

Project Highlight – SD State Wildlife Grant

Project Type Species reintroduction

Title Reintroduction of osprey into suitable sites along the Missouri River in South Dakota

In a nutshell This state threatened species nests primarily in the Black Hills. More than 100 osprey chicks were reintroduced in southeastern South Dakota in hopes of establishing a new breeding population. A related research effort involved the use of satellite transmitters to learn more about migration pathways and wintering sites used by osprey reintroduced in South Dakota.

Relevant Species of Greatest Conservation Need

- osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Relevant Habitats relatively unaltered portions of Missouri River

Cooperators many (see final report for complete list)

Purpose

- Reintroduce 20-30 osprey chicks per year at selected sites in southeastern South Dakota
- Document timing, distance and routes of migration for juvenile ospreys hatched from selected sites in South Dakota
- Identify wintering areas and arrival and departure dates
- Evaluate characteristics of the migration routes and wintering areas and attempt to identify potential threats to ospreys

Timeframe July 2004 – December 2010

Location Missouri River in southeastern South Dakota; Yankton and Clay counties

Summary or Important Findings

- A total of 111 osprey chicks, primarily from the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, area, were reintroduced in South Dakota. SDGFP continues to solicit staff and public reports of nesting evidence resulting from the reintroduction project.
- Sixteen fledged osprey carried backpack transmitters between 2004 and 2009, providing information on migration rates and routes, distances traveled, and wintering areas.
- None of the instruments transmitted long enough to document the return of any of the birds to possible nesting areas. A single bird wearing a transmitter that was no longer working was killed at a powerline in Fall River County in southwestern South Dakota.

Best contact person Eileen Dowd Stukel, SDGFP

More Information

South Dakota Conservation Digest article, March/April 2009, "Wings Over Water – Restoring a Piece of South Dakota's Natural Heritage" by Jane Fink, Osprey Release Coordinator for SDGFP.

Dowd Stukel, E. and W. Melquist. 2011. Reintroduction of osprey into suitable sites along the Missouri River. Final Report, T-10. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, SD.