



# Friends of Osprey

## Newsletter 4 (May 2024)

### Artificial Nesting Platforms

The Friends of Osprey Committee and an ever-growing band of dedicated volunteers are well into planning for the next four Artificial Nesting Platforms for Eyre Peninsula.

This year approval is being sought to place a platform at **Port Neill** where a pair of birds have been regularly seen and attempting to nest on several makeshift platforms constructed by concerned locals. We believe there was a nest on a cliff face to the north of the township that collapsed as a result of storm activity. This new platform should hopefully see this pair (who have remained in the area) nesting and breeding this upcoming season.

**Tulka** approx. 10 km south of Port Lincoln is also a proposed site for a platform. This one 100% funded by Birds SA with FoO overseeing the construction and installation. There are two birds including Calypso, a banded 2019 bird from the Port Lincoln Barge in the Tulka area. This pair attempted to build a nest on a fishing vessel last season. Unfortunately, the boat was in use and their nest building efforts were dismantled (often) by the owner.

Further up (NW) the West Coast of Eyre Peninsula, a platform is planned for **Smoky Bay** after a pair of Osprey successfully nested on a Prawn Trawler moored in the bay awaiting repairs to the rudder. We wish to sincerely thank the Paul Family (owners of the vessel) who postponed repairs to allow the birds to complete the breeding cycle onboard that vessel.

The final platform is one that has been long awaited at **Streaky Bay**. It is to replace a platform the Lewis Brothers erected near an Oyster Lease they owned and operated at the time. These brothers kept extensive records of these birds' activities while the lease was in their name, recording 20 fledglings in just 8 years and that at this location, the main food source was flounder and plenty of them. The current platform has been at risk of collapse for some years. We look forward to providing them (the osprey) with a new safe, secure platform and also to them producing many more fledglings.

There are also 2 more platforms under consideration for Yorke Peninsula this season. One at Point Pearce, the other at an undetermined location. While both are funded by other bodies, FoO was involved in the transportation and temporary funding of materials for these platforms.

This will bring the number of Artificial Nesting Platforms across the State to 19. Last breeding season 8 of the 13 Nest Platforms were active and we are quietly confident that number will increase this season.

While there will still be demand on both Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula for future Nest Platforms, funding will need to be sourced for these structures.

## Satellite Tracking – 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Price Osprey - Yorke Peninsula - Charlie

On the 9th of March the Osprey became independent and departed the breeding territory at Price. The Osprey travelled south along the coast of Yorke Peninsula and then inland to Hardwick Bay and further south to Sturt Bay and then east to Edithburgh. The Osprey then headed east across the Gulf St Vincent to Carrickalinga (10th March) then onto Mypolonga wetlands on the Murray River where it remained for about one day. The following day the Osprey headed inland (east) to Billiat Conservation Park, Murray Sunset National Park and Hattah State Forest in Victoria.

On the 18th of March due to a lack of information being supplied by the tracker, Ian suspected the Osprey may have been a mortality. The next day, at Ian's request, saw a Friend of Osprey searching for and locating the dead Osprey which was in skeletal form.

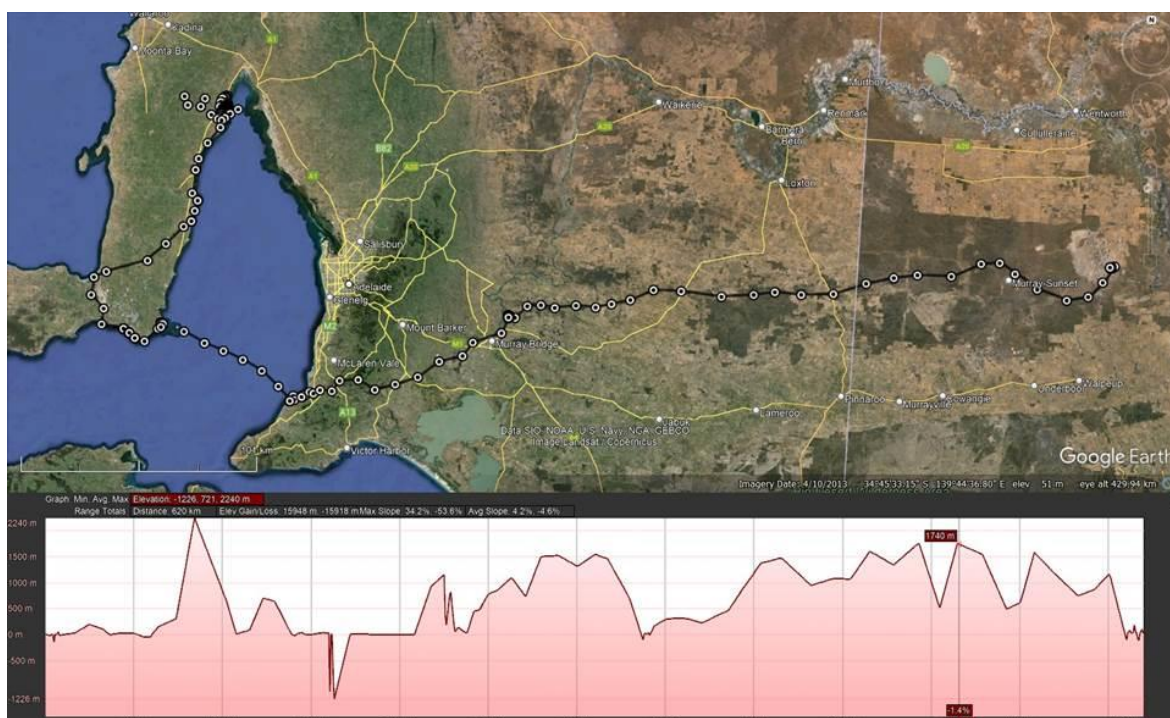
The most plausible explanation for this mortality is predation as evidenced by the tracking data. This would explain why the bird exhibited some short distance movement post mortality which was largely due to scavengers (feeding, carrying and dragging the carcase). The bird was likely to have been exhausted due to lack of food as well as dehydration due to the extreme temperatures it would have experience the previous 5 days.

The Ospreys vulnerability to predation may have been heightened as a result.

Since banding, its dispersal direction and distance was ESE and an overall movement of ~595km over a period of 5 days (Figure 2). From Price to Myloponga the Osprey travelled 327km over 3 days from Mypolonga to its final resting place in Hattah State Forest.

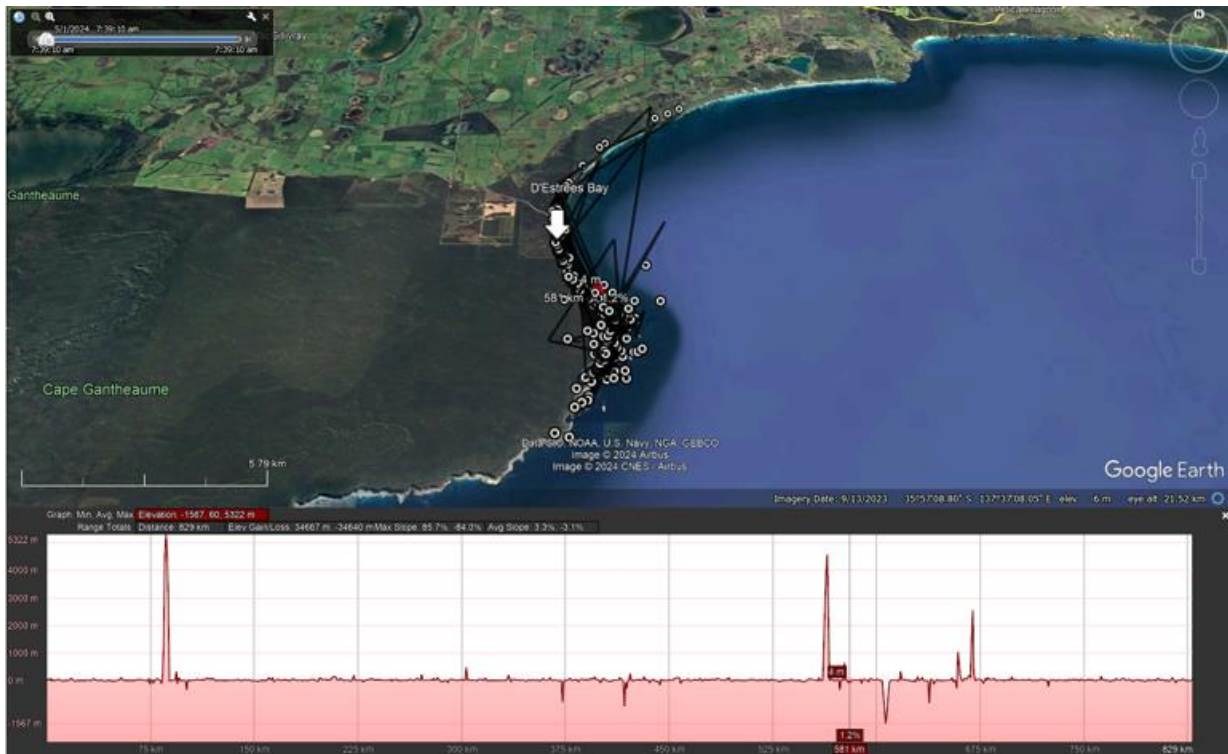
It travelled 268km over 2 days making a total distance from Price on Yorke Peninsula to Hattah State Forest of 595km. Since fledging from the nest on or about the 13th of December, the Osprey travelled a total distance of 685km

The high and wide elevation profiles are flights over the mount lofty ranges and the mallee.



### Cape Gantheaume Osprey – Kangaroo Island - Heiri

Female Osprey fitted with a Satellite Tracker on the 12th of December 2022. This Osprey young fledged on the 22nd of December 2022 and has been on the wing for about 500 days (17 months). In contrast to the last report this Osprey has spent most of its time in the vicinity of the nesting territory since fledging. This Osprey is now in its 2nd Year and doing very well. Over the last 3 months, 1st February to 30th April 2024, this Osprey has travelled a total of 829 kilometres with an average flight elevation of 60 meters. The sharp narrow peaks are short flights inland on the elevation profile. Clearly this Osprey prefers hunting in the Cape Gantheaume, D'Estrees Bay areas.



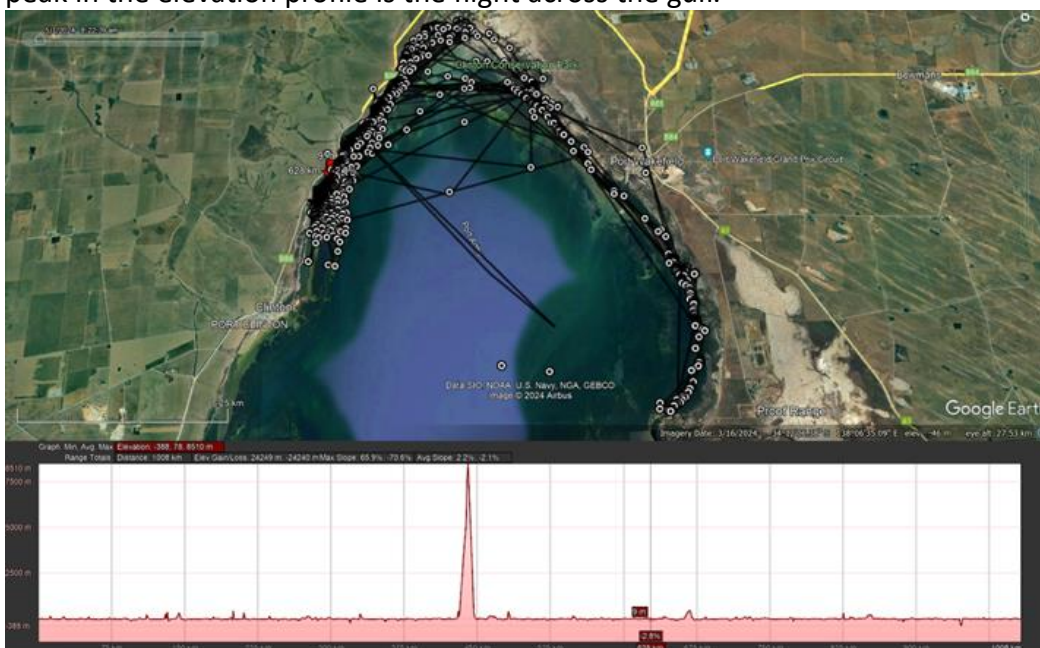
### Price – Kangaroo Island - Phantom

Update and movement of the Osprey (Phantom) has shifted its hunting and foraging back to the Penneshaw and American River coastline. A couple of short trips to Bay of Shoals. This Osprey is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year having now survived for 29 months following the fitting of the satellite tracker in early Nov 2021. From 1st February to end of April, this Osprey has travelled a total of 1,234 kilometres with an average elevation of 105 meters. The higher wider peaks in the elevation profile represent longer distance flights travelling along the coast and probably exploratory flights. Some of these flights were 80km and 40 km distance in two days. This Osprey continues to forage near another Osprey breeding territory.



**Price Osprey - Yorke Peninsula - Will**

This Osprey has remained in the vicinity of the nesting territory since leaving the nest and has now survived for 18 months following the fitting of the satellite tracker in early Nov 2022. This Osprey is now in its 2nd Year. Over the time 1st February to end of April 2024, this Osprey has travelled a total of 1008 kilometres with an average elevation of 78 meters. This Osprey has covered a similar section of coastline to the previous report and foraging and hunting is confined to about 54 km section of coastline with less time spent in the Bald Hill area and more time along the Clinton / Price side of the gulf. This Osprey's movements and sedentary lifestyle provides weight to the proposal to install a nest Platform on ADF land in the next 6 months in the Bald Hill and Point Clinton CP areas. The significant peak in the elevation profile is the flight across the gulf.



## Port Lincoln Osprey – The Barge – Ervie

Movement of the Osprey (Ervie) has a clear focus on Brennans Wharf, the adjacent grain silo sheds, a section of coast between the town jetty and Axel Stenross's Maritime Museum at Port Lincoln. Another preferred foraging location for this bird are the waters fronting the land based Aquaculture farm at Point Boston. Other more distant exploratory flights include Boston Island and the Port Lincoln Boat Yard and Slipway. Ervie has covered a total of 918 kilometres over 30 days (April) at an average elevation of 168 meters.

A fine scale data analysis of Ervie's movements show Brennans Wharf a clear preferred fishing location followed by the grain silo sheds and the section of coast between the town jetty and Axel Stenross Maritime Museum. This data highlights the importance of the shipping terminals for fishing and the shallow sections of coast adjacent to Port Lincoln. As highlighted in previous reports. Another important factor that would be influencing time spent at these locations are the lights spread along the wharf and along the town foreshore areas. Spilled grain, etc could also be attracting fish resulting in a positive influence for Osprey hunting and fishing. Osprey appear to have adapted well to this semi urban seascape with its unexpected benefits. The fine scale data shows tall trees and other suitable structures along some sections of the coast also play an important role in perching and fishing activities.

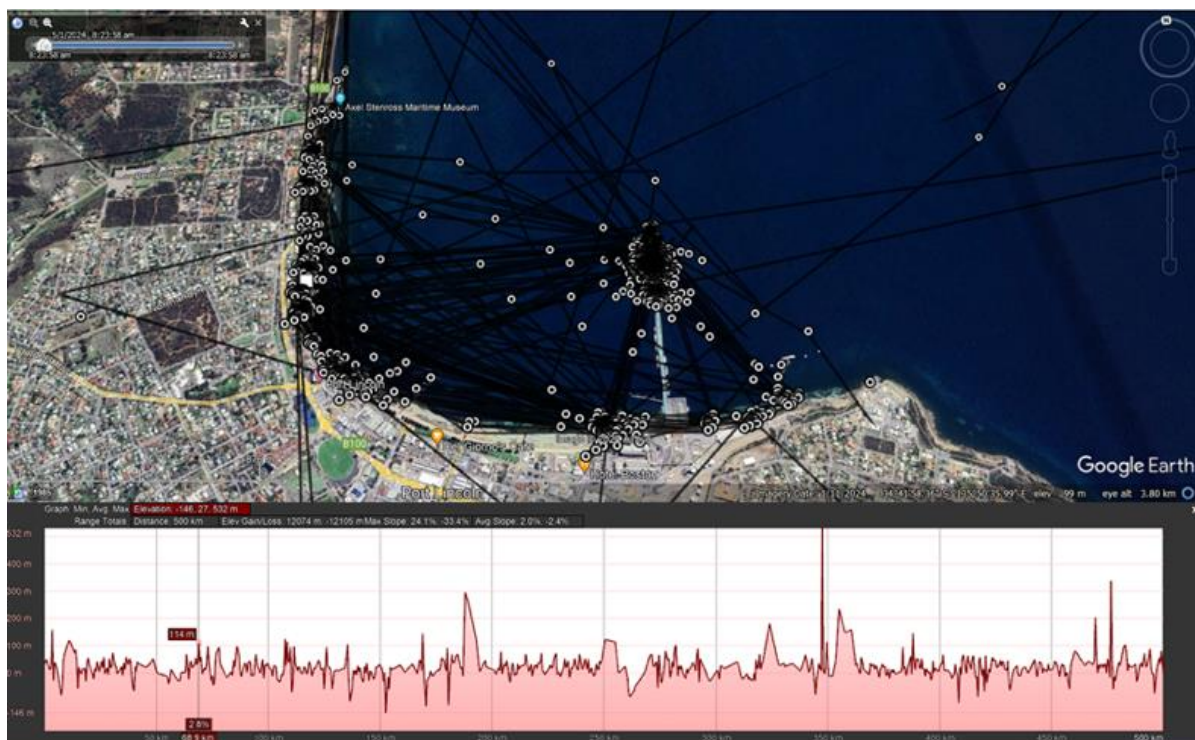
The higher wider peaks in the elevation profile represent longer distance flights travelling over water and land and probably exploratory flights. This Osprey continues to forage in close proximity to other Osprey (Giliath & the Thistle Island Osprey, Schutzie), the pair of Osprey nesting on the Barge and possibly others. (see report below on Giliath's preferred movements). This is a behaviour also observed in the Northern Hemisphere Osprey population. I have overlaid same data from April 2023 and April 2024 and almost identical patterns of movements. This Osprey is also now in his third year.



## Port Lincoln Osprey – The Barge - Giliath

Similar to the report above for Ervie, movement of the Osprey, Giliath has a clear focus on Brennans Wharf, the adjacent grain silo sheds, and a section of coast between town jetty and Axel Stenross Maritime Museum at Port Lincoln. There are fewer more distant exploratory flights for Giliath at this stage however this male has covered a total of 500 kilometres over 30 days (April) at an average elevation of 27 meters. The fine scale data also shows tall trees and other suitable structures along some sections of the coast play an important role in perching and still fishing activities.

A fine scale data analysis of Giliaths movements align very closely with some aspects of Ervies movements. As mentioned above numerous Ospreys appear to have adapted well to this semi urban seascape and its benefits. The higher wider peaks in the elevation profile represent short flights over water and land. This Osprey continues to forage in close proximity to other Ospreys (Ervie & the Thistle Island Osprey, Schutzie), the pair of Ospreys nesting on the Barge and possibly others. (see report above on Ervie's preferred movements). Again, this is a behaviour also observed in the Northern Hemisphere Osprey population.



## Osprey Risk Mitigation

Friends of Osprey have on their agenda Risk Mitigation. We have been working with SA Power Networks regarding the risk of electrocution. Obviously, the power network is huge and it's difficult to identify just which poles Osprey will choose to perch on. This was brought into sharp focus a few months ago when a female Osprey was reported electrocuted near Tulka on Eyre Peninsula. SA Power Networks have subsequently fitted animal guards to the pole which we appreciate given there are two birds still in the area.

## 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 a small number of birds. We do use colour bands and we rely on sightings of birds to know where they go after leaving the nesting area. We have engaged with Birdlife Australia to access data from their Birdata 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://birdata.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 will have seen we now have “merch”. Caps are \$34, T-shirts (Navy, Grey or White) \$45 and Windcheaters (Navy or Black) \$65.

If you would like to purchase, please contact [friendsofosprey@gmail.com.au](mailto: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 <https://friendsofosprey.com.au/support/>