

NOTES

TIMBER HARVEST MODIFICATION AROUND AN ACTIVE OSPREY NEST

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Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) are generally found along seacoasts and on or near large bodies of inland waters. They frequently nest in areas where timber is harvested. It is important to know something about tolerance to timber harvest activities, especially during the nesting season.

Management suggestions for this bird range from merely leaving the nest tree unmolested (Melo 1975), to not cutting within 100 to 150 m of an Osprey nest during non-nesting periods and no closer than 0.4 km to an active Osprey nest (Lind 1976). Melo (1975) reported a successful Osprey nest where nesting had begun in 1975 before timber harvest started. Timber harvest operations came within 30 m of the nest snag and the only special treatment was not to fell the nest snag or to "brush" the snag with felled trees. The nest was not occupied in 1976 although Ospreys did construct a nest nearby (Melo pers. comm.). Ospreys returned in spring of 1977 and nested at the site of the 1975 nest.

We report here on some harvest modifications around an active nest in Arizona during summer 1972. This nest is located in the Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) timber type on the Black River District, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The nest, located on top of a broken Ponderosa Pine snag 81 cm DBH, overlooks the high, steep canyon wall of the Black River where the Ospreys forage. A 16 ha management unit was established around the Osprey nest and about 30% of the 22 m²/ha basal area was removed during summer of 1972. Timber was cut as close as 61 m from the nest on the north where the Osprey's view of workers was somewhat obstructed by a ridge. Timber was not harvested closer than 100 m from the nest in any other direction. Skidding within the management unit was done with horses in June when two young were in the nest. Although logging was not permitted within 61 m of the nest, there was a haul road 30 m from the nest.

The Osprey behavior was monitored during 1972 with a time-lapse camera placed in an adjacent tree. The Ospreys displayed alarm whenever anyone approached the nest or when log trucks passed by, but continued to nest and fledged two young. Ospreys have continued to use the nest each year through 1979. Nearby snags were used as perch sites and Ospreys were seldom observed perched on the nest tree except on the nest. We do not know if the nearby snags were necessary but they were used under existing conditions. We suggest they be left for other snag dependent wildlife as well as for Ospreys.

Melo (1975) and Lind (1976) expressed two extremes in management recommendations but these extremes may not always be practical. Melo presented data for only 1 year on minimum modifications, which was to leave the nest tree unmolested.

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Ospreys failed to use the nest the next year following timber harvest, but did return and nest the second year after harvest. Our observations indicate that timber harvest can occur closer to an active nest than the 0.4 km suggested by Lind. Probably the more realistic harvest modification that will still permit continued nesting by Ospreys lies somewhere between those suggested by Lind and Melo. We suggest that timber harvest be restricted to a minimum of 100 m from established Osprey nests during any period of year until sufficient data have been collected to indicate that closer harvest will not be harmful.

LITERATURE CITED

- Lind, S. 1976. Production, nest site selection, and food habits of Ospreys on Deschutes National Forest, Oregon. M.S. Thesis, Oregon State Univ., Corvallis. 53 pp.
- Melo, J. 1973. Logging around an Osprey nest site—an observation. *J. Forestry* 73:724-725.

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Sketch by Narca Moore