



Friends of Osprey

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Building your own osprey nest platform

Friends of Osprey is often approached with requests from individuals interested in building their own osprey nest/ platform on their private property. They are inspired by regular visits of these birds where they are seen either perching, regularly flying overhead or fishing nearby.

While enthusiasm and commitment from individuals is always encouraged and appreciated, it must be said up front that there is absolutely NO guarantee that osprey will take up a random man-made structure erected with your best intentions.

That being said, if you feel the need, have the time, passion and resources, there is no law to prohibit you from providing a platform or perch on your own private property, although local council permissions may be required.

It is worth noting that any platform/nest is far more likely to be successful as a possible breeding site if there are a pair of ospreys frequenting the area as opposed to an individual bird. Individual birds however would still benefit from any suitable elevated structure. These birds travel great distances so the individual visitor may attract a mate at some time in the future.

Several of Friends of Osprey's highly engineered platforms are still awaiting a pair of birds to take up the site.

There are several webpages dedicated to constructing osprey nests and perches that will give anyone interested an insight into what can be done, size wise, height, location, etc.

The first link is from the Roy Dennis Foundation, created by Roy Dennis, OBE, MBE. His work with osprey in the UK saw them recover from literally, the brink of extinction to what is now seen as a thriving species once again. It provides a detailed description of how the foundation construct their artificial nests.

The second link below shows a variety of nests, natural and man-made and should offer a suitable option and inspiration to those interested in constructing their own version.

As you will see, many of the natural nests are on and around powerlines and poles. For obvious reasons, we would strongly advise against erecting a platform anywhere near this manner of infrastructure. It is extremely dangerous for both the builder and the birds. It does however dramatically demonstrate the need for suitable SAFE artificial nesting sites.

The first recognised successful artificial nest on the Yorke Peninsula was a simple wooden pallet secured to the top of the mangroves in Wills Creek near Price.

Osprey will nest on any number of structures from boats, navigational beacons, communication towers and unfortunately power poles and associated transducers, etc. They prefer to perch on anything elevated near where they forage to rest, observe and eat their catch although they are regularly seen at ground level when a suitable perch is unavailable.

Friends of Osprey (Eyre Peninsula group), has recently erected an old tank stand in the hope of attracting a pair of birds to a new site where they regularly fish. Simple, cheap, safe and easy to install.

An individual male bird (Bradley) was seen on the tank stand within days of it being located there.

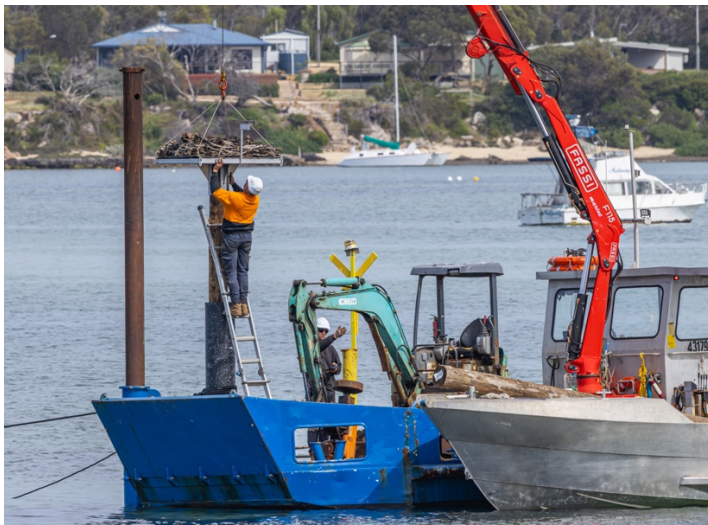


The tank stand

Further north, another group of enthusiastic locals have erected an old windmill stand (upside down) in a farmers paddock close to the birds' foraging grounds. Sticks were added to the top of the structure and osprey have been seen using it as a perch.

Another nest to the west of Port Lincoln has recently been added to the top of an unused wind generator tower. Both ospreys and white bellied sea eagles have shown interest in this structure.

A great win for these birds is the interest and input from an Eyre Peninsula oyster growing company, Angel Oysters. While re-building an existing oyster lease, they unknowingly dismantled an artificial osprey nest site, an old, upturned craypot which for many years in the past was occupied by a breeding pair of ospreys. This nest had not been occupied for the last few years. Pressure from the disgruntled townsfolk had the company assuring them it would be returned to the corner post within their lease. Friends of Osprey intervened, offering to build a more suitable nest and the rest is history. Up to three birds at once have been seen around this nest. This company have offered to add nests to several other lease sites they are building.



There can be a high element of danger in erecting these platforms due to the heights involved as well as the weight of the structures. It is, therefore, extremely important to have safety gear relevant to the activity being undertaken and preferable to use experienced, capable personnel and reliable equipment and plant during the actual erecting of the nest site.

Advice that we have received from Roy Dennis on his 2024 visit to South Australia is that once a platform has been installed, a 'fake nest' should be attempted by the installers. A circular, deep bowl shape should be attempted, which can then be lined with seaweed and mosses or other organic material. However, don't be offended if the ospreys who take up residence on the platform later pull it apart!

Best of luck and if you have any questions, please reach out to Friends of Osprey via our email address: friendsofosprey@gmail.com

Useful links:

<https://tinyurl.com/roydennisnestingplatforms>

<https://tinyurl.com/ospreynestsizeshape>