



Georgian Bay



Osprey Society

“Voice of the Osprey”

Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2008

One chick made it and one didn't

We always hear good stories and bad stories each summer about the Osprey in our area. This past summer we heard two such stories. Jeff Hedden wrote to us with this one and sent this photo. The chick is from a nest in Honey Harbour on Roberts Island. Its nest is on the west side of the island across from the government docks on Beausoleil Island. From what we can tell it tried to fly too early and did not have the

skill yet. Jeff's cousin caught a few small sunfish to nourish it which it very much appreciated and ate all 3 from head to tail. In a day or so it flew away crashing once into the water. After that it was fine.



A less fortunate story came from Cynthia Kemerer on Bone Island in Cognashene. A fledgling was found on a rock, seeming rather stunned. It was offered some chicken by a thoughtful neighbour but it didn't eat any. The neighbour talked to it at length (as one might to a patient in shock). The next day the chick was gone and a bird seen in the nest was presumed to be the stranded chick. However on day three the body of a dead chick was washed up on the shore. It is believed that was the fate of the unfortunate fledgling which tried to fly too soon.

Georgian Bay Osprey Society

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Our objectives

- To protect and enhance the habitat of the Georgian Bay Osprey
- To study and survey their life cycle, habits, nesting and habitat
- To promote awareness, appreciation and communication

Monitoring Report

Thanks to all the nest monitors, and data coordinator Cathy Cooper, we have a 2007 Osprey nesting report. In the 61 sites monitored, 42 chicks fledged in 2007, a number very similar to our results over the past seven years. This works out to about 1.1 for every nest occupied, and about 88 % of chicks hatched successfully fledged.

We are starting to hear reports of Eagles on the Eastern Shore of Georgian Bay, and the number of nests and young in southern Ontario have increased substantially. It will be interesting to see if competition develops for nest sites and territories.

Cathy Cooper has focused her efforts on other Georgian Bay projects for 2009 and thanks are due to Cathy for her hard work in the past year. Sandy and Ric Symmes will be completing the nest report summaries for 2008 and coordinating the monitoring for 2009. We have yet to receive quite a few nest reports for the 2008 season. If you have not already done so, please send your nest monitoring report along to Sandy Symmes at gbos@xplornet.com (if you can scan and send the report) or mail them to Sandy Symmes, 3548 Town Line, RR2, Orillia, ON L3V 6H2.

We are reviewing the nest monitoring form in an effort to simplify reporting in 2009. In addition, we are exploring a possible partnership with Bird Studies Canada that would allow monitors an option to input their reports on the "Nature Counts" web page. This would allow the data to be entered more quickly and easily for those familiar with the internet. We would retain a mail and email option for those who are more comfortable with our traditional method. There will be more information on these developments before monitoring forms are distributed in March 2009.

Nest monitors are needed.

We have quite a few nest sites that still exist but have lost their monitor for some reason. Nest monitoring requires no particular expertise, just an interest in these amazing birds, binoculars or a spotting scope and a little time to check and make notes. We supply monitoring tips and a report form. Monitors agree it is an interesting and rewarding way to enjoy Georgian Bay. In particular, nest monitors are needed for the following sites:

Go Home Lake, NE shore near Flat Rock Falls
12 Mile Bay at Elephant Rock
Bass Rocks, Mouth of 12 Mile Bay
Lanoka Is, South end, 12 Mile Bay-Manitou area
Lanoka Is B, rock near North end, 12 Mile Bay-Manitou area
Steer's Channel, WahWahTaysee - Indian Harbour

If you are willing to try your hand (and eyes) as a monitor, or you know someone you feel would be interested, please contact Sandy Symmes at gbos@xplornet.com, or call and leave a message on 705 327 7822. Sandy goes south for the winter but picks up messages and emails regularly.

Ric and Sandy Symmes
GBOS Nest Monitoring Coordinators

Live raptors visit our AGM

This year's AGM was a little different from former meetings. We had as our guest speaker Laurie Schutt, Executive Director of the Wye Marsh. Laurie is a licensed Peregrine Falconer and after her exciting talk about raptors in general she invited us outside to see her pets; two hawks, 2 owls and a falcon. Laurie had trained her pets so well she had them fly from her gloved hand to their perch, 25 yards away and back again. Of course she treated them with a small mouse on their return.

There were several children there who were very excited about seeing these raptors close up. Several of them volunteered to have the birds sit on their hand, then fly to their perch and return to the child's hand. This was a great treat for all of us to see and learn about these raptors.

There were about 25 members at the meeting, many with their children, which was held at the cottage of Valerie and Rob Thompson in Cognashene. We heard reports of some abandoned nest sites and some occupied - one with 3 adults and one chick on it.

The construction report from Jane-Anne Campbell told us that the new platform near Huron Island was occupied with one chick and that the Copperhead nest site will be replaced.

Our educational project was only partly successful. We asked all the public schools along the eastern shore of the Bay to have the children participate in a contest to draw a picture of an Osprey. The children would have to do their research on the web and thereby learn a little about the Osprey. Unfortunately only three young people submitted drawings and they were all from the Near North School Board. The winner was a young boy from Britt Public School and he was honored with a glossy portrait of an Osprey.

During the Election of Officers for the coming year it was announced that Cathy Cooper had resigned the monitoring portfolio and Sandy Symmes volunteered herself and her husband Ric to take up this position. We are very pleased to have these two members as directors.

We would have liked to present David Winlo and John Hardy, our two retired directors, with books to thank them for their long term services. However neither was present and the gifts will be given to them at a later date.



This is the largest of the owls Laurie brought from Wye Marsh



Laurie Schutt prepares to send this wee owl to the perch

photos by Rob Thompson