

Pennsylvania Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC) Goshawk Subcommittee Nest Data Policy - 2016

The OTC is a committee of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey that is advisory to the Pennsylvania Game Commission. In 2016, the OTC set up a new subcommittee to help gather information on the Northern Goshawk in Pennsylvania.

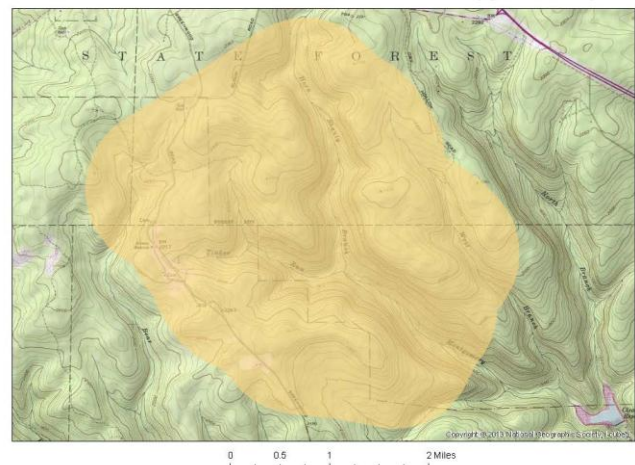
In order to accurately assess changes in the distribution of nesting Northern Goshawk in Pennsylvania and facilitate status review, verified nest location data are needed for this species. Due to the sensitive nature of nesting raptors, the OTC has established the following policy on use of goshawk nest site data reported to the OTC Goshawk Subcommittee to ensure conservation of nesting goshawks.

All locations of goshawks or their nests reported to the OTC will be kept in a confidential database. Nest sites that are confirmed also will be mapped and entered into the PA Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) data base that is managed by the PA Natural Heritage Program, the program responsible for location data on all rare species within the state (<http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/>).

Conservation polygons that protect the nest location are drawn by qualified Natural Heritage biologists around each nest location. The polygons are drawn to protect the supporting habitat needed for the survival of the species and do not reveal the exact location of the nest site. The shape of the polygon varies depending on the topography and other landscape features. Therefore, it is not a circular buffer and the nest location *is not* in the center of the protection polygons, nor is the polygon identified as being a goshawk nest in the database (see example below). In this manner, the exact location of a rare species, such as a raptor nest, is protected from possible disturbance. Mapping in PNDI database is critical to protecting the nest from any human disturbance.

Any person wishing to report a nest who believes the nest needs further protection can opt to report nest site only by forest stand or general area. When choosing this option it is essential to provide thorough confirmation information including photographs, recordings, or other documentation that supports identification. Because nests reported only to the level of forest stand cannot be protected, this option is discouraged especially on public property. Any nest site reporter that does not want a nest he/she reports to be available for future research can request that the data be so marked within the database by adding a note at bottom of data form.

Northern Goshawk Environmental Review Polygon Example



The OTC Goshawk Subcommittee database will be housed at Penn State University, under supervision of OTC Chair Dr. Margaret Brittingham. The PNDI database is maintained by the state agency responsible for bird and mammal conservation, the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Neither database is open to unrestricted public use. The primary purpose of the OTC Goshawk Subcommittee database is to assess goshawk distribution change within Pennsylvania. Future uses may be to study reproductive success to better understand the limiting factors for breeding population and for status determination.

Goshawk reports can be emailed to goshawk@psu.edu or Goshawks C/o Dr. Brittingham, OTC Chair, Wildlife Resources, 409 Forest Res. Bldg., Penn State University, State College, PA 16802 ; Phone reports to Goodrich at: 570-943-3411x106.