



## OSPREY NEST STRUCTURE PLACEMENT



Placement of nest structures for ospreys affects the chances they'll be used. As a general rule, the closer to water, the better. Colonization of new sites is related to how close ospreys presently nest to the new site, since young birds returning to breed usually take up nesting within one to several miles of their natal area.

Another important consideration is predation. We recommend single pole structures with a platform on top, on mainland areas and any area where raccoons and other predators are present. Single poles are easily outfitted with a predator guard (inverted cone, or a sleeve of aluminum flashing) that prevent raccoons from climbing into the nest. A raccoon has been seen climbing into a 30-foot high nest, so a guard is very necessary on most nests.

An attractive nest, to an Osprey, includes a nearby perch. The male prefers to perch either on the nest or within 50'. A 2x4 that rises two to three feet higher on both sides of the nest platform is ideal, as is a perch pole least 4' in height, placed nearby. A simple perch consists of a 2x4 with a wood branch (1½" to 2" in diameter) mounted perpendicularly on top of the 2x4.

Ospreys generally return to New Jersey in late March and take up nesting in April. Nest structures should be in place by mid-March for that season's use. Ospreys are most sensitive to disturbance during April, when they are laying eggs, and are most likely to abandon the nest if disturbance is too great. They will grow more defensive of the nest area in May and June when they have chicks, and both male and female must feed intensively to keep up with all the appetites. It is important that disturbance remain low during this time as well.

Ospreys have exhibited tolerance of certain types of disturbance, such as boat traffic on waterways, as long as such traffic ignores them. Disturbance increases as boats stop nearby and people focus on the birds at close range. A safe distance from which to observe ospreys will vary depending on the area, but observers must stay beyond the distance at which the adults react. Their reaction must be judged as even their attention to the observer, not simply when they lift off the nest in defense.

You should have permission from the landowner where you install a nest platform. Landowner information can be obtained at the municipal or township office. For lands in state ownership, a special use permit may be required by the Department of Environmental Protection.

If you put up an osprey nest structure, please send GPS coordinates or map in [Google Earth](#) and email us the location. We include all potential nest sites in our triennial census of ospreys in the state. If the nest is used by ospreys, please notify us.

Finally, we offer technical assistance to private consulting firms, individuals, school groups, environmental commissions, Boy & Girl Scouts, and anyone else who is interested in building and constructing osprey nesting structures. We can help you choose the most suitable location to place a platform so it will not negatively impact other wildlife that may live in the area.

Please do not hesitate to [contact us](#) for more information or if you have a question.

For further information, please contact [Kathy Clark](#), Supervising Zoologist, NJ Fish and Wildlife or [Ben Wurst](#), Habitat Program Manager, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ at 609.628.2103.

# OSPREY NEST PLATFORM



CONSERVE WILDLIFE  
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

Use treated or cedar lumber and galvanized hardware

### Side View

2x4"

Bolt through w/  
3/8" x 8' carriage bolt, each side

Secure with 1/2" x 10"  
hex or carriage bolt

16' 6x6" pole

Set in ground 4'

### Top View

2x6"x5' board

Optional: Attach Red cedar branches to box  
instead of wire mesh

2x6" support underneath box

Space 2x6" in 3"  
from edge of box

Attach with 3' stainless  
wood screws

3' square box  
cut from one  
12' 2x8"

**New Jersey Osprey Project**  
**Endangered & Nongame Species Program**  
**&**  
**Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ**



**Material list for building one osprey nest platform**

					<i>Approximate (2012)</i>
<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Unit price</b>	
<i>Lumber</i>					
Pole	1	16'	6x6" pressure treated		\$40.00
Box frame, box side brace, platform brace	1	12'	2x6" pressure treated		\$8.00
	1	12'	2x8" pressure treated		\$10.50
Perch / brace	1	12'	2x4" pressure treated		\$6.00
Wire cloth (optional)	3'	3'	2"x4" galv. hardware cloth		\$3.00
Red/white cedar branches (preferred)	2	3'	~ 1-2" in diameter		
<i>Fasteners</i>					
Base to pole	2	1/2" x 6"	galvanized lag bolts		\$4.60
	2	1/2"	galv. flat washers		\$0.80
Box to base	6	3"	stainless wood screws		
	4 box corners & 2x6" nest supports	16	3"	stainless wood screws	
	28 total	3"	1 lb. box stainless wood screws		\$15.00
Brace to base	2	3/8" x 8"	galv. carriage bolts		\$5.00
	2	3/8"	galv. flat washers		\$0.40
	2	3/8"	galv. locking washer		\$0.40
	2	3/8"	galv. nut		\$0.40
	1	1/2" x 10"	galv. hex bolt		\$7.00
		<i>or</i>			
	1	1/2" x 10"	galv. carriage bolt		\$6.10
	2	1/2"	galv. flat washers		\$1.40
	1	1/2"	galv. locking washer		\$0.40
	1	1/2"	galv. nut		\$0.80
Fasten wire to box (optional)	40	3/8"	galv. fence staples		\$0.40
<i>Predator Guard</i>					
Aluminum flashing (use painted only) *	1	24"x ~ 25"	.092 gauge (brown painted)		\$5.00
Nails	5	6d	Galv. roofing nails (1 lb.)		\$4.00
			Estimated Total Cost		\$119.20

\* Trim coil with a 24" width can only be purchased by the roll, which is 200' and is approximately \$98.00\*

Please let us know where you place the nest platform(s) and when they are used by a pair of ospreys.  
 We will include the site in our triennial surveys. Thank you for helping Ospreys in New Jersey.

**For more information:**

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