

## Protecting Our Avian Visitors

Avian (bird) protection is a very important part of our commitment to wildlife protection and environmental stewardship. When birds land or nest on our electric power lines and our utility infrastructure, transmission facilities can be damaged, outages can occur and our avian visitors can be impacted.

Raptors (birds of prey) and other migratory and endangered birds routinely use power line poles and towers as perches to establish territorial boundaries, hunt, rest, find shade and feed. Poles often provide perching and/or nesting opportunities in areas where few natural perches or nest sites can be found. If the configuration and location of utility structures are in areas where birds are attracted by vegetation and topographical features, the chance of electrocution and/or collisions increases.

With the formation of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), the U.S. electric power industry and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have worked together to reduce bird electrocution and collisions. As part of this effort, we've developed a comprehensive Avian Protection Program, which contains guidance and specific strategies that we use to protect birds.

We are always proactively looking for potential risks to bird safety and health and implement steps to protect birds that may come in contact with our equipment or be affected by our operations or activities. We include bird-friendly design and construction in our operations to minimize impacts in migratory fly zones and priority bird habitat areas. We routinely work with agencies and organizations that support avian and electrical safety and research such as the Edison Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). We also research and employ technological solutions to help avoid adverse bird contact with electrical equipment.



### The Basics of Avian Protection

All migratory birds in North America are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Certain species are also protected by the Endangered Species Act. Eagles benefit from special protection under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

When a bird completes an electric circuit, which means it touches two energized parts at the same time or energized and grounded parts of electrical equipment are touched, the bird could be electrocuted.

Most electrocutions occur in medium-voltage distribution lines, when the space between the conductors is small enough to be bridged by birds. Surprisingly, high-voltage lines are generally less hazardous to birds. Poles with energized hardware, such as transformers, can be especially hazardous to small birds, because they contain many closely spaced energized parts. Birds may also collide into our lines as they navigate between habitats.



## Our Avian Protection Policy

Our Avian Protection Policy requires that we protect birds of prey and migratory birds that might come in contact with our equipment or are affected by our activities.

We integrate bird-friendly design into our operations to minimize the impact on our avian visitors. Examples include installing longer than normal cross arms on our power lines and creating nesting platforms as an alternative for birds using our power lines or towers. We install protective covers on conductors and minimize or avoid noise and other disturbances while birds are nesting. We also retrofit existing transmission, distribution and substation structures to reduce bird injuries and death.

## Focusing on Best Practices

Focusing on best practices with regard to avian protection helps to keep our birds safe and the power on. Our best practices include:

- Training our employees to be aware of the potential for dangerous bird interactions with our facilities. This training includes familiarization with APLIC's Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art 2006 as well as company-wide protection activities
- Evaluating equipment, operations and activities that might have an impact on migratory fly zones and priority habitat areas
- Identifying risks and, as needed, institute effective bird protection and plans to minimize any impact
- Obtaining all required approvals from state and federal agencies to address nesting concerns and to ensure safe removal and relocation of nests when necessary

- Taking advantage of topography and vegetation that naturally help birds avoid colliding with wires
- Installing line-marking equipment on distribution and transmission lines located in bird habitats to reduce potential avian collisions
- Participating actively in the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee



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