

## **Osprey Technical Committee Update**

The IEMR Osprey Technical Committee met in St. John's on January 24 to review work done to date. Research and monitoring of the potential effects of low-level military flight training at 5 Wing Goose Bay on the productivity of osprey has been conducted annually by the Department of National Defence since 1991. During the first eight years, active osprey nests within the Low-level Training Area (LLTA) were avoided by military aircraft by a 2.5 nautical mile radius. Based on the results of observation and productivity over this period and in consultation with appropriate regulatory agencies, the exclusion zones for aircraft around osprey nests were removed prior to the 1999 training season. From 1999 to 2001, 30 active nests in the LLTA and 30 from an adjacent Control area were monitored for productivity of osprey. Although osprey productivity varied annually, no difference in nest activity, nesting success and productivity were detected between the LLTA and Control samples in each year of the study. Low-level sorties remained similar in number and distribution over this period but no trend in relation to reproductive success of osprey was evident.

### **Conclusions:**

- There were no significant effects of Low Level Flight Training during monitoring and treatment of osprey nests.
- LLTA productivity of osprey nests without mitigation was consistent with the control area osprey nests.
- Osprey in the Labrador region are at the northern extent of their range, with reproduction influenced primarily by weather and related factors (such as wind).
- The position of DND is that the option B impact prediction in the 1994 EIS was overstated. Impact to osprey is considered minor before mitigation.
- The impact to Osprey considered negligible without mitigation and there is low uncertainty of impact.

### **Future osprey monitoring and research by DND and IEMR**

DND has concluded that their behavioural and effects monitoring for mitigation purposes is completed and that no further study required. They began work with satellite telemetry in 2002 to examine other issues related to osprey regarding whether the same birds are returning to nests; migration routes through the training area and whether migration timing is protected by mitigation and issues related to bird strikes by aircraft. Dawn Laing is conducting a M.Sc. project under Dr. Bird to address some of these questions. Four transmitters were put on juvenal osprey in 2002, however, all transmitters failed shortly after deployment. In 2003, the goal is to collar another 5 adults to examine migration times and routes.

DND is proposing possible environmental screenings to look at future training opportunities, including propeller aircraft and helicopter effects and determining threshold effects. They hope to examine acoustic effects on bald eagles and

osprey physiological responses. The IEMR concurred with the reasons and conclusions presented by the DND work through JWEL. The Institute would like to see the dataset continued with respect to monitoring of nests inside and outside LLTA in 2003 and has committed to continue monitoring with respect to future analyses. Monitoring of osprey will be contracted out by the IEMR for the summer of 2003 and future research will be developed in consultation with the Osprey Steering group that met in Halifax on March 19, 2003 and will meet again in the fall of 2003.