AltaLink is Alberta’s largest electricity transmission company, serving more than 85 per cent of Alberta’s population.

With more than 12,000 kilometres of transmission lines and 280 substations, our service territory covers 212,000 square kilometres that includes major urban centres, large industrial plants, farms and small communities.

**OUR BUSINESS**

- We invest in transmission lines and substations to replace aging infrastructure and to connect new sources of electricity to consumers. In 2010, we invested $500 million in transmission projects.

- We operate a high-speed telecommunications system that protects and controls the electrical grid. This equipment allows us to operate safely and reliably.

- We monitor and operate our transmission facilities through our 24 hours a day, seven days a week control centre that coordinates the flow of electricity with the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) and other transmission facility owners.

**Did you know?**

- AltaLink was the first utility in Canada to implement an Avian Protection Plan (APP).

- Prior to installing Greenjacket substation wildlife covers, 20 per cent of substation outages could be attributed to wildlife.

- More than 60 per cent of bird collisions are a result of contact with the overhead shield wire, the uppermost wire that protects the structure from lightning.

- Large water birds are more susceptible to collision because they are unable to quickly manoeuvre around power lines.

- Ospreys nest primarily on power poles near water bodies because the poles resemble tall, dead trees – their natural nesting structures.

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ALTALINK
AltaLink’s commitment to birds

AltaLink is Alberta’s largest electricity transmission company. We build and operate high voltage transmission lines that move electricity from where it is generated to areas where it is consumed. Our transmission system is the vital link that connects power to people.

Since we build transmission structures in the natural environment, we have an obligation and responsibility to preserve the beauty and integrity of wildlife and their habitat. AltaLink is committed to mitigating the impact our operations have on the environment.

AltaLink has an Avian Protection Plan (APP), which is a management system designed to reduce the impact our transmission facilities can have on birds. AltaLink was the first Canadian utility to develop an APP.

As a member of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), the Alberta Ferruginous Hawk Recovery team and the Raptor Research Foundation, AltaLink stays current with industry best practices.

How does AltaLink protect birds?

We prevent electrical contacts

Birds are at risk of electrocution when they come into contact with two energized components, or an energized and grounded component of electrical equipment. In addition to the impact to wildlife, these contacts can cause a number of substation outages. To mitigate bird electrical contacts, AltaLink worked with Cantega Technologies to develop Greenjacket® protective covers that insulate exposed electrical equipment.

GREENJACKET® COVERS

AltaLink is the first company to use Greenjacket covers to protect wildlife from electrical contacts. Between 2006 and 2011, AltaLink outfitted 43 substations with Greenjacket covers. Since then, AltaLink has significantly reduced wildlife-caused outages in substations. All new substations are assessed, and if there is a potential for electrical contact, Greenjacket covers are installed.

We prevent bird collisions

Bird collisions often occur in areas where a transmission line intersects waterfowl breeding and feeding areas. Birds commonly collide with the overhead shield wire – the thin, uppermost wire that protects the system from lightning damage. These wires are often difficult for birds to see due to low light conditions.

Risk of injury is highest for waterfowl and water birds as they are unable to manoeuvre quickly enough to avoid collision. AltaLink assesses new projects for the potential of bird collision. Higher risk sites are mitigated or avoided. AltaLink conducted a comprehensive risk assessment of our existing facilities, and is implementing a mitigation program. This program includes the installation of bird markers to increase the visibility of the lines. These markers are the FireFly™ and the Bird Flight Diverter (BFD).

BIRD FLIGHT DIVERTERS (BFD)

The BFD is a spiral device that wraps around the overhead shield wire, making it easier for birds to see and avoid.

Both the FireFly and BFD have been shown to reduce collisions by 60 to 90 per cent.

We protect bird habitat

AltaLink strives to avoid sensitive areas when siting new transmission lines. When birds nest on electrical facilities, AltaLink either leaves the nest, or relocates it nearby. A nest is only relocated if it poses a risk to the safety of the bird or the reliability of the transmission system. Between 2007 and 2011, AltaLink successfully relocated 12 osprey nests.

Where they once had a strong presence in southern Alberta’s grasslands, ferruginous hawks are now an endangered species. Safe nesting sites are essential to supporting a strong population. AltaLink has installed six nesting platforms to aid in the recovery of ferruginous hawks, and is an active member of the Ferruginous Hawk Recovery team.

Dennis Frehlich, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, releases a Swainson’s hawk that was rehabilitated at the Alberta Birds of Prey Centre.