Welcoming The Ospreys

by Sarah Martin

This is Sarah's report of the Osprey Nesting Platform Project, conducted by the Central Ohio OYBC Chapter on Saturday, September 24, 2011.

Dick Tuttle poses with OYBC members Sarah, Jacob, Sarah, Clare, Emily, Allison, and Kat, along with their osprey platform. Missing from photo: Nick

Dzzzzzrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! Dzrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! Not exactly the sound you'd expect to hear coming from a birding club, huh? However, if you had been at the Ohio Young Birder's Club (OYBC) activity on September 24 that's exactly the sound you would have heard. On that day the members of OYBC met at Gerry Brevoort's (one of the club's advisors) house to build an Osprey nesting platform. We were supervised by Dick Tuttle, a man who knows how to build and put up Osprey platforms.

The day began with Mr. Tuttle showing us some pictures of Osprey platforms that had already been built. Then he introduced everyone to the different jobs that we needed to do to build the Osprey platform. There were about six basic jobs. One was building the cradle, which is where the Ospreys build their nest. Another was cutting metal tubing into certain lengths so it could be used as supports for the cradle and the perch. (The perch is a piece of wood held to the cradle by two metal tubes. The parent Ospreys can land on it when they don't want to be in the nest with all their hungry, squawking babies, or the babies can use it when learning to fly.) Some other jobs were banging the ends of the tubes flat so they could be nailed to the wood and putting chicken wire on top of the wooden part of the cradle. The tubes needed to be painted green, too, and the sharp edges needed to be cut off the chicken wire so the Ospreys who use the platform won't be hurt.

After that we all set to work, with a little help from the parents of some of the Young Birders. Sawdust flew and drills whined as the people flattening the metal tubes banged away on a small anvil. We worked at our separate tasks for about three hours. When we had finished making all the parts, we began to put it together. We put the cradle together and stapled the chicken wire to it. We couldn't put the tubes on, though. They would have to be put on when the platform was erected. After we were done we all stood with the Osprey platform while the adults took pictures of us with the platform. There was even a professional photographer there!

After we had finished the platform, Mr. Tuttle told us some things about where the platform will be put up. He told us that it is going to go in the water at the Twin Lakes in Powell (which happens to be where we went Kayaking last June). Since it is going in the water, though, they will have to wait until the water level is really low to put it up. Hopefully that will happen soon!

As everybody was getting ready to leave, Mr. Tuttle gave everybody an article about Ospreys. I think we all learned a lot that day, even if it was more carpentry skills than birding skills. Hopefully, we can go and visit the platform when it is put up and see the ospreys who have made it their home.