

An overview of American Transmission Co.'s Avian Protection Program

Committed to the environment

ATC is committed to environmental leadership in all aspects of our business. We support sustainable environmental policies and actions through balancing environmental stewardship with financial, engineering and maintenance requirements, and social impacts.

Our dedication to the environment also is evidenced through our designation as a Green Tier company by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Green Tier recognizes businesses and organizations that demonstrate superior environmental performance and dedication to continual improvement, and strives to encourage responsible environmental decision making to protect and restore natural resources.

Bird protection laws

- ◆ **Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918**
- ◆ **Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act**
- ◆ **Endangered Species Act**

The laws listed are among those that regulate activities that could significantly disturb birds or result in a take. These regulations apply to the majority of bird species. ATC complies with all laws that prohibit harming birds and strives to minimize the impact that transmission line construction and operation have on wildlife throughout our service area.



ATC worked to plant native grasses and clover that provide good forage for grouse and other wildlife following construction of a transmission line in Vilas County, Wis.

Why does ATC have an Avian Protection Program?

- ◆ Birds may accidentally be injured or killed due to electrocution or contact with transmission facilities. These occurrences may also affect the reliability of the transmission system.
- ◆ Maintenance and construction of transmission facilities may disturb nesting birds.

How does ATC's Avian Protection Program help protect birds?

Transmission facility siting and design

During facility siting and design, ATC identifies areas of heavy avian use and evaluates measures to mitigate potential avian impacts. Heavy avian use areas include: Important Bird Areas (IBAs), a global program administered in the U.S. by the National Audubon Society; state wildlife areas; federal waterfowl production areas; large wetlands; parks; and other managed lands.



ATC's current transmission line design standards meet recommended clearance distances, the distance between a live conductor and another live conductor or the live conductor to a ground, for the region's largest bird species. Existing lines may be upgraded to meet these clearances when rebuilt or replaced.

Nest management

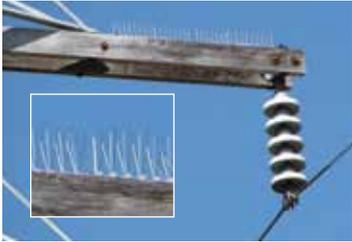
ATC's Avian Protection Program requires that all stick nests built on ATC facilities be reported to environmental or asset maintenance staff. The asset maintenance and environmental teams will then evaluate the outage and electrocution risk and may move the nests to a platform if necessary.

Incident reporting

All dead or injured birds found on ATC facilities, or in the right-of-way are reported to the ATC environmental department. In the case of injury, a bird rehabilitation specialist is contacted for assistance. All incidents involving migratory birds are reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These incidents will be evaluated to determine if installation of avian protection measures is appropriate.

Avian protection measures

- ◆ Transmission component or configuration modifications
- ◆ Flight diverters installed on shield wires increase visibility of wires
- ◆ Perch guards prevent birds from landing or sitting on transmission facilities
- ◆ Replacement of problematic structures



Perch deterrents are installed to prevent birds from landing or sitting on transmission towers.



Bird flight diverters increase visibility of transmission lines.



ATC contractors help by erecting and installing artificial nesting platforms, like these structures installed in a heron rookery.

Osprey nests

Bird nests on utility equipment may cause concern, both for the safety of the birds as well as the reliability of the electric system.

Since 1993, various conservation organizations and electric utilities have installed nest platforms, and about 87 percent of Wisconsin's breeding osprey population nest on platforms, according to the Department of Natural Resources. There are more than 100 nesting platforms located on or adjacent to transmission lines across ATC's service area, and these platforms support successful breeding of this once declining species. ATC continues to install platforms on our transmission system as well as other locations in partnership with various agencies, organizations and individuals. These platforms protect the birds, enhance reliability and promote continued recovery of the species.



In March 2008, ATC worked with We Energies and the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog to erect an osprey platform in the bog. An osprey pair chose the platform to build a nest early that summer – the first pair of ospreys to nest in Ozaukee County in more than 50 years.

ATC Environmental Avian Coordinator

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About ATC

Everything we do at ATC is designed to ensure the reliable operation of the electric transmission system. ATC is a transmission-only utility that owns, operates, builds and maintains transmission facilities in portions of Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Minnesota and Illinois.



Helping to **keep the lights on**, businesses running and communities strong®

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