

Osprey Restoration in Iowa

2018 Nesting Report

The osprey restoration program in Iowa began in the 1997 and involved translocating young birds from Minnesota and Wisconsin to strategic locations across Iowa. The last year that birds were released was 2016 and currently, the objective is to monitor nesting activity. There are three main areas in the state where osprey have become well established: the Iowa City to Waterloo corridor, Des Moines and Vicinity, and Spirit Lake and vicinity. There are also two nest pair on the western border of Iowa, south of Sioux City (Figure 1).

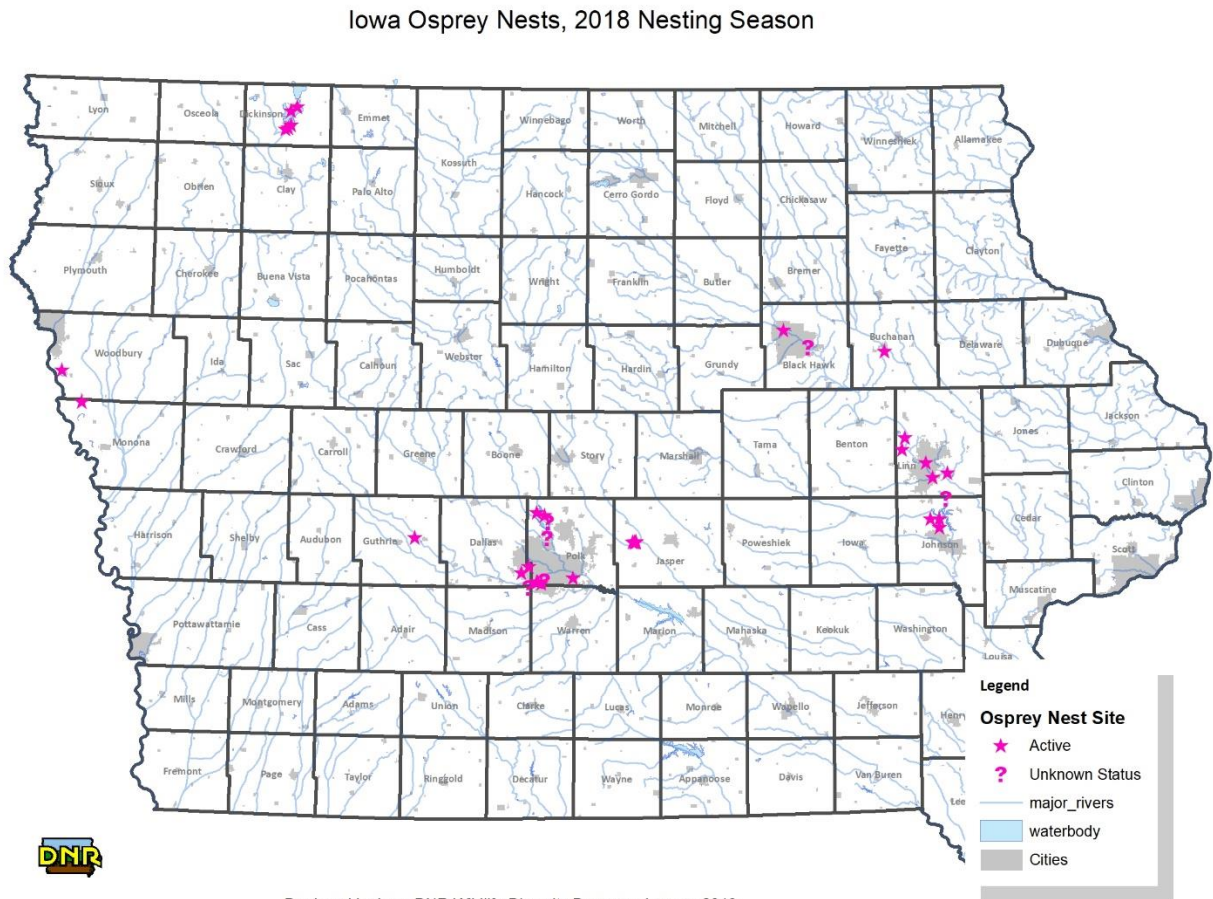
Monitoring of nest sites is accomplished primarily by volunteers. Volunteers are assigned to a particular nest or nests and new nests are reported opportunistically. Volunteers visit the nest multiple times and try to gather information on the nests activity at the start of the nesting season and whether the pair is successful in fledging young towards the end of the nesting season. Some opportunistic reports of nesting activity are also accepted if no formal data is available.

At the start of 2018, there were 40 Osprey nests that were designated as routinely active (active in recent years especially 2017) or with unknown status (no updates on the nest recently). A total of 32 of these nests were reported on during or after the nesting season (Table 1 and 2). Three of these 32 nests were reported as inactive in 2018, with 29 having some Osprey activity on or near the nest. Of the active nests, 5 had no reported outcome, 8 failed to produce young and 16 were successful in producing young. A minimum total of 30 young were fledged with the average number of young produced per nest at 1.25 (Table 1).

The number of nests that were active was the highest it has been in recent years. Seven of the reported nests were newly reported in 2018. The rate of nest failure was higher than in recent years and monitors reported that for several of the nests the Osprey pair stuck around all nesting season but no young ever seemed to be produced. Osprey in Iowa usually initiate nesting in April which was unseasonably cold in 2018, with temperatures in some places staying in the 20s and 30s. This may have had an impact on nest initiation and, paired with an anecdotally noted severe black fly season, it may have caused a higher than normal nest failure rate. It should be noted, however, that there has also been a small shift in how nests are being tracked in 2018 which may also have had a small effect on the data trend. Therefore, data comparisons between 2018 and previous years should be done cautiously.

In future years, the DNR will continue to monitor Osprey nest sites with the partnership of volunteers. One challenge that will also continue to be studied and managed is the fact that Osprey's favorite nest platform seems to be cell phone towers. More than half of the 40 nest sites are known to be on cell phone towers. Osprey don't generally cause damage to the towers but conflicts can arise when work must be done on a tower during the nesting season.

Figure 1. Statewide map showing where Osprey nests were active in 2018 or had unknown activity



Produced by Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program, January 2019.

Summary	2016	2017	2018
Number of nests with Active or Unknown Status	30	NA	40
Number of Nests Reported On	30	28	32
Number of Inactive Nests	5	NA	3
Number of Active Nests	24	28	29
Number of Nests Failed	2	5	8
Number of Nests Successful	22	23	16
Number of Nest with Unknown Outcome	NA	NA	5
Minimum Total of Young Produced	42	47	30
Average Young per Nest	1.75	1.68	1.25

Table 2. 2018 Osprey Nesting Results in Iowa

Nest ID	County Name	Nest Activity in 2018	Nesting Outcome	Number of Young Fledged
3	Dickinson	Active	Failed	0
18	Dallas	Active	Failed	0
25	Johnson	Active	Failed	0
28	Linn	Active	Failed	0
107	Dickinson	Active	Failed	0
120	Johnson	Active	Failed	0
123	Johnson	Active	Failed	0
128	Dickinson	Active	Failed	0
2	Monona	Active	Successful	At least 1
8	Polk	Active	Successful	2
14	Linn	Active	Successful	1
17	Buchanan	Active	Successful	1
32	Polk	Active	Successful	2
35	Woodbury	Active	Successful	2
45	Jasper	Active	Successful	2
110	Polk	Active	Successful	2
113	Dallas	Active	Successful	2
114	Linn	Active	Successful	3
118	Guthrie	Active	Successful	3
119	Dickinson	Active	Successful	1
124	Jasper	Active	Successful	2
125	Jasper	Active	Successful	2
127	Jasper	Active	Successful	2
129	Dickinson	Active	Successful	2
10	Black Hawk	Active	Unknown	NA
105	Polk	Active	Unknown	NA
111	Polk	Active	Unknown	NA
122	Polk	Active	Unknown	NA
132	Linn	Active	Unknown	NA
4	Dickinson	Inactive	No Activity	NA
24	Johnson	Inactive	No Activity	NA
126	Jasper	Inactive	No Activity	NA
9	Polk	Unknown	Unknown	NA
11	Black Hawk	Unknown	Unknown	NA
13	Linn	Unknown	Unknown	NA
15	Johnson	Unknown	Unknown	NA
33	Polk	Unknown	Unknown	NA
40	Black Hawk	Unknown	Unknown	NA
112	Madison	Unknown	Unknown	NA
117	Polk	Unknown	Unknown	NA