

Stockton College Students Install Osprey Platform on Saltmarsh Next to Stockton Seaview

Migrating Ospreys to Have New Nesting Site for Their Spring Return

For Immediate Release; [Photo 1](#), [Photo 2](#) Credit to Mike Horan

Tuesday, December 03, 2013

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Galloway Township, NJ- A group of students from The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey built and installed an osprey platform to provide their mascot with a nesting site next to Stockton Seaview Hotel and Golf Club.

Following a lesson on natural habitat loss in Dr. Daniel Moscovici's Environmental Issues class, groups of students researched the diet, habitat and distribution of local animal species. "I asked the students to choose a local species, identify where on campus it would live and to build its habitat," said Moscovici, an assistant professor of Environmental Science and Geology.

One group chose the osprey, a species that was named the college mascot in the early 1970s when it was listed as an endangered species. Thanks to help from conservationists who provided manmade nesting platforms where trees no longer stand, the species has rebounded and is no longer listed as endangered.

After engaging in peer-reviewed research and presenting their findings to fellow classmates, the students had the opportunity to get their hands dirty, said Moscovici, of Oreland, PA. Using power tools, Chris Borkowski, of North Cape May, Keith Mulligan, of Tabernacle, and Kelsey Thomas, of Cherry Hill, converted an old wooden pallet into an osprey nesting platform.

Moscovici and a group of students from the class joined Ben Wurst, habitat program manager at the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, to install the platform off Ocean Avenue.

"With Ben's expertise, we took a boat out to the saltmarsh and used a post hole digger to install the platform," said Moscovici.

"I really loved that students chose to construct the platform from salvaged materials; it shows

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that they are conscious of their ecological footprint,” Wurst said.

As the manager of the New Jersey Osprey Project, Wurst was pleased to be contacted by Moscovici to involve Stockton students in his work. “Given the school mascot is the osprey, it seems only fitting for students to participate in our grassroots osprey conservation project,” he said.

The hands-on element of the class helps to “tie everything together and it’s a really rewarding complement to the academics,” said Moscovici.

“We could see Atlantic City and the golf course from the saltmarsh as we were installing the platform. If I were an osprey, I’d want to live there,” he added.

Wurst chose the site, which is viewable from Ocean Avenue, so that students can actively monitor the nest during the nesting season. Students can report nesting activity on osprey-watch.org.

On Nov. 27, the Conserve Wildlife Foundation released [data](#) from a statewide census that reported a milestone of more than 500 nesting osprey pairs. The student-built platform will help to continue the momentum.

In the Environmental Issues course, students study a different issue each week with topics ranging from deforestation and farming to waste management and conflicts. Lectures focus on issues in national and global contexts and are complemented with local, hands-on applications.

In addition to the osprey platform, other groups of students created bat houses, bluebird houses, wood duck boxes and owl boxes, which were installed throughout the Galloway campus.

“Stockton’s campus provides 2,000 acres for students to apply the material we learn in the classroom. I want my students to know about what’s going on right here,” said Moscovici.

Ospreys migrate north from South America in early spring to seek nesting sites. “It’s in a good location, so there’s a good chance we will see ospreys this spring,” said Moscovici.

Photo 1 Caption: Ben Wurst, Dr. Daniel Moscovici, Chris Martin, and Chris Borkowski make their way through the saltmarsh to install an osprey nesting platform. Photo by Mike Horan.

Photo 2 Caption: Dr. Daniel Moscovici, Ben Wurst, Bridget Blood, Keith Mulligan, Chris Martin, and Chris Borkowski stand alongside a handmade osprey nesting platform that was installed just off Ocean Avenue at Stockton Seaview Hotel and Golf Club. Photo by Mike Horan.

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