in the New Year.

2010 marks our fourth year collecting and compiling the results of members monitoring Georgian Bay Ospreys. It has been interesting throughout. We had the benefit of forms and tables prepared by Ian and Meta Ferguson, and many years of data from Dave Winlo

before him, from Kitty Fells. We very much enjoyed our communications with the many monitors and members. On top of that, we think this data is useful and important. Jody Allair from Bird Studies Canada, the guest speaker at our AGM this year emphasized the importance of “citizen science and observation” where data like ours provides an early indicator of the health of our water and shorelines.

This summer we sold our house and cottage on the Bay, and moved to southern Ontario where it is not really practical to continue. Consequently, this is our last year and a new Coordinator will take over for 2011. Many thanks to all the monitors who reported on nest activity in 2010. Please keep up the good work!

Sandy and Ric Symmes, Nest Monitoring Coordinators