



Telemetry

By: James (Jim) A. Brown

The *Friends of the Osprey* in conjunction with *Bird Studies Canada* plan to use Telemetry to track and record the migration habits of a male osprey over the winter months this year. This will be dependent on the successful installation of a tracking device on a male Osprey.

But what is Telemetry? It is a process of tracking the movement of birds or animals in their day to day activities. A small transmitter PTT (Platform transmitter terminals) weighing 14 grams is placed on the bird or animal and a signal is sent to a satellite in space. The company being used for this project is North Star. North Star uses the Argos Satellite system. The Argos System is a polar orbiting, LEO constellation of French-owned receivers. Mounted on five US weather satellites are receivers that pick up the signal from the PTT's and track the location of the bird.

The *Friends of the Osprey* will locate a suitable male bird and with the help of representatives of Bird Studies Canada capture the bird temporarily, and attach the PTT to its back. This will in no way affect the bird in any of his activities. Male birds tend to return to the same nest year after year so we will then be able to locate the bird when the battery expires on the PTT. There is speculation that Osprey winter somewhere in the Amazon but this is not a sure fact; they may winter anywhere in between. By tracking the movement, we will have a better understanding of the migration pattern of this one bird and be able to answer some important questions. With a successful installation of the PTT and if the bird does not come to any harm during its migration, we will be able to keep a record of its progress on a day to day basis both to and from its wintering habitat. Does it travel the same route to and from its wintering spot or does it return by a different route. These are some of the questions we will be able to answer through this study. *Bird Studies Canada* will monitor the progress and send the *Friends of the Osprey* regular updates of the progress plotting its journey to the winter migration and back to Canada. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources have been conducting similar studies since the early 90's but it is believed that this is the first of its kind to occur in Ontario and possibly Canada.

The *Friends of the Osprey* would like to get local school children involved to give them a better understanding of this unique and beautiful raptor. The future of this species is sometime tenuous. They were on the endangered species list because of the use of pesticides etc. but they were removed a couple of years ago. Recently declining numbers put them back on the watch list again. Future generations must take an interest to help Osprey. We of the *Friends of the Osprey* hope this study will generate, enthusiasm, and interest in the future of these birds.

UPDATE: Late Spring 2010

We have now confirmed that our Telemetry Project is a go for this year. The transmitters have been purchased and Bird Studies Canada advises that they have most of our permits and will get the animal care approval this week. Watch The Post for these exciting updates in the next few weeks.