

More dead ducks found north of Pincher Creek



By [Greg Cowan](#), QMI Agency Pincher Creek Echo
Thursday, February 27, 2014 1:13:02 MST PM

A newly-built power transmission line just north of Pincher Creek has claimed more winged victims.

Dozens of ducks have once again been found dead under the AltaLink-owned power lines, this time by a contractor.

The lines are placed right between a popular waterfowl resting area by the Oldman River and adjacent to grain fields where the birds often feed.

It is a high traffic flight area.

Poor weather and low visibility were to blame in early January when David McIntyre, a retired forest scientist, came across the dismembered carcasses of numerous ducks and one Canadian goose.

Now, a new suspect has been made apparent in the mystery duck deaths.

Peter Brodsky, AltaLink's external communications manager, told the Echo aviation specialists reviewing the scene witnessed hawks and eagles stirring up the resting waterfowl forcing them into the power lines at high speeds.

The birds of prey would then eat the fallen dead.

"I don't want to make it sound like the raptors are completely to blame," said Brodsky. "We are looking at ways to mitigate the issue."

AltaLink installed bird diverters after the last mass duck death to make their power lines more visible.

Now they are ordering and installing swan diverters, which are quite a bit bigger in diameter and painted a bright yellow, according to Brodsky.

It is a short-term solution while AltaLink's aviation specialists complete their report on the situation.

"We want to find a way for our lines and the ducks to coexist in the area," said Brodsky.

Heavy fines have been issued to corporations before in matters of duck deaths.

In 2012, Syncrude was dealt \$3 million in fines after 1,600 ducks died in tailings ponds near Fort McMurray.

No final duck-death toll has been issued, but estimates put the number well into the hundreds combining both incidents.