

Assessing Bash Risk Potential of Migrating and Breeding Osprey in the Mid-Atlantic Chesapeake Bay Region

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Abstract: Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) pose a significant risk to safe military flight operations. A multi-agency research project was initiated to quantify the risk of osprey-military aircraft collisions in the Mid-Atlantic Chesapeake Bay Region. During the 2006 nesting season, six adult osprey (three males and three females) were fitted with satellite transmitters near Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. We monitored satellite-tagged osprey movement patterns and obtained the location of each osprey at two-hour intervals during 0500–2300 hours during the breeding and fall migration periods of 2006. During the breeding season, adult osprey flew at an average altitude of 63 m above the ground and were active (i.e., flying) relatively equally throughout daylight hours. During the fall migration period, four osprey completed their migration to their wintering grounds, traveling an average distance of 4,828 km. We lost contact with two osprey during their fall migration. All six adult osprey utilized similar migration routes along the eastern coast of the United States. Female osprey began their fall migrations (August), prior to males (September). Adult osprey migrated (moved) during daylight hours and roosted at night. During migration, females flew at an average altitude of 377 m and males flew at an average altitude of 324 m. Migratory routes and flight characteristics (e.g., altitude) of osprey will be evaluated to assess the risk migrating osprey pose to military aircraft operations along the Eastern seaboard.

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