

OUTDOORS



Drama for osprey atop a utility pole

By IRV OSLIN
T-G Correspondent

PERRYSVILLE — A shocking turn of events claimed the life of a red-tailed hawk, left an osprey couple homeless and caused a power outage at the Mohican State Park Lodge and Conference Center.

The real-life drama played out atop a utility pole on Pleasant Hill Road.

Thanks to a cooperative electrical co-op and a determined osprey pair, all might be restored. Except for the life of the ill-fated hawk.

The drama began to unfold the second week of May along Pleasant Hill Road west of McCurdy Road. What looked to be a promising future for a breeding pair of osprey went haywire.

On Thursday, May 11, the nest had been reduced to a few sticks lodged in a crossbar atop the utility pole.

The stunned osprey pair perched in a tree at the back of a farm field between the pole and Pleasant Hill Lake.

According to Gary Glover of the Energy Cooperative, evidence suggested that a red-tailed hawk might have attacked the nesting osprey and was electrocuted. A crew, dispatched to pinpoint and repair the source of a power outage at the lodge, found the hawk's remains at the base of the pole.

Glover, vice president and chief operating officer of the co-op's Electric Operations Office, said the crew installed a guard

atop the pole, which was designed to prevent raptors or nesting material from coming into contact with the wires. This would allow the osprey to rebuild their nest.

"Just in the past 10 years, we've put several up in the Loudonville area," Glover said.

It worked like a charm. At first. The osprey pair wasted no time rebuilding their nest. Except for an occasional fish break.

Then the story took another turn. Nesting material had dangled onto the wires.

On May 18, an Energy Cooperative crew removed the nest and put a temporary barrier above it to prevent rebuilding. Contacted on Friday, May 19, Glover said the co-op planned to erect a new pole and nesting platform early the following week. This one should allow the osprey to rebuild again without the danger of being electrocuted.

A crew put up the pole Tuesday morning.

But will they have time to produce a clutch of eggs and raise the hatchlings?

According to area birding expert Gary Cowell, it's not unusual for osprey to rebuild relatively late in the breeding season.

Cowell, vice president of the Greater Mohican Audubon Society, speculated that the breeding pair could be offspring of osprey nesting on two platforms on Pleasant Hill Lake.

As of the second week of May, osprey on the Pleasant Hill Lake nests appeared to be sitting on eggs.



Irv Oslin photos

A male osprey delivers another branch in the process of rebuilding a nest on Pleasant Hill Road before it was removed because it was dangling onto wires. His mate will position the branch while he fetches another.

OSPREY FACTS

Like bald eagles, osprey have made an impressive comeback after the banning or stringent regulation of DDT and other persistent pesticides. Osprey populations bottomed out by the 1960s. They are now a common sight in coastal areas. Our area's shallow lakes and streams make ideal habitat for these birds, which almost exclusively prey on fish.

Here are a few more osprey facts:

- Diving into the water, for the first time, they grab their prey and emerge seemingly without missing a beat. They can be moving at about 30 mph when they hit the water and have been clocked at 50.
- When diving, they are limited to about 3 feet in

depth.

- Osprey's feet represent a unique adaptation. They have a reversible outer toe, allowing them to grasp fish with two toes in front and two in back. They are able to align their legs to hold fish head-first and parallel to their bodies, reducing drag during flight.
- Their fishing success rate is about one in four tries.
- Males supply the sticks for the nests, while the females arrange them. Females incubate the eggs. Males take over egg-sitting duty long enough for the females to hunt.
- Osprey migrate to South and Central America in winter, with the young staying at the wintering grounds the



A female osprey rearranges sticks delivered by the male at the Pleasant Hill Road nest before it was removed because it was dangling onto wires.

first two years of their lives. They begin breeding at three years of age.

- Their wingspan can reach up to 6 feet.
- Raccoons are their main predator. (The Pleasant Hill Road nest has a steel band near the base to deter climbing predators.)
- Because their prey is

high up on the food chain and susceptible to long-term pesticide exposure, osprey are a good indicator of environmental quality.

Sources: The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the Ontario, Canada, based Friends of the Osprey.



Energy Cooperative crew members work on putting up a new pole Tuesday on Pleasant Hill Road.

Another power provider, Firelands Electric Co-Op Inc., donated utility poles for those platforms nearly two decades ago.

The poles were placed

in the water near the edge of the lake during winter draw-down and have produced many broods of osprey.

However, Cowell pointed out that the plat-

forms have seen better days. One pole, near Covert Road, leans precariously.

The ospreys could use a helping hand, someone willing to step up and re-

place the aging platforms next winter.

Irv Oslin, a retired Times-Gazette reporter, is an outdoors enthusiast.

Ohio Wildlife Council approves hunting regulations

The 2017-18 hunting and trapping seasons were among the regulations approved by the Ohio Wildlife Council at its scheduled meeting in April, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

White-tailed deer hunting changes include modifications to bag limits for several counties throughout the state.

Overview of deer hunting seasons for 2017-2018:

- Deer archery: Sept. 30, 2017-Feb. 4, 2018
- Youth deer gun: Nov. 18-19, 2017
- Deer gun: Nov. 27-Dec. 3, 2017; Dec. 16-17, 2017
- Deer muzzleloader: Jan. 6-9, 2018

An increase in the bag limit, from two deer per county to three deer per county, was approved for Athens, Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Fairfield, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Hocking, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Tuscarawas, Vinton and Washington

counties.

A reduction in the bag limit, from three deer per county to two deer per county, was approved for Allen, Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Paulding, Putnam and Williams counties.

All other county bag limits remain the same. The statewide bag limit remains at six deer. Only one deer may be antlered, and a hunter cannot exceed a county bag limit.

In other rule changes, any straight-walled cartridge rifle with a minimum caliber of .357 to a maximum caliber of .50 is now allowed for hunting deer in Ohio.

There have been three seasons of hunting deer with straight-walled cartridge rifles in Ohio with no biological impacts to the herd or additional hunter incidents.

Defining the allowable rifles makes the rule easily understood and easily enforced, while also being inclusive of a great number of rifle options.

OUTDOOR BRIEFS

Outdoors photos, stories, etc. wanted

We want to see your outdoors hunting and fishing photos, both current and back in the day.

We also want people to write columns about hunting and fishing and give us notices of upcoming hunting and fishing events.

Submit these by mail or drop them off at 40 E. Second St., Ashland, Ohio 44805; or send by email to newsroom@times-gazette.com.

New Pittsburg traps

The New Pittsburg Sportsmen's Club (11256 Myers Road West Salem) will have practice traps open every Thursday at 6 p.m. weather permitting.

Cost is: adults \$4 per 25 targets, youth \$2 per 25 targets. Check <http://>

npsc1960.com/ or <https://www.facebook.com/NewPittsburgSportsmen'sClub/> for updates and cancellations.

Licenses available to purchase

Ohioans can purchase a 2017-18 hunting or fishing license at wildohio.gov and at hundreds of participating agents throughout Ohio.

Licenses also are available for purchase on a mobile device such as a smartphone.

A resident fishing license and hunting license cost \$19 each.

Prices for all fishing and hunting licenses and permits are unchanged from last year.

Ohio's 2017-18 licenses are valid immediately upon purchase through Feb. 28, 2018.

White-tailed deer and fall wild turkey hunting permits will go on sale later in 2017.

Spring wild turkey season

Ohio hunters have checked nearly 21,000 wild turkeys so far

Ohio hunters checked 20,819 wild turkeys to-date during the combined 2017 spring wild turkey hunting season and statewide youth wild turkey hunting season, April 22 through May 21. The northeast zone, which includes Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Trumbull counties, remains open through May 28.

Hunters checked 18,899 birds during the first four weeks of the 2017 wild turkey season compared to 16,229 birds in 2016. Young hunters checked 1,920 birds during the 2017

statewide youth season compared to 1,564 in 2016.

Ohio's 2017 spring wild turkey season was open from Monday, April 24 to Sunday, May 21 in the south zone and is open from Monday, May 1 to Sunday, May 28 in the northeast zone. The Statewide youth season was April 22-23.

A list of all wild turkeys checked during the 2017 combined spring turkey hunting seasons follows.

The first number following the county's name shows the harvest numbers

for 2017, and the 2016 numbers are in parentheses.

An * designates a north-east zone county, which will remain open to wild turkey hunting through Sunday, May 28.

Adams: 503 (432); Allen: 91 (89); Ashland: 275 (202); Ashtabula*: 562 (569); Athens: 408 (363); Auglaize: 60 (50); Belmont: 532 (491); Brown: 425 (347); Butler: 189 (166); Carroll: 447 (322); Champaign: 89 (95); Clark: 17 (15); Clermont: 418 (396); Clinton: 45 (40);

Columbiana: 332 (361); Coshocton: 648 (418); Crawford: 75 (74); Cuyahoga*: 9 (12); Darke: 45 (40); Defiance: 290 (324); Delaware: 102 (111); Erie: 57 (55); Fairfield: 130 (102); Fayette: 15 (26); Franklin: 23 (21); Fulton: 140 (120); Gallia: 472 (418); Geauga*: 215 (264); Greene: 24 (16); Guernsey: 564 (428); Hamilton: 107 (117); Hancock: 52 (53); Hardin: 86 (87); Harrison: 550 (425); Henry: 58 (72); Highland: 456 (387); Hocking: 379 (309); Holmes: 376 (217); Huron: 170

(113); Jackson: 447 (347); Jefferson: 399 (410); Knox: 435 (285); Lake*: 73 (54); Lawrence: 293 (274); Licking: 418 (281); Logan: 137 (141); Lorain: 165 (141); Lucas: 67 (60); Madison: 6 (13); Mahoning: 231 (228); Marion: 37 (35); Medina: 171 (138); Meigs: 533 (419); Mercer: 20 (21); Miami: 24 (20); Monroe: 592 (508); Montgomery: 19 (18); Morgan: 426 (308); Morrow: 181 (174); Muskingum: 612 (462); Noble: 481 (349); Ottawa: 1 (3); Paulding: 113 (126); Perry: 390 (260); Pickaway: 19

(26); Pike: 300 (278); Portage: 287 (205); Preble: 93 (114); Putnam: 66 (87); Richland: 346 (280); Ross: 389 (350); Sandusky: 21 (25); Scioto: 299 (270); Seneca: 178 (141); Shelby: 46 (50); Stark: 337 (281); Summit: 57 (65); Trumbull*: 364 (464); Tuscarawas: 674 (429); Union: 58 (48); Van Wert: 22 (27); Vinton: 360 (306); Warren: 95 (101); Washington: 543 (466); Wayne: 143 (106); Williams: 283 (313); Wood: 24 (36); Wyandot: 108 (103); Total: 20,819 (17,793).