



Friends of Osprey

Newsletter 3 (August 2023)

Artificial Nesting Platforms

The Friends of Osprey Committee and a band of dedicated volunteers have been very busy installing Artificial Nest Platforms in recent weeks. Once again, the wonderful crew at the Ardrossan and Community Men's Shed came to the fore with construction of the platforms, we can't tell you how grateful we are for the work these men do. This year Yorketown Area School Grade 7 students also helped constructing nests to be placed on each of the platforms. The nests make a huge difference to the birds acceptance of the platforms and of course the children get to learn about Osprey so it's a win/win.

Details of the Platforms are as follows:

Coobowie – Installed on the 19th June this platform was installed to replace a nest on the communications tower at Ardrossan and was funded by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board. Four hours after installation the birds were on the platform re-arranging the nest. Observers report the birds appear to have adopted the nest platform so now we hope for a successful breeding season.



Photo By Nanou Carbourdin



Photo by Fran Solly

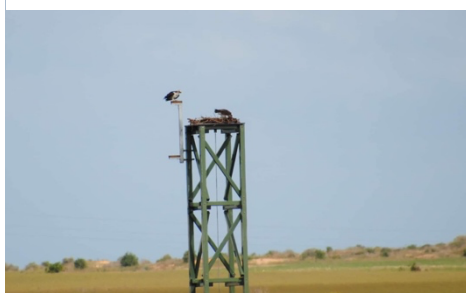
Sleaford Bay – Installed on the 23rd June this platform was funded by Shark Cage Diving – Calypso Star Charters on private property. The platform is in an area that Osprey are known to frequent, and it is hoped that in the future birds will adopt it as a nest site. This platform was able to be installed onto a cement base using a crane and so is a slightly different design to the “sleeved” platforms.

Black Springs – Installed on 4th July with assistance from West Point Shellfish, Angel Oysters and Southern Eyre Aquaculture. The Oyster Farmers instigated this platform with reports of Osprey attempting to nest on a channel marker and failing over successive years. They were totally engaged in the process and report that birds have been seen on the platform which is now a safe distance from regular boating activity.

Photo by Rodney Carrick



Photo by Bazz Hockaday



Arno Bay –

Installed on 24th July this platform is located on land owned by Cleanseas – Spencer Gulf and we would like to acknowledge their support with the project. The platform will replace a nest on a communications

tower. The installation of this platform was delayed due to issues with accessing a helicopter for the installation so was a few weeks later than intended but 6 days after installation the birds were on the platform rearranging the nest. It remains to be seen if they will actually relocate this year but we are confident this will be a better long term solution for them.

Onkaparinga River – Installed 26th July this platform was funded by Green Adelaide. In recent months more birds are being reported on the Fleurieu Peninsula and this platform is intended to provide a nest option for birds moving into the area.



Photo by Julie Thompson

Coffin Bay – unfortunately a planned platform for Coffin Bay was not approved and did not proceed.

These platforms bring the total number of Artificial Nest Platforms across the State to 13.

Close monitoring of Osprey activity indicates there is still significant need for platforms and planning is underway for a further three platforms in 2024:

- Tulka – Birds including a 4-year-old banded female (Calypso) are attempting to nest on a fishing boat.
- Port Neill – Birds attempted to nest on a makeshift platform fitted over a damaged channel marker. The platform was removed and there is no known substitute nest.
- Streaky Bay – Birds have nested successfully for several years on a structure on an Oyster Lease. The structure is rusting and in danger of collapse.

Satellite Tracking

In late 2022 four birds were fitted with Satellite Trackers under the research permit granted to Ian Falkenberg. Details of those birds are:

Will – Female bird from the Price Artificial Nest Platform. This is the second bird tracked from this nest. Will has remained close to the nest site at Price with occasional forays around the top of the Gulf and down as far as the Proof Range. The bird tends to follow the coast although has on occasion crossed the Gulf.

Heiri – Female bird from Kangaroo Island was the last bird tracked and has travelled the least distance remaining very close to the nest site at D’Estrees Bay this may change once the breeding season there gets underway for this year.

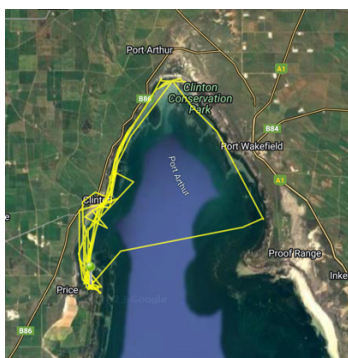


Figure 1 Track for Will 2022 Price Nest



Figure 2 Track for Heiri 2022 D’Estrees Bay

Zoe – Female bird from the Port Lincoln Barge left Port Lincoln and flew inland turning back to the coast near Point Drummond. The bird then flew on to Elliston where she investigated the off-shore Islands before once again going back to Point Drummond and then north east over Lake Gairdner and eventually to Woomera. She was sighted at the sewerage ponds at Woomera and left two days later heading to Lake Torrens before returning to Point Drummond. Transmissions stopped shortly after she returned to Point Drummond and the signal from the tracker was insufficient to affect a recovery.

Ronnie – Female bird from Thistle Island Nest. This is the second bird tracked from this nest and the second fatality. Ronnie left the Island and flew around some of the offshore Islands near Coffin Bay before heading north and inland. The bird came back to the coast near Whyalla but then went inland again and was last recorded near Melrose in the mid-North. The tracker did not provide sufficient signal for a recovery.



Figure 3 Zoe 2022 from the Port Lincoln Barge

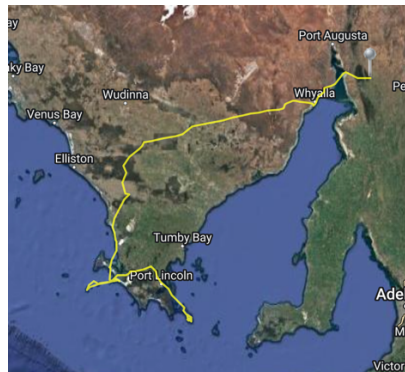


Figure 4 Ronnie 2022 from Thistle Island

The surviving birds tracked in 2021 continue to be in their territories. Phantom the female bird from Price remains near American River and Ervie the male bird from Port Lincoln continues to be between the Port Lincoln Foreshore and the Marina/Greyhound Road foraging areas. He has in recent days taken his longest flight to date with a visit to Louth Bay and the mouth of the Tod River giving weight to the suggestion that he may be in company with Pro the female bird that was partnered with Desy who died following an injury at Louth Bay.

The research permit for this work has just been extended so that over the coming three years Ian has approval to satellite track an additional 12 birds. The data in coming years will be very important as birds like Ervie and Phantom look to partner and breed.

Osprey Risk Mitigation

Friends of Osprey have on their agenda Risk Mitigation. Two areas we have been looking at are the risk of electrocution and risk of entanglement. Regarding the first of these we have provided advice to SA Power Networks through Department of Environment and Water and gained a commitment for power poles that are used as perches by Osprey to be fitted with devices to reduce the risk of electrocution. An initial five poles were identified and we are pleased that the work on those has now been done. SA Power Networks are undertaking to fit all new poles with the devices and to retro fit any poles considered a risk. With this in mind we are asking that if our members see Osprey using power poles and are able to get a photo we would appreciate it. We would need to see the top of the pole and know its exact location (gps coordinates). The second area of risk that has been followed up is with sewerage breather pipes. These pipes are fitted with four spikes to stop birds perching on



top and falling down the pipes. The spikes don't work as a deterrent and do pose a risk to birds. Following our request SA Water have undertaken to re-engineer any pipes that Osprey are using to remove the spikes. We are very grateful to both SA Power Networks and SA Water for their willingness to consider the safety of the birds.

Data Collection

The work that we do with Osprey in South Australia can only be truly effective if we have good data on where birds are breeding and the success rates of breeding recovery, how many birds fledge, where do they go after fledging and do they make it to adulthood. The satellite trackers help but they are limited to small numbers of birds. We do use colour bands and we rely on sightings of birds to know where they go once they leave the nest area. We have engaged with Birdlife Australia to access data from their Birddata App where citizen scientists are recording bird surveys and incidental bird sightings. Anyone can download the app from the app store and set up an account. There is good help on the app or at <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/home> and we would love to have all our members reporting their Osprey sightings using this app.

Merchandise

Any of our Friends who were at the Price Tractor Pull on the weekend will have seen we now have "merch". Caps are \$34 and Tops \$65. If you would like to purchase, please contact friendsofosprey@gmail.com.au or purchase online at <https://friendsofosprey.com.au/support/>



Thank you

Thank you for being a member of Friends of Osprey and supporting the work that we do. As always with conservation there is much more to be done and funds are always needed. If you are willing and able donations can be made at www.friendsofosprey.com.au