

North West Transmission Developments

Eagle Nest Survey Q & A

March 2024



TasNetworks conducts aerial inspections to identify wedge-tailed eagle nests and white-bellied sea eagle nests in the vicinity of the proposed North West Transmission Developments (NWTD). Eagle nest surveys form a vital part of the environmental and social impact assessment for the project, with TasNetworks developing the project to maximise separation from environmentally sensitive areas.

The NWTD include 240km of new and upgraded transmission lines and other energy infrastructure that will link Cressy, Burnie, Sheffield, Staverton, Hampshire, and East Cam. The proposed developments will allow Tasmania's power system to remain strong and stable while providing the increased capacity needed to accommodate new and existing renewable energy developments in the region, including Marinus Link.

Find out more about the proposed North West Transmission Developments via the TasNetworks website: www.tasnetworks.com.au/nwtd/

This fact sheet includes details of how to get in touch with us if you'd like to be notified before eagle nest surveys occur.

What are eagle nest surveys?

Eagle nest surveys include the survey of an area to locate nests of wedge tailed eagles or white-bellied sea eagles. Eagle nest surveys are conducted in accordance with the Forest Practices Authority (Tasmania) Fauna Technical Note 1: www.environment.gov.au/epbc/notices/assessments/2007/3385/pubs/note1-eagle.pdf

Eagle nest surveys are conducted outside of the breeding season (July - January) to avoid impacts on breeding eagles. Precautionary protocols are followed as part of the surveys to ensure impacts to hunting eagles are avoided.

Why does TasNetworks need to survey eagle nests?

It's important that we understand the potential impacts of our transmission assets on the environment. One way we do this is to complete eagle nest surveys in locations that are near existing and proposed assets. We then incorporate this information into our broader project planning to ensure we're appropriately balancing potential environmental, social and economic considerations and ensuring maximum possible distance from sensitive areas.

Why are the eagle nest surveys conducted annually?

It is an approvals application requirement of the planning criteria and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) guidance for the NWTD that eagle nest surveys be conducted on an annual basis: www.planning.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/618393/Planning-Criteria-1-February-2021.PDF

How are the findings from the surveys used?

Eagle nest surveys help to confirm existing Natural Values Atlas (NVA) nest location records and eagle nest locations from previous years' surveys. The surveys also identify any new nests within proximity to easements. Findings from the surveyed areas are used in finalising route design, in addition to planning and construction activities. Consideration is given to amend the route to avoid nests that are located less than 1km from proposed infrastructure, where practicable.

TasNetworks is committed to minimising impacts on eagles and avoiding impacts wherever possible. As part of the EIS documentation, specific measures for how eagle impacts will be managed for the NWTD will be described. A key management measure will be the avoidance of construction activities during the eagle breeding season (July to January inclusively) where activities are in proximity to active nests.

How are the eagle nest surveys conducted?

There are two main methods of searching for potential nest sites:

1. Aerial surveys
2. Ground searching

Aerial surveys are the most appropriate method to conduct eagle nest surveys for the NWTD due to large distance/area and viable environment covered as part of the surveys.



During **eagle nest surveying** the helicopter can be seen moving at low altitudes as it flies backwards and forwards across the survey area. At times it may need to spend longer periods focusing on areas that are more densely populated with trees.

During **eagle nest activity surveying** the helicopter will fly at a higher altitude directly to the previously identified nest. Once it approaches the vicinity of the nest it will fly at a low altitude to confirm if the nest is in use.

Ground searches are conducted on a case-by-case basis when identification of an eagle nest is difficult to confirm via the aerial search.

Why are helicopters used to conduct Eagle Nest Surveys?

Aerial inspections via helicopter provide us with a birds-eye view of our distribution and transmission networks and allow us to easily locate and identify wedge-tailed eagle nests and white-bellied sea eagle nests in the vicinity of the proposed NWT. Using a helicopter reduces the impact to private properties as there's no need to drive through paddocks, farms, or crops. You may see our helicopter moving slowly and at low levels. We know it can be noisy, however these checks are crucial for gathering information as part of the assessment process for the project.

Have you considered using drones to conduct surveys?

In 2023, a successful trial confirmed drones are suitable for inspecting many of TasNetworks overhead distribution lines. Drone images are often more detailed than inspecting by chopper – which ultimately boosts the quality of maintenance and helps prevent faults and outages.

Helicopter inspections are still needed for eagle nest surveys, emergency situations, aerial transmission inspections and situations where TasNetworks needs to inspect a large section of network very quickly with the least amount of impact as possible.

The use of drones for eagle nest survey work is being reviewed and will be considered for a trial stage in the future. However, in rugged terrain our drones currently face many challenges including drone loss and Civil Aviation Safety Authority (**CASA**) compliance complications.

Are you allowed to fly over my property?

There are regulations that cover how and where an aircraft can lawfully fly. These regulations are governed by CASA and include special considerations for powerline inspection works. To find out more, visit the CASA website: www.casa.gov.au/

Flying in a neighbourly manner

Aircraft pilots are expected to demonstrate consideration for nearby residents and operate in a Fly Neighbourly manner at all times. Pilots are asked to:

- Use aircraft with low noise signatures wherever possible;
- Be conscious of the times of operation and the noise generated;
- Avoid prolonged engine run-ups;
- Climb to a cruising altitude as soon as practical after departure;
- Avoid rotor slap noise;
- Avoid tight manoeuvres and turns when flying over residential areas;
- Fly in accordance with extended final approach and departure procedures so as to avoid cutting corners and overflying built up areas.

To decrease the noise impact on TasNetworks customers helicopter operations are conducted between the following hours. (With a preference not to fly on public holidays).

- Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm
- Weekends 9am to 8pm

How do you advise customers when and where you are flying?

To ensure the community is aware of any upcoming eagle nest surveys, we place advertisements on our social and digital media channels and send customers located in the identified survey areas an SMS (if we hold their current mobile number).

We also notify customers on our Advise register within two business days before flying near their property. You can apply to go on the Advise register by calling 1300 137 008 or send us an enquiry: www.tasnetworks.com.au/Forms/Send-us-an-enquiry. We will require your property details and your request will then be assessed by our project team.

'No fly' and 'Advise' Registers

TasNetworks is responsible for maintaining and updating 'No Fly' and 'Advise' registers and communicating any changes to the helicopter service provider.

What is an Advise Register?

The helicopter service provider is to contact customers on the 'Advise' Register 48 hours prior to a scheduled flight impacting their area of interest.

What is a No Fly Register?

The helicopter service provider is to avoid flying over any customers on the No Fly Register, if unavoidable to fly at a minimum of 1000ft (300m).

If you would like to apply to be added to the Advise Register No Fly Register please contact TasNetworks through the following:

- Telephone 1300 137 008
- Or online at Send us an enquiry – TasNetworks: www.tasnetworks.com.au/Forms/Send-us-an-enquiry

Can you tell me exactly when you'll be flying over my property?

We endeavour to be as accurate as we possibly can with our flight schedule, however, due to changes in weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances, we may need to modify flight paths or in some cases, cancel inspections.

Keep an eye on our website for changes to the inspection schedule or contact us to ask to be put on our Advise Register and we'll contact you 48 hours before a scheduled flight.

Do you have any suggestions for managing livestock that may get startled by helicopters?

We aim to carry out eagle nest surveys as quickly as we can to minimise livestock and community disturbances. Wherever possible, if livestock is visible to the pilot they will move away from the property and look for an alternate approach that will not disturb the livestock.

We notify customers on our Advise register within two business days before flying near their property.

What is the difference between an eagle nest survey and a nest activity assessment?

An **eagle nest survey** includes the survey of an area to locate nests of wedge tailed eagles or white-bellied sea eagles. This survey is conducted outside of the eagle breeding season.

A **nest activity assessment** is conducted when a potentially disturbing activity may need to be conducted within the eagle breeding season. The nest activity assessment is an activity check undertaken by qualified specialists to determine if a nest is being used during that breeding season. Nest activity assessments are only permitted during specified times through the breeding season. These dates vary from year to year and are agreed to by the FPA and Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania.

Customers located in the identified survey areas are notified for both of these activities.

How do I voice a concern or make a complaint?

Customers that wish to register a concern or a complaint regarding helicopter inspections can contact TasNetworks through the following:

- Telephone 1300 137 008
- Or online at Send us an enquiry – TasNetworks: www.tasnetworks.com.au/Forms/Send-us-an-enquiry

How can I find out more information?

To learn more about planning and approvals for the NWTG, please visit www.tasnetworks.com.au/nwtg

To make an enquiry regarding helicopter inspections, call us on 1300 137 008 or send us an enquiry via our website: www.tasnetworks.com.au/Forms/Send-us-an-enquiry

TasNetworks is working hard to minimise risks that our poles and wires pose to birds of prey. To learn more about our work to protect birdlife please visit: www.tasnetworks.com.au/protecting-birdlife