

North side power outage caused by bird, Thunder Bay Hydro says

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2600 customers lost power this morning in and around Thunder Bay's downtown north core



Thunder Bay Hydro says a bird was the cause of a north side power outage this morning. The area is home to a lot of seagulls and other larger birds, which can cause issues during nesting season, according to a hydro spokesperson. (Wikimedia Commons)

A Thunder Bay Hydro spokesperson says a large-scale power outage in the downtown north core Friday morning was caused by a bird.

Eileen Dias said hydro typically sees more outages at this time of year due to it being nesting season for a number of larger birds. She noted that, combined with the downtown core's proximity to the waterfront, means hydro crews have to stay vigilant.

"It's simply a seasonal issue that just plagues us during nesting season, and our crews were right on it and responded immediately," she said.

"That was the way that we needed to do it in such a way where we identified a problem and kept people safe."

With birds nesting at this time of year, that means "very persistent" large-winged birds often cause issues with electrical equipment, Dias said, adding that the marina attracts a lot of them.

The outage happened just before 9 a.m. and affected about 2,600 customers. Power was restored to a number of properties within 20 minutes, and by 10 a.m., the issue was fully resolved.

When power was partially restored, the last remaining area to be affected by the outage was the southern section of the north core area, Dias said.

According to an **FAQ on Manitoba Hydro's website**, raccoons, squirrels, or other animals can cause short circuits by contacting power lines or other equipment. Birds landing on power lines or transformers can also trip fuses.

In this case, the exact cause is less clear.

"There actually was multiple issues that took place," Dias said when asked if the bird interfered with a transformer.