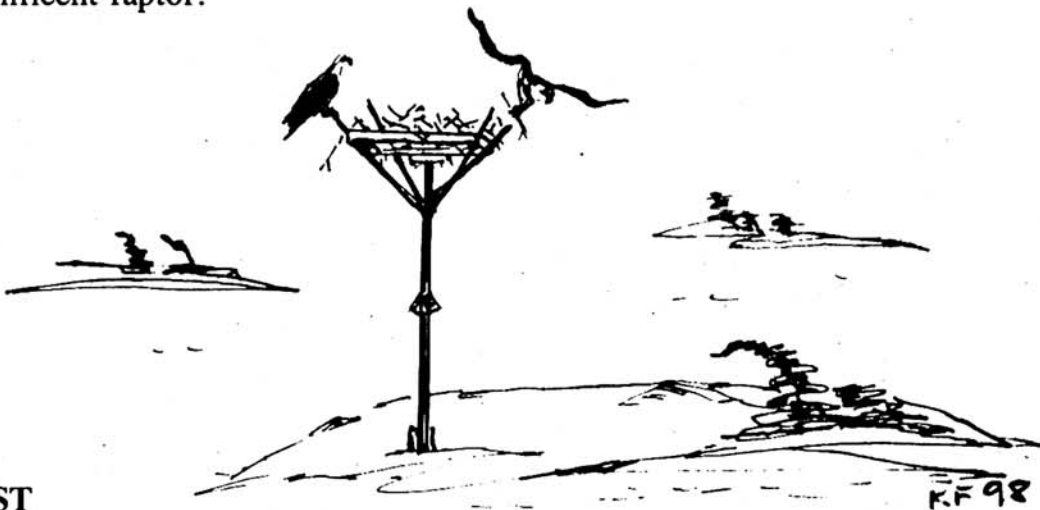


# GEORGIAN BAY OSPREY SOCIETY

## BUILDING AN OSPREY NESTING PLATFORM

Osprey (*Pandion Haliaeetus*), in the absence of natural sites such as tall trees, have been known to nest on chimneys, TV antennae, channel markers, and, in particular, utility poles. The design described here has been used successfully by the Georgian Bay Osprey Society. This pamphlet should be read in conjunction with GBOS' pamphlet "Have You Been Lucky Enough to See This Bird" which tells you more of the Osprey, its habits, what to watch for, how to enjoy and respect this magnificent raptor.



### FIRST

- Get the permission of the landowner and cooperation of neighbours.
- Be sure you want this large bird as your neighbour - at times noisy, easily disturbed, sometimes dirty around the nest.
- Be ready to observe your osprey, keep notes, repair the nest if damaged, report problems - ospreys mate for life, returning to the same nest.

### SECOND

- Select a site which:
  - has a clear flight path - no higher trees within at least 30 ft. (10m).
  - is near water and shallow 3-6 ft. deep (1-2m) fishing areas (usually on a bare point shore or small island in the Georgian Bay)
  - is in an area where ospreys have been seen
  - has all round visibility from the nest
  - is preferably further than 1/2 mile (.8k) from another nest
  - is within 300 ft. (+/- 100m) of a suitable perch
  - is not close to disturbance such as sporadic boat traffic

## CONSTRUCTION (See Figure 1 & 2)

### **Artificial Platform on a Pole**

- Use a pole at least 21 ft. (7m) high, preferably 30 ft. (10m) or higher.
- Make the nest platform at least 4 ft. x 4 ft. (approx. 1.3m<sup>2</sup>) and attach to the pole before raising.
- Have a professional do at least the erecting, if not the whole project.
- Best times, on the Georgian Bay shore line, are autumn or winter over the ice.
- If contractor cannot find materials such as used rock mounts (see list, panel 3) try local utilities.
- Modifications to the basic design can be made but experience suggests the following are important:
  - braces at each corner which strengthen the structure, inhibit wind damage and make suitable perches
  - at least 3 guy wires
  - sturdy rock mounts and bolts
  - use only galvanized bolts, nails, etc.
  - **not recommended:** wire mesh - rusts and collapses, catches talons
  - plywood - rots and planes in the wind
  - use cedar not treated wood
  - don't deviate too much from the dimensions suggested
  - put some sticks in the newly constructed box
- **Note:** A marshy site may be appropriate but requires a different platform support (eg: tripod, quadruped). Contact GBOS for information.
- Observe and maintain the nest - particularly if over the years it gets heavy, tilts or shows signs of collapse - ospreys return each year, adding more sticks

### **A Topped Tree**

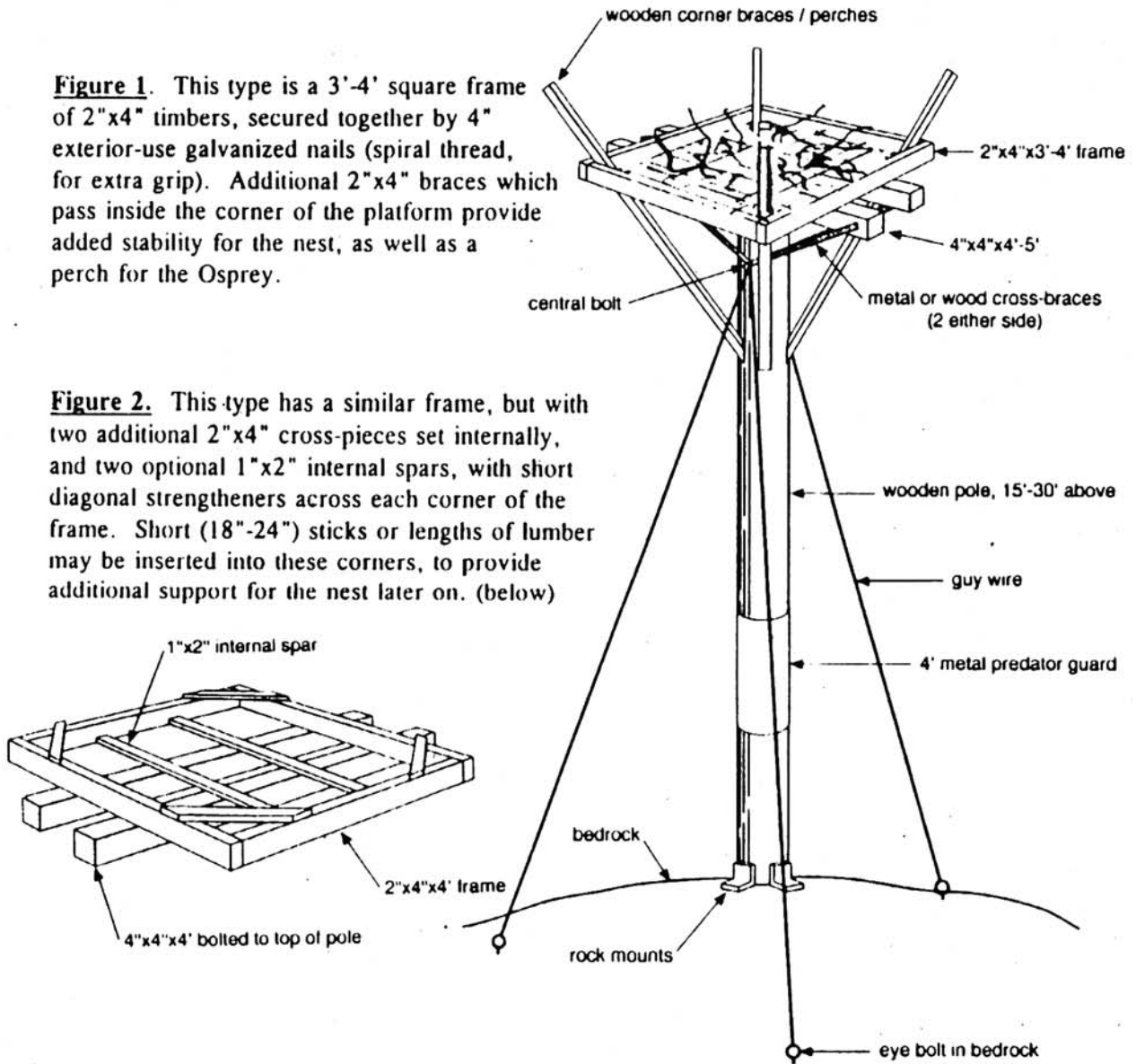
- Must be taller than other trees around.
- Usually a conifer, which has at least an 8" (20cm) diameter trunk when topped.
- Meets all the site requirements above.
- Place a platform in the tree or place branches in a similar pattern - nail and/or wire into place.

### **Costs**

Depending on availability of material, labour costs, price may range from \$200 - \$1,500 ---- average about \$900. GBOS will help with introductions to contractors and possible cost sharing 50/50 to maximum \$450, if approved.

**Figure 1.** This type is a 3'-4' square frame of 2"x4" timbers, secured together by 4" exterior-use galvanized nails (spiral thread, for extra grip). Additional 2"x4" braces which pass inside the corner of the platform provide added stability for the nest, as well as a perch for the Osprey.

**Figure 2.** This type has a similar frame, but with two additional 2"x4" cross-pieces set internally, and two optional 1"x2" internal spars, with short diagonal strengtheners across each corner of the frame. Short (18"-24") sticks or lengths of lumber may be inserted into these corners, to provide additional support for the nest later on. (below)



### DO

- Obtain land owner permission
- Get cooperation from neighbours.
- Follow the construction guidelines.
- Maintain site - repair damage.
- Report activities to GBOS.

### DON'T

- Erect in areas of irregular disturbance.
- Erect where no ospreys have been seen.
- Be impatient - some nests take 10 years or longer to be occupied.
- Take risks - use professional help.

### Disclaimer

Installation of these poles and platforms and subsequent nest inspection and repair can be dangerous. We strongly recommend using contractors experienced in such construction and climbing techniques. The Georgian Bay Osprey Society will accept no liability for accidents or other claims arising from the construction, installation or maintenance of any structures described herein.



When you have a nest which you can observe, consider the following:

- Recontact GBOS - become a member; report activity; become a monitor; come to meetings; receive and contribute to the Newsletter.
- Try to interest your neighbours, young people - there are many rewards in watching, getting to know **your** ospreys as they return each year.
- Keep a copy of GBOS' pamphlet "Have You Been Lucky Enough to See This Bird" handy - tells you what to look for and when.
- Invest in a good pair of binoculars or even a spotting scope - it's amazing what details you can see.

### **PROTECT YOUR OSPREY NEIGHBOURS**

For further information:

### **OUR OBJECTIVES**

- TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE HABITAT OF THE GEORGIAN BAY OSPREY
- TO STUDY AND SURVEY THE LIFE CYCLE, HABITS, NESTING AND HABITAT
- TO PROMOTE AWARENESS, APPRECIATION AND COMMUNICATION