

# Late April Action

**The first egg** was laid on Sunday, April 22, at approximately 11:25:35 a.m. A third Osprey tried to join our mated pair. He was repelled and driven off by the male (Named Noble). This clash occurred at 1:17:58 p.m. on that Sunday.

The female (named Whitley) does all of the incubating on the first day, even as the male tries several times to incubate, it's not until the second day that Whitley allows Noble to help with the incubation. From that point on Noble returns several times a day to help with the incubation. Whitley turns over the incubation duties for a couple of hours total each day.

In the meantime, Noble provides the occasional fish to eat. Noble will catch a fish, find a tree to consume about half of it and then bring the rest to Whitley, who takes the half-eaten fish, and leaves Noble to incubate while she flies off to privately consume the remainder of the fish. Typically, there's only one adult in the nest at any given time. When there is a changeover from one bird to the other, the switch occurs in less than 30-45 seconds. On occasion, the nest will go unprotected for several minutes, but this is rare.

**The second egg** was laid three days later on Wednesday, April 25. It was found after a camera malfunction at 6:55:00 a.m. It was noted that during this time and for a few days afterward, Noble would bring a section of water-lily stem/root, and Whitley would nibble on it occasionally.

**The third egg** was not expected since the literature implies that young osprey tend to only produce two eggs in their first year of mating. Only older couples typically have three or four eggs. Now that the third egg was found three days later on April 28, sometime before 11:54:55 a.m. when the failed camera came back on line, we were wondering whether or not we had a young pair after all. We maintain that this is a first time nesting couple.



Noble and Whitley didn't waste any time mating the first day they were together, and several times a day afterward as well.

Noble is a good provider right away, although the first few fish were consumed by him, the later days, he provided for his mate along with help to build up the nest.



One interesting incident happened on the fifth day..... a third bird, a male, showed up with a fish and tried to enter into the nest. Noble, who had a fish of his own, challenged him. Ariel gymnastics between the two males was needed until the matter was settled. That third bird has not been seen since. The intruder is the middle bird in the above photo.



Both birds contribute to nest building initially. But at a certain point the male starts bringing in the finer grasses, and straw for the egg-laying area of the nest. This egg-laying area is typically in the center, but could wind up anywhere . After about two weeks, and several matings, the female begins spending more time in the nest arranging things to suit her, while the male continues to provide fish for her that has been partially eaten already by him somewhere off the nest. This is his contribution of food. And the female readily takes whatever fish he brings back, In the meantime, the male still brings material for the nest. And they both arrange this material. Sometimes both can be seen grabbing beaks of material to crush and break them up further into smaller pieces, possibly creating



a softer bed of material.

Next Update planned for beginning of egg-laying

# Early April 2018

*The pole was placed in January of 2017.*

The spring of that year (March to June of 2017) saw little, if any, interest in the platform. However, in August of that same year, 2017, long after the typical nesting season, there was occasional activity at the platform by three immature Ospreys. It was believed that these three birds were fledged from the immediate area a few months earlier, and would soon depart for their migration to Florida or S. America, to spend a year or two. But at this particular time, these three birds would occasionally use the platform as a place to eat the fish they caught in the lake. By the fall of 2017, the platform was empty and would remain empty until April 7, 2018, when a solitary female landed early in the morning.

During the winter of 2017, the lake association held a contest to give names to the nesting pair that we were counting on attracting to our platform. The winning names were Whitley for the female and Noble for the male. (The names of the two counties that border on the lake.) And thus on Saturday, April 7, 2018, a female Osprey named Whitley, landed on the nest at 6:30 a.m.

The rest of this brief update can be told in pictures.



Whitley arrives to an artificially prepared nesting platform and settles right in sorting out nesting material.



The male, Noble, arrives four days later. Studies tell us the birds return to an area within 100 miles of their home nest, find a mate and start a new life together, using that same nest for every year.