

MID-CONTINENT PLATFORM NESTERS

DAVID C. VANDERBURGH, 125 Dunfield Ave., Dauphin, MB R7N 0P1



Osprey returning to nest with fish for two young

David Vanderburgh

In the September 1993 issue of *Blue Jay*, "Manitoba Hydro Accommodates Osprey Activity," I described our platform-building methods for relocating Osprey nests on electrical distribution and transmission lines in parts of Manitoba.

Since that time, we have installed several more platforms and I have personally monitored the use and success of these sites. The results have been most gratifying, to say the least!

I have not personally observed any Osprey nests, other than on hydro lines, in these areas. However, I have had reports that a few "natural" nests do exist near lakes in the adjacent Duck and Porcupine Mountain areas. It appears to me that the birds prefer to nest on hydro structures, when available, rather than natural sites. This being the case, we have no means of determining what the fledgling rate would be if nest platforms were not available.

Table 1. MONITORED USE OF OSPREY NESTS/PLATFORMS ON HYDRO STRUCTURES IN PARTS OF CENTRAL AND NORTHERN MANITOBA

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Number of nests/ platforms monitored	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	7	13
Number of fledglings observed	3				2	1	3	8	12



Newly installed platform c/w nest which the crew moved from the centre of the structure

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However, given the observed number of fledglings as per Table 1, the Osprey population in these areas is certainly doing very well!

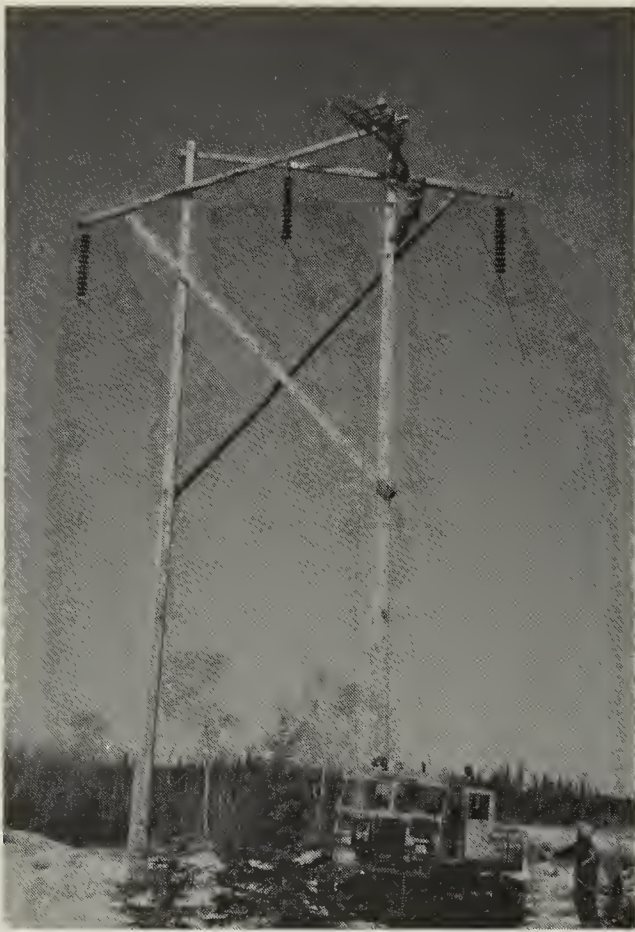
I draw no long-term conclusions from our platform activities. However, it is certainly apparent that our efforts are making a contribution to the "mid-continent" Osprey population!

Since our data is relatively recent,



Moving the nest to the new platform

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Manitoba Hydro crew installing a nest platform on energized 230,000 volt line near Dawson Bay on Lake Winnipegosis
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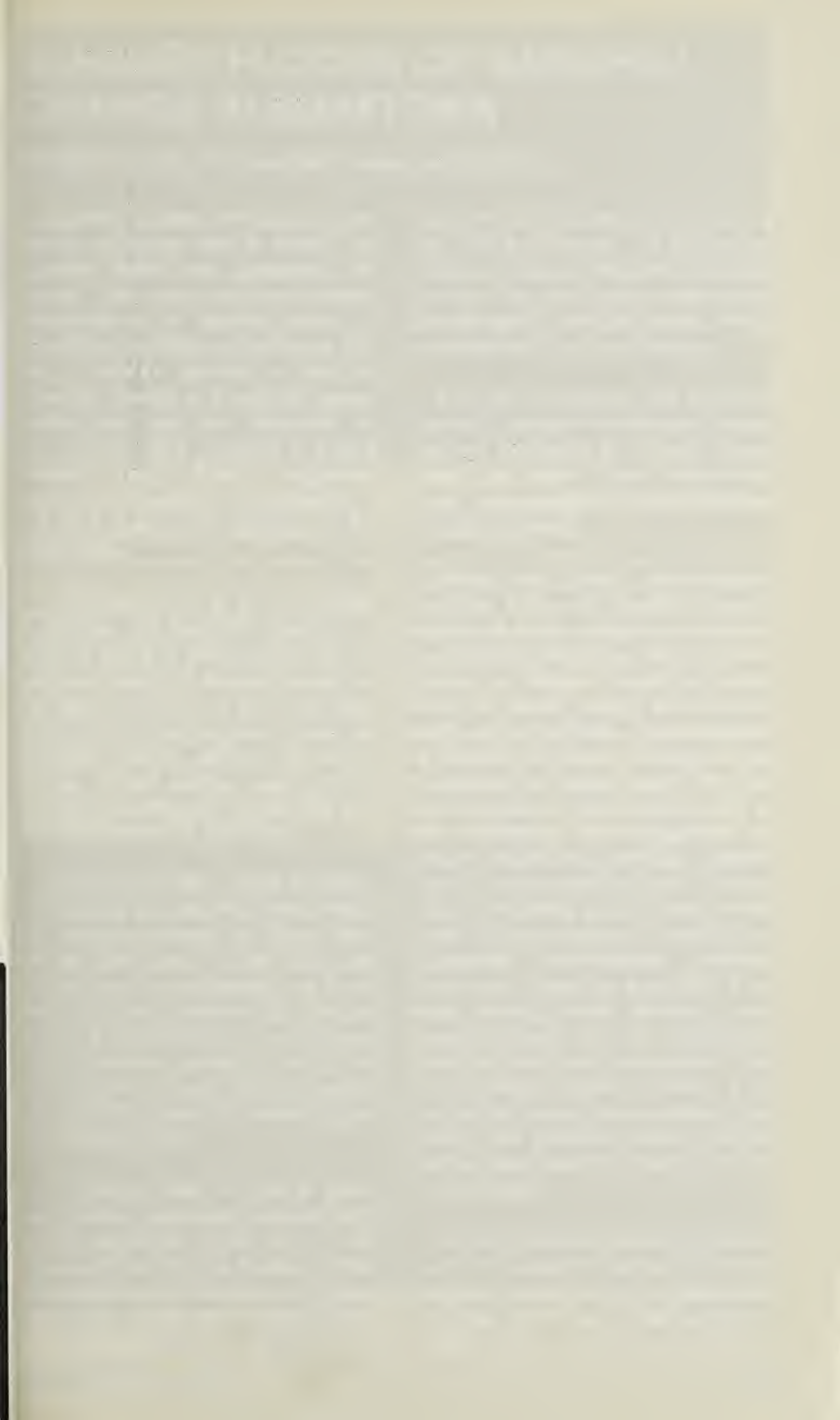


Another Manitoba Hydro crew installing a nest platform during replacement of a fire-damaged 25,000 volt structure on the shore of the Waterhen river
David Vanderburgh



Athabaskan Thrift (Armeria maritima), an endangered species

Diane B. Robson





Juvenile Sandhill Crane

Roy John

secluded bogs. On 18 June 1989, Colin Bradshaw (a visiting birder from England) reported being "attacked" by a Sandhill Crane, evi-

dently protecting a nest or young, in an extensive bog about 20 km southwest of Lac du Bonnet. On 16 June 1996, a party of birders led by David Hatch saw a pair of Sandhill Cranes with two small young in an alfalfa field 2 km south of Lac du Bonnet. These dates indicate that breeding cranes would be attending closely to nesting activities when most of the flocks described above were seen.

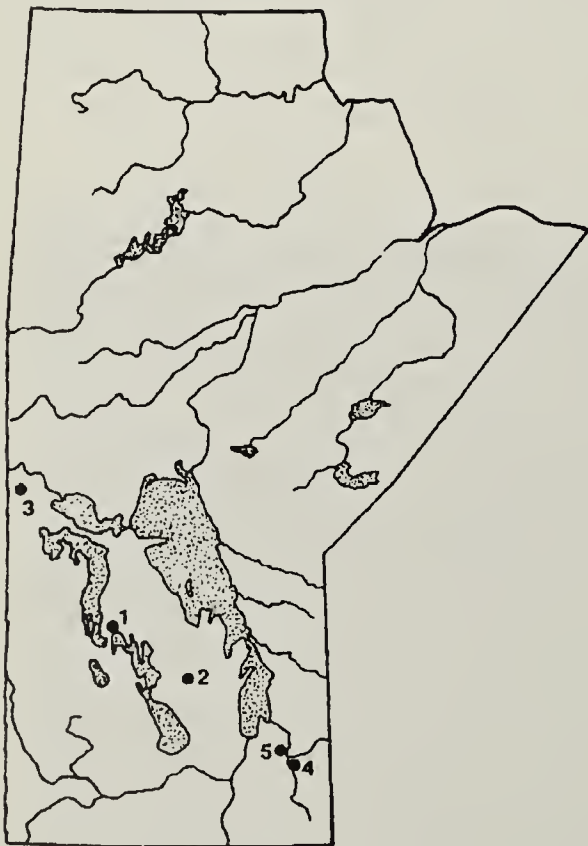


Figure 1. Map of Manitoba, showing the localities discussed in the text, near (1) Waterhen, (2) Ashern, (3) The Pas, (4) River Hills, and (5) Lac du Bonnet.

Tacha found that cheek-patch colour in Sandhill Cranes changes with age (white in adults; gray in 100% of 17 1.5-to-2-year-old birds and 78% of 18 2.5-to-3-year-olds).² When observing the Lac du Bonnet flock on 1 July 1992, I noted that the white cheek patch was clearly visible on most birds, although a little dingy in many cases. This observation is inconclusive, but would be consistent with a flock composed mainly of birds at least three years old.

1. Koonz, W.H. 1990. Unusual concentrations of Sandhill Cranes during the breeding season. *Blue Jay* 48:157.
2. Tacha, T.C. 1988. Social organization of Sandhill Cranes from midcontinental North America. *Wildlife Monographs* No. 99, The Wildlife Society, Bethesda, MD. 37 pp.