

Tweed Osprey Group Report 2022

During the Eastern Osprey breeding season (March – November) Tweed Osprey Group volunteers annually monitor Eastern Osprey nesting sites throughout the Tweed Local Government Area, and south to Brunswick Heads in the north of the Byron Local Government Area.

- 27 Eastern Osprey nesting sites were monitored in 2022
- 22 sites were active - Nesting material added to substrate and Ospreys present during part or all of the breeding season
- 17 pairs attempted to breed – Osprey observed sitting low, presumed to be incubating
- 14 attempts were successful and fledged chicks
- 17 and possibly 20 chicks fledged
- A further 4 potentially active sites (T15, T33, T34, T41) were not monitored as they can only be viewed from a waterway
- One additional site in Brunswick Heads (T46) was not monitored throughout breeding season but was active at the start of the season
- 1 monitored site (T29) only used for perching and feeding, not nesting
- 3 sites with cradles (T3, T5 and T32) were not active – no Ospreys present through the season
- 3 sites previously monitored regularly (T9, T19 and T40) are no longer monitored as the dead trees can no longer support nests

In February and March 2022 the NSW Northern Rivers region experienced extreme flooding events which resulted in extensive erosion of creek and river banks, pollution and silting of waterways, and probable impacts on fish stocks. Despite ongoing impacts on the waterways from the floods and the following very wet winter months the Osprey population appears to have continued to breed and fledge young with little interruption.

Site Code	Site Name	Monitored in 2022	Active Breeding Site 2022	Attempted to breed	Chicks Fledged 2022
T3	Chinderah Tower	✓	x		
T5	Campbells Hill	✓	x		
T6	Nth Tumbulgum	✓	✓	✓	0
T7	Dodds Lane	✓	✓		
T9	Mooball Trig/Black Rocks	x	x		
T11	Maritime Museum	✓	✓	✓	1
T13	Boyd's Bay Bridge	✓	✓	✓	1
T15	Bilambil Creek	x	?		
T17	Boyle Avenue	✓	✓	✓	3

T19	Clothiers Creek Rd	x	x		
T21	Kingscliff	✓	✓	✓	1
T23	Hastings Point	✓	✓	✓	1
T25	BP Chinderah / Barneys Pt Bridge	x			
T26	Stotts Island	✓	✓	✓	0
T27	Sand Bypass Jetty	✓	✓	✓	2
T29	Golf Club	✓	x		
T30	Salt	✓	✓	✓	0 or 1
T31	Nth Pottsville Holiday Park	✓	✓	✓	1 or 2
T32	Wyuna Ave	✓	x		
T33	Bilambil Sports field	x	?		
T34	New Brighton	x	?		
T35	Gahwang Crt Ocean Shores	✓	✓	✓	1
T36	Blackwatch	✓	✓	✓	1
T37	Fingal School	x	x		
T38	Brunswick River	✓	x		
T39	Cobaki Village	✓	✓	✓	1
T40	Cobaki Broadwater	x			
T41	Anconia Avenue	x	?		
T42	Les Burger Sportsfield	✓	✓		
T43	Cudgen Foreshore	✓	✓	✓	2
T44	Banora Pt Tower	✓	✓	✓	1 or 2
T45	Upper Brunswick River	✓	x		
T46	Brunswick Sports field	x	✓		
T47	Dry Dock Road	✓	✓	✓	1
T48	Sth Black Rocks Pottsville	✓	✓		
T49	Coolangatta River Golf Course	✓	✓		
T50	Barneys Pt Fingal Rd	✓	✓	✓	0
		27	22	17	17 possibly 20

Comparison of annual Osprey breeding success

Final numbers of fledged chicks are subject to natural factors such as weather, availability of prey, predator activity, parental care, and accidental death of a parent from injury, collision with vehicles, or entanglement with fishing gear. Tweed Osprey Group results additionally depend on the number of nests monitored, how many are active, and on the skill of observers to determine which birds and what activities are happening at the nest, and on the timing of observations. It is possible that multiple observations will still not accurately determine the presence of chicks as they can be difficult to see in some nests and nestlings quickly develop plumage that is not easily distinguished from adults. Results therefore sometimes are considered “possible” when positive identification of fledglings accompanying adults has not been made, but it is assumed chicks have fledged. The following table shows results as number definitely fledged / total possible fledglings.

Year	Definite/Possible	Year	Definite/Possible	Year	Definite/Possible
1995	10	2005	7	2015	12/13
1996	12	2006	13	2016	17/18
1997	12	2007	14	2017	16/17
1998	22	2008	6	2018	11/12
1999	18	2009	19	2019	19
2000	10	2010	16	2020	14/16
2001	10	2011	15/21	2021	19/20
2002	12	2012	17/20	2022	17/20
2003	11	2013	13/16		
2004	9/10	2014	11		

Details of 2022 Osprey Nesting Sites

T3 Chinderah Tower: Box cradle erected by Essential Energy in 2021. Never used by Ospreys.

T5 Campbells Hill: New pole and box cradle installed close to old site in 2021 but Ospreys did not utilize it, instead focusing on the old broken cradle, but without proceeding to nest. The old cradle was removed in 2022 but the Ospreys still did not utilize the new box cradle. Flood damage in February 2022 caused heavy siltation of the Tweed River, possibly resulting in Ospreys being unable to find prey in the turbid river, and/or reduction in prey. During and after the flood Ospreys were consistently absent from the site, only visiting the site very occasionally in September but roosting elsewhere. The site remains abandoned at the time of this report.

T6 North Tumbulgum: The nest was rebuilt and Ospreys present in April. Incubation suspected June, July, early August. Subsequently a single Osprey present on crossbar or standing on nest but no chick ever observed. Assume attempt failed.

T7 Dodds Lane: Site is in a cane field beside Tweed River. Access was mostly impossible due to the wet weather and waterlogged paddocks throughout much of the breeding season. When observations were possible one or 2 adults present but no incubation or chicks observed. Assume they did not attempt to breed, or attempt was missed whilst site was inaccessible.

T9 Mooball Trig/Black Rocks Sportsfield: Dead tree no longer can support a nest. Site not monitored

T11 Maritime Museum: Nest rebuilt April. Incubating June, July. Single chick suspected late July. Fledged after mid-October.

T13 Boyds Bay Tick Gates: Incubating May, Single chick mid-July, being fed late August, self-feeding mid-September. Fledged October

T15 Bilambil Creek: Was in dead tree which is no longer visible. Site not monitored.

T17 Boyle Avenue: Incubating June, 2 chicks during July, one fledging 2-3 weeks behind the other by late August. Several weeks later a 3rd chick seen which also fledged.

T19 Clothiers Creek: Dead tree no longer can support a nest. Site not monitored

T21 Kingscliff: Nest is enormous! 1 chick fledged and family of 3 seen around nest post-fledging

T23 Hastings Pt: Erection of a new pole and box cradle in a safe location away from the busy Tweed Coast Road was scheduled for February but was delayed by the floods. It was erected in April in the grounds of the Hasting Point Holiday Park close to the banks of Cudgera Creek. The Ospreys had already commenced nesting on the crossbars. Tweed Shire Council intends to remove one of the crossbars from the old site to discourage nesting there, but will retain one crossbar for perching. Incubating June, July. Chick visible August. Fledged early October

T25 Barneys Pt Bridge: Following a series of road deaths of fledglings from this nest over the years Tweed Shire Council relocated the nest pole to a site further down-stream along Fingal Road in April 2022 (refer to T50).

T26 Stotts Island: Large nest in top of a hoop pine, as in previous years with pair present, female obviously much bigger than male. Incubating early July, feeding a small chick late August, but not seen again. By mid-September nest abandoned and both adults observed well away from nest. Assume attempt failed.

T27 Fingal Sand Bypass Jetty: 2 chicks fledged

T29 Golf Club: The Osprey pair from T17 Boyle Avenue continue to use this site for perching and feeding but not nesting.

T30 Salt: Dilapidated nest was rebuilt and 2 birds present from early June. Incubation suspected in August but no chick was positively confirmed by Osprey Group observer, although neighbours said they had seen a chick. A crossarm below

the nest collapsed in August. The remaining structure was inspected by Tweed Shire Council and deemed to not require maintenance.

T31 Pottsville Nth Holiday Park: Nest rebuilt by early June with 2 Ospreys present. Incubating through July with chicks suspected by end of August. 2 chicks visible late September and seen being fed late October. Both seen on 7 Nov, one self-feeding, other smaller and allowing sibling to feed uninterrupted. Subsequently only chick seen. Assume only 1 fledged successfully, possibly 2. T31 is within the area set aside by Resilience NSW to provide temporary housing for flood victims. The activity below the nest during the construction phase of the housing project did not appear to impact the Ospreys.

T32 Wyuna Ave: Cradle remains unused by Ospreys for nesting or perching.

T33 Bilambil Sportsfield: This pole and cradle is located on private land along Bilambil Creek and can no longer be observed from a public location. Not monitored as it requires viewing from the creek.

T34 New Brighton: Original site in a hoop pine no longer active or monitored. Ospreys were observed hunting along Marshalls Creek, New Brighton in December 2022 so a nest may be present in an unknown location. The area can only be viewed from the creek itself.

T35 Gahwang Crt, Ocean Shores: The nest was lost last year in a storm but was rebuilt this year in the top of the same hoop pine. One chick fledged this year.

T36 Blackwatch: Nest big and full by end of May with 2 Ospreys present. Some greenery growing in the nest. Incubating in August. Single chick confirmed mid-September, still being fed early October, still on nest 2nd week in November. Assume fledged.

T37 Fingal School: Not monitored. A few sticks seen on the cradle but no Ospreys seen at the site during incidental visits.

T38 Brunswick River: Tree no longer supports a nest.

T39 Cobaki Village: Nest disintegrated from last year. Rebuilt June, with incubation during July, August. Single chick observed early September. Fledged chick observed flying onto nest early November.

T40 Cobaki Broadwater: Not monitored. This nest was only seen once in 2010 and not since. Could only be viewed by boat from the Cobaki Broadwater

T41 Anconia Avenue: Not monitored. Located in a dead tree on bank of Cobaki Broadwater. Was viewed from Anconia Ave, West Tweed until a house was built and the view blocked. Can now only be viewed from a boat on Cobaki Broadwater.

T42 Les Burger Sportsfield: Nest held a few sticks and pair present by June. Possible incubation late June / July but subsequent observations did not confirm.

Site vacant September, October, November with occasional visit by an Osprey.
Assume no attempt to breed this year

T43 Cudgen Foreshore: Pole and cradle erected 2017. Pair present and rebuilding nest in April 2022. Copulating May. Single chick end of July, second chick sighted early August. Both fledged, one a week or 2 after the first. Nest subsequently deteriorated but 3 birds regularly returned to perch at nest site.

T44 Banora Pt Tower: Box cradle erected by Essential Energy in 2021. Nest refurbished and probably incubating in June. Chick suspected in early August, confirmed 31 August and 2nd chick suspected. Wing stretching and flapping end of September. Definitely 1 chick fledged, some concern regarding 2nd chick.

T45 Upper Brunswick River: Nest was observed in a tree in 2018. Nest tree subsequently collapsed, site not now monitored

T46 Brunswick Sportsfield: Pole and cradle erected in 2019. Site not monitored by Tweed Osprey Group, but the site was active 24 June 2022 with sticks on the cradle and one Osprey present. Outcome unknown

T47 Dry Dock Road, West Tweed: Pole and cradle erected late 2019. This year incubating June to mid-July. Single chick sighted 11 August. Wing-flapping and hovering 19 September, self-feeding on nest 29 September, assume fledged.

T48 South Black Rocks, Pottsville: Cradle added to existing pole in 2020. Substantial nest built on cradle in 2022. Despite Ospreys present no breeding attempt was observed by Tweed Osprey Group monitors. A local resident reported that 3 Ospreys regularly used the site through the breeding season, but she did not see any chicks. Ospreys regularly use light poles on corner of Tweed Coast Road and Kellehers Rd for feeding and perching.

T49 Coolangatta River Golf Course: A new nest located in a hoop pine near 2nd hole was reported last year but no breeding occurred. Ospreys were present again this year but again no breeding occurred.

T50 Barneys Pt Fingal Road: Pole from the T25 site relocated with new box cradle to this site downstream from the Barneys Pt bridge along Fingal Road alongside the Tweed River in April 2022. The Ospreys quickly added sticks to the new box cradle during June. Copulations were observed, with incubation suspected in July, possibly August, but then no chick observed. Attempt abandoned approximately 20 August. Crows a problem

Nesting attempt on the roof of a building in Tweed Heads

In early July 2022 a pair of Ospreys attempted to build a nest on top of the roof-top ventilation unit of a block of units at 20 Endeavour Pde, Tweed Heads. NPWS were alerted and contact was made with the manager of the building who was advised not to interfere with the nesting attempt. Subsequently the nest disintegrated and sticks

were scattered around the roof, possibly during bad weather during the east coast low on 22-24 July. Many members of the public were concerned about this event, with some of the opinion the nest was deliberately destroyed. Tweed Osprey Group has received a report that some sort of netting has been installed to discourage birds from nesting on the building. NPWS will follow up on this to ensure there are no wildlife entrapment issues and proper codes of practice and guidelines to protect assets and wildlife have been followed

Osprey mishaps, injuries and deaths in 2022

Tweed Osprey Group is not aware of any reported Osprey deaths or birds taken into care in 2022.

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