

# **Ameren Illinois Creates Avian Protection Program To Help Save Birds of Prey and Migratory Species From Potential Hazards**

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Since the 1970s, utility companies and conservation agencies have been working together to understand the interactions between migratory birds and power lines.

Finding solutions to protect our avian friends not only supports our ecosystem, but also protects the reliability of the power supply we all enjoy. If a bird is electrocuted on a power pole, it can cause outages, equipment damage and increased costs of operation and maintenance.

Nowadays, there are plenty of low-cost, easy-to-install protective measures utility companies can take to help keep birds safe from potentially deadly situations. But being good stewards of the environment means doing more than merely complying with federal laws.

That's why Ameren Illinois created our Avian Protection Program to help save birds of prey and migratory species from potential hazards. It's an ongoing plan to upgrade our electric and natural gas utility system with higher standards and better structures that are avian-safe for the eagles, hawks, falcons, osprey, owls and other birds that dot the Ameren Illinois' 43,000-square-mile service territory area.

Here are some of the ways Ameren Illinois is doing its part to help our feathered friends:

**Protective covers in high risk areas:** After inspecting more than 150 distribution circuits located near known raptor nests, we added insulating products on hundreds of poles and other structures that posed the greatest risk to large birds of prey. For example, protective covering on the center phase of a three-phase pole top allows large birds to perch anywhere on the pole without being potentially electrocuted.

**Flight diverters:** Reflective devices have been installed on power lines crossing lakes and wetlands to help large birds, such as swans, blue herons or pelicans, avoid collisions with power lines. The diverters can be seen from a greater distance than the power line, allowing the bird more time to correct its flight path and avoid injury.

**New, avian-safe construction standards:** We revised our construction standards to ensure that new distribution lines include insulated components or increased spacing between wires so eagles, hawks, owls and other large birds of prey can land on a line and spread their wings – safely.

**Responsible nest management:** We work with the proper government agencies when nests must be removed from utility poles or transmission towers for safety or reliability reasons. Only inactive nests of non-endangered species are removed.

**Workforce training:** Ameren Illinois has trained hundreds of employees and contractors on the installation and use of avian products, new construction standards, and proper handling and reporting related to protected species and their nests.

Over the past eight years, Ameren Illinois has installed 92,000 avian-safe distribution poles and approximately 180,000 protective covers on energized equipment such as switches and wiring that can pose a threat to birds of prey as well as retrofitting 1,400 structures in high-density birds of prey areas.

We know our work is having an impact because, on average, during the years 2017-19, Ameren Illinois achieved a 20 percent reduction in the number of animal related transformer outage events compared to the average of years 2011-13. During the same time periods, we achieved an average 39 percent reduction in the number of customers interrupted.

Educating the next generation will be critical to all of our avian protection efforts, and Ameren Illinois is a proud sponsor of the Illinois Raptor Center, the TreeHouse Wildlife Center and the World Bird Sanctuary. These partnerships help young people gain a greater appreciation for these majestic creatures and the precautions needed to help keep them safe.

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[CPR-305--Avian-Protection-Flyer--Rev-Oct-2019.pdf](#)