

Innisfail-area woman in a flap over planned Cook Lake transmission line

'When you have a bird that has a 10-foot wing span and is six-feet long, that's a pretty big bird'

By Terri Trembath, David Bell, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 07, 2016 10:16 PM MT

Canada geese, winged teals, redheads are just a few of the countless migratory birds that call Cook Lake home but a bird lover says a new Altalink transmission line is going to threaten the habitat near Innisfail.

Bernice Stewart has been coming to Cook Lake for years. As an amateur photographer her favourite subjects are birds.

"There's the mallards, the blue-winged teal, there's coots, there's lesser scaups," Stewart told CBC News.

"Even large birds like trumpeter swans."

But Stewart says there could be a danger to the birds when Altalink builds a transmission line that crosses over the lake this fall.

"When you have a bird that has a 10-foot wing span and is six-feet long, that's a pretty big bird," she said.

"They need space."

The Alberta Utilities Commission approved the 700-metre-long transmission line two years ago, says Jim Law of the commission.

"The route that was chosen in this case wasn't the preferred route, it was the alternative route but it was done after the panel listened to arguments for and against it," Law explained.

Scott Schreiner, a spokesperson with Altalink, says the company is taking the migratory patterns into consideration.

"One of the things we will do to try and reduce those collisions, is put markers on these transmission lines," Schreiner said.

Stewart, a self-described bird lover, isn't convinced.

"Because it stops the flight path of especially the big birds and you know, our trumpeter swans are at risk in this province," she said.

"And if this is a stopping off place for them in the spring and in the fall, then they're going to be injured."

Construction is set to start in October.