

Osprey Monitoring

The goal of the monitoring program is to document the location and breeding success of Osprey nests within the Bay of Quinte watershed. As part of a long-term monitoring program to ensure the Osprey population remains healthy and abundant. Ospreys are an apex predator and, as such, indicators of water quality health. Changes in number of nesting pairs and number of chicks produced and fledged can reflect changes in aquatic ecosystem health.

You can participate by monitoring a nest/s throughout the complete breeding season (April – August) or as a casual observer posting photos and comments periodically when you happen to be near a nest. If you follow a nest through the season the following observations should be recorded: nest locations, date of arrival, whether the nest is active or not, the number of fledglings and departure dates for the fall migration

How To Monitor

Using your mobile phone, it's a simple process to record your observations and photos. First turn on the location setting on your phone, then using Twitter, and the hashtags #bqrap and #osprey post your photos or observations. Make sure that you complete your post from the nest site, otherwise the post will not be accurately located. Spend time observing the Ospreys and their behaviour. You never know what you might discover. Now, you are a citizen scientist.

Monitoring Tips

All you need is your mobile phone but a pair of binoculars/spotting scope might be handy. As some Ospreys are tolerant of humans and other are not. If nesting Ospreys spook easily and leave the nest, increase your observation distance. If left unattended for extended periods the eggs/nestlings could fall prey to gulls, crows or other large raptors or cooling of the eggs/nestling could also lead to nest failure.

Avoid observations in inclement weather. These conditions are stressful for the birds and not great for your mobile phone. Approach nesting sites slowly and quietly. Binoculars/ spotting scopes are great for long distance observation.

Sometimes chicks are difficult to see, don't worry they will grow quickly and soon be visible. Osprey eggs do not hatch at the same time. Be patient.

As the chicks grow distinguishing them from the adults can be challenging. The young will have reddish-orange eyes, while the adults have golden eyes. As well, the young have more speckling on their feathers than the adults.

Timeline and Data

Month	Osprey nesting behaviour	Observations
Late March – early April	Ospreys arrive and select and construct a nest site. Egg laying starts mid/end of April	Are there Ospreys at the nest? Arrival date?
May	Osprey incubating eggs – approx. 38 days	Are the Osprey incubating?
June	Chicks develop through June Off spring fledge at 7 – 9 weeks old but depend on the parents for another 6 weeks	Are there young present? How many?
July	Chicks begin to fledge	How many young present?
August	Migration starts in August	Departure date?

Visit the nest sites throughout the season and post comments and photos of the birds for everyone to enjoy.

Contact Info

Any questions? Please contact:

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Visit the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan web site for details www.bqrap.ca