



CONSERVE WILDLIFE  
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

## Northern Barnegat Bay Osprey Project

Prepared by: Ben Wurst, Habitat Program Manager  
Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ  
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### **Background:**

Historically, before the effects of DDT caused the state's osprey population to decline, over 500 osprey nests could be found along New Jersey's coastline. By 1974 only 50 nests remained. The effects of DDT in the food chain caused reproduction to fail, and habitat was lost with a burgeoning shore population that eliminated many trees and increased ground predator populations. In New Jersey, the osprey was listed as endangered in 1974 by the state. Recovery began when DDT use was banned, and biologists coordinated efforts to supply man-made nest platforms for the birds. These new artificial nest platforms replaced the snags and trees that were lost as the barrier islands became more developed. By 1986 the osprey population had surpassed 100 pairs, sparking the decision to upgrade their status to threatened in the state. Since that time, the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) staff has worked to monitor and manage the population, tracking their nest success every year with a core group of volunteers, and surveying the population every three years. More recently, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ has been working with ENSP to help provide adequate nesting structures for ospreys. In 2009 the NJ osprey population hit a new post-DDT record of just over 485 active nests, near the estimated historic population of 500 nests.

Barnegat Bay has been one of the core nesting areas, where ospreys survived even through the lowest point of the species' decline. Yet it is an area where the population remains lower and less-dense than in many other areas of the coast where habitat is prime. I believe the lack of nest platforms in the bay is limiting the osprey population, and focused improvement, by providing platforms, will increase the nesting population.

In 2010, the osprey colony (Barnegat Bay and Sedge Islands) had an excellent season with an average productivity rate of 1.6 young/active (known-outcome) nest with a total of 96 young produced from 58 nests. In the coming years, more young will be returning to breed close to their places of origin.

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**Goal:**

Enhance nest availability and productivity of ospreys on Barnegat Bay to help restore the state population to historic levels.

**Objectives:**

- Increase the availability of nest platforms for osprey along northern Barnegat Bay.

**Methods:**

- Construct nest platforms using NJDFW osprey platform plans.
- Transport platforms to central staging area (Brick Township Municipal Boat Ramp).
- Transport platforms to each individual location where the nest will be placed.
- Erect platform(s) with volunteers and donors.

**Timeline:**

- Construction and installation timing depends on funding. Platforms can be installed year-round, but the cut-off date for being installed before a nesting season is April 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Late June/Early July 2011/12 – Survey nest platform(s) for occupation with donors.

**Budget:**

Item	Quantity	Cost
<b>Osprey Platform</b>		
Lumber (16' treated pole, box, bracing, perch) & hardware	1 platform	\$150
<b>Subtotal, Materials</b>		\$150
Installation: including minimum 4 staff, tools, boats and vehicles	Per platform	\$150
Project Manager salary	\$200/platform	\$200
Administrative costs		\$50
<b>Total cost per platform, built and installed</b>		\$550
<b>Subtotal, Platforms</b>		7 \$550
<b>Total estimated cost</b>		<b>\$3,850</b>

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This proposal was developed exclusively for John Studdiford and others who wish to help support our osprey recovery efforts along the Atlantic Coast of New Jersey. This proposal does not need to be funded in full. It was developed to be funded on a “per nesting platform basis” or when funding is available. I look forward to working with you.

If you are interested in funding this project, contact me for more information.

-Ben

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**Figure 1** - Overview of area – Mantoloking, New Jersey.



Blue markers are existing osprey nests. Red markers are suitable new nest sites on public land.

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