



Osprey

(Pandion haliaetus)

STATUS

SARA
Alberta

NO STATUS
SENSITIVE

British Columbia
Saskatchewan

YELLOW
NO STATUS

PRIMARY HABITAT

Riparian/Wetland

TERRITORY SIZE

0.8–3.1 ha

NEST TYPE

Platform

NEST REUSE

High

STAND LEVEL

1.8 ha patches around nests and 300–500 m high-impact activity buffers around active nests.

LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Retention patches and riparian buffers containing tall trees within 1–2 km of fish-bearing waters.

The osprey is a striking raptor that nests near fish-bearing waters. Note that in BC, active and inactive Osprey nests are protected and government authorization is required to destroy them.¹

BREEDING WINDOW



HABITAT ECOLOGY

- The Osprey is mainly found nesting within 1–2 km of fish-bearing waters, although it may nest up to 20 km away from these waters.²
- Platform nests are built on trees that are taller than the surrounding canopy and which often have flat tops (e.g., dead tops, broken tops, etc.). Nests may also be built on very tall snags.³
- Osprey nests have a high likelihood of reuse, either by Osprey or by other species.^{2,4}

RESPONSE TO FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Harvesting that removes existing or potential nest trees (e.g., flat-topped trees taller than the canopy) negatively affects Osprey. This is particularly true of removal of existing nests, as they are very likely to be reused if left.³
- Osprey have been observed nesting on isolated residual trees and snags within clearcuts, however these isolated trees may be at higher risk of blowdown than patches.³
- Osprey responses to human disturbance are highly variable and appear to depend on whether individuals are habituated to human activity. Some pairs will breed successfully in heavily-developed areas, while pairs nesting in remote areas may be more likely to be disrupted by low amounts of disturbance.⁵

RANGE MAP



STAND-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Platform nests should be protected even when not occupied due to their strong chance of future reuse.⁴
- Patch retention is recommended over single-tree retention to provide nest trees for Osprey.⁴
- Unharvested buffers around nests are recommended and studies generally suggest maintaining 1.8 ha (75 m radius) unharvested patches around platform nests that were occupied at least once within the last five years⁵. During the critical breeding period, high-impact activities (e.g., road-building, logging) should be avoided within 300–500 m of active nests.^{5,6}
- Patch retention in harvest blocks near fish-bearing waters is recommended to provide potential future nest opportunities, particularly patches with one or more trees extending above the canopy.