

Heron Rookery Nesting Stand  
Almond Marsh  
Grayslake, Illinois

Materials

1 ¼ inches 10 foot galvanized pipe, threaded on both ends - number needed depends on height

Threaded couplings for attaching two pipes together - number needed depends on number of sections per leg.

End caps, or 4"x6" welded metal plates - 3 needed, one per leg end that sets into the pond bottom material

Rebar - 3 foot lengths – 8 per stand (number can vary) welded and bent to conform to nest.

Approx. 6" x 8" steel plate that is thick enough to withstand welding heat to weld rebar onto.



3 pieces of rectangular steel that will be welded inside the ends of the top section of 3 of the pipes for hinge.

Pieces of steel to be welded to the underside of plate for hinge - 3 per stand (see pictures for details)

½" bolts with lock washers and nuts (length depends upon width of flanges) preferably stainless steel - 3 per stand

Background

Knowing the depth of the pond and type of material on the bottom will help determine the total number of pipes needed. Decide how high you want the stand. In the Weathersfield, Vermont Rookery, which our stand is modeled after, the stands are 20 feet above water (<http://www.sover.net/~mwalsh/rookery/>). The stand in Almond Marsh in Grayslake, IL is approx. 30 feet above water and another 10' under water.

## Procedure

After the plate, flanges, and rebars were welded, we were ready to erect the platform. The Almond Marsh platform was erected on the ice on Feb 20, 2009. The ice was about 8" thick. We attached the first section of pipe with the flange to the welded flange on the platform using the 1 1/4" bolts. Note: If 3 lengths of pipe, or more, are used, when the legs are attached to the



plate, tighten the bolts on the lock washers as snug as possible to where the legs will still pivot when raising the platform. If the stand is short enough to where you can use a tall ladder to reach them, then the bolts can be tightened when the stand is raised.

At first we assembled four sections of 10' pipe on each leg. There was no way the four section legs could be raised, the legs bowed too much. After trying everything we could think of without using some sort of block and tackle, or crane to lift the platform, we decided to remove one 10' section of each leg. With the three sections eight of us could push up the platform with very little problem. We leveled the platform out as much as we could by measuring the distances between each leg to try to equal them out as much as possible.

Once we got the location of the legs as close as possible, we drilled a hole in the ice near the first leg, we checked the distance of the bottom of the marsh using the remaining 10' pipe section. The pipe went down about 8' and with the bottom being mucky we were able to push the pipe



down and angle it to match the leg of the raised platform. We then screwed the 10' section of pipe with just the top of it above water to the third leg of the raised platform. We did this for each of the remaining two legs. The final height of the platform was about 28 feet above the water taking into the consideration the angle of the legs.





After the platform was set, using a ladder, we attached 12' lengths of welded angle iron between each leg using u-bolts to stabilize the legs from bowing.

The total cost of the materials was about \$400. This did not include the cost of the welder. We were able to use the expertise of the Forest Preserve's welder for no charge.

Go to [http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org/Heron\\_Platform.html](http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org/Heron_Platform.html) for more pictures.