

The International Osprey Foundation Newsletter



Osprey Observer

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY, 1987

TIOF TO THE RESCUE

When Joe Jura, co-owner of Bascule Venture, contracted with the State of Florida to remove the abandoned railroad drawbridge at Boca Grande, he reckoned to do it without a pair of nesting Ospreys.

Delores Heimann, director of Friends of Wildlife on Boca Grande, learned that the birds had not only nested on the old iron bridge, but were raising young. She opposed the dismantling of the bridge until after the chicks had fledged. Don Wood, of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (FGFWFC) and Capt. Jerry Thomas of the Florida Marine Patrol agreed and warnings were issued not to disturb the active nest.

But Jura had a deadline for transporting the bridge to New York and everyone involved was anxious to resolve the matter. With the nesting Ospreys protected by federal and state laws, the situation seemed deadlocked - until TIOF was contacted.

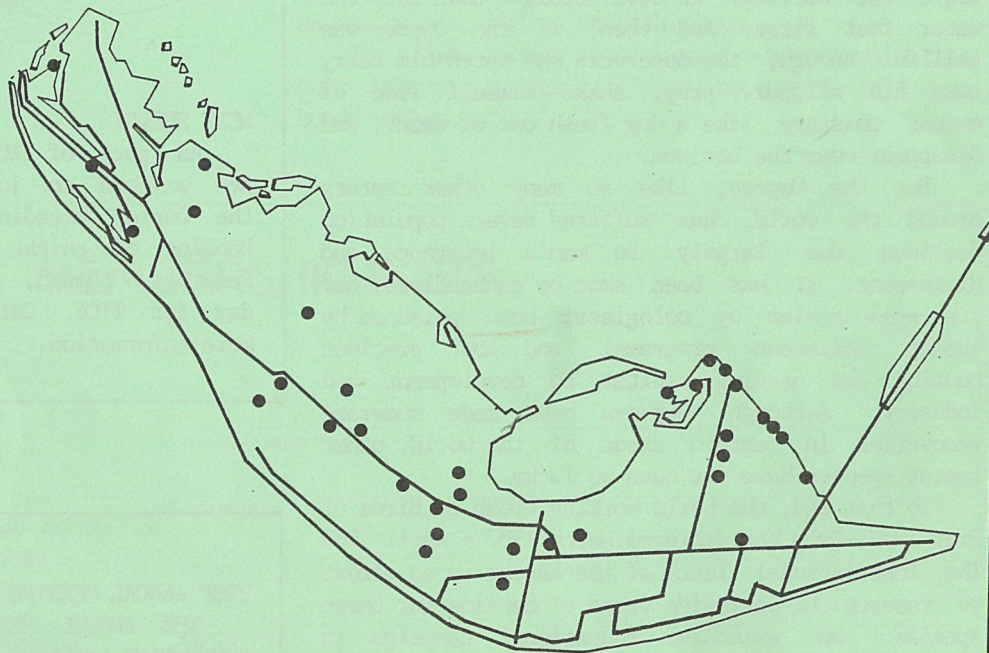
TIOF president Mark Westall examined the situation and felt that the nest, complete with chicks, could be moved to a nearby artificial nesting platform without too much disruption.

On April 14, 1986, Westall met with Brian Milsap (FGFWFC) and Jura for a unique house-moving exercise. Hardway Construction, who had been hired by Jura to do the actual dismantling, constructed a nesting platform near the existing nest over the waters of Boca Grande. Westall then gingerly transferred the bulky nest, made of twigs, seaweed and sand to its new site. There was bated breath as the parents hovered in the area, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief when they returned to claim their relocated offspring, oblivious of the fact that they had been holding up a very costly deal.

A SUCCESS STORY

In 1986, Ospreys built and occupied 34 nests on artificial platforms compared with 26 on natural sites on Sanibel Island. Eggs were laid in 31 of the platform nests and in 15 of the natural nests. Only 40% of the natural nests produced young while 68% of the artificial platform nests were productive, a pattern seen in the data available for 1979-86.

The mortality rate of chicks in natural nests was higher (48%) than those in platform nests (33%). While 11 chicks fledged from natural nests, 36 did so from nests on platforms. Protection from weather and raccoon predation are among the reasons for the success of artificial platforms.



Map shows location of artificial nests

WHAT IS TIOF?

The goal of The International Osprey Foundation is to aid in the preservation and study of birds of prey. Its membership includes raptor authorities and ornithologists from all over the globe.

TIOF also has a strong following locally and president Mark Westall, who lives on Sanibel, conducts an artificial nesting program on Sanibel and Captiva as well as monitors and bands the islands' Osprey population. These programs are carried out on a voluntary basis, sanctioned by TIOF.

A new board of directors was elected in February

of 1986. Board members are Wyman Atkins, K.C. Emerson, Frank Irvin, Liz Klie, Anne Mitchell, Bob Repenning, Bill Webb and Mark Westall.

An international newsletter is published twice yearly and a local newsletter, the Osprey Observer, once a year for TIOF members. This issue is being distributed island-wide to acquaint non-members with the activities and goals of TIOF. If you wish to continue receiving it, you may join the organization. A membership form is included in this newsletter.

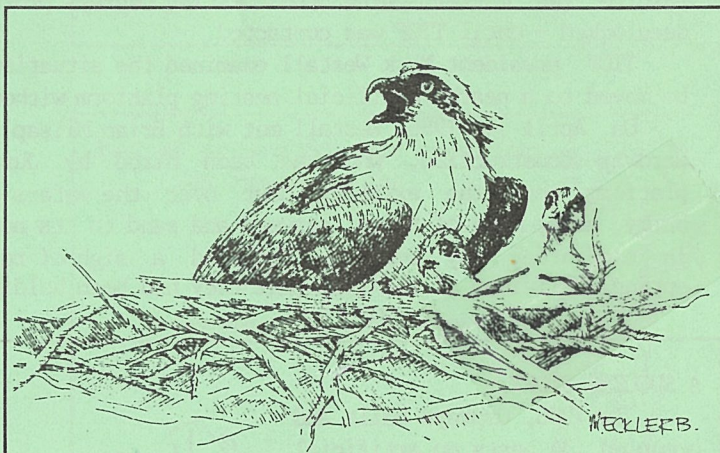


INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE RAPTOR

Anyone who has ever seen an Osprey, or heard its call, will never forget their first sighting of this magnificent bird of prey. Amateurs and professionals alike have watched with wonder and amazement as this large raptor slowly circles above a shallow body of water, slows to a dead standstill and then hovers awhile (perhaps more than 100 feet above the surface) to dive straight down into the water feet first. And then, if the Osprey was skillful enough, the observers may watch him carry away his slippery prey, shake himself free of excess moisture like a dog fresh out of water, and disappear over the horizon.

But the Osprey, like so many other raptors around the world, has suffered severe population declines due largely to man's ignorance and disrespect. It has been shot by gunhandlers; had its eggs stolen by oologists; been poisoned by insect abatement programs; and lost precious hunting and nesting habitat to development and industry. Although Ospreys have made moderate recoveries in certain areas of the world, other raptor species have not been so lucky.

To that end, the World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls has declared March 1987 - April 1988 The International Year of the Raptor in an effort to reverse the worldwide trend of decline for these species. An extensive educational campaign in cooperation with conservation organizations throughout the world is being planned and TIOF will be participating to the fullest.

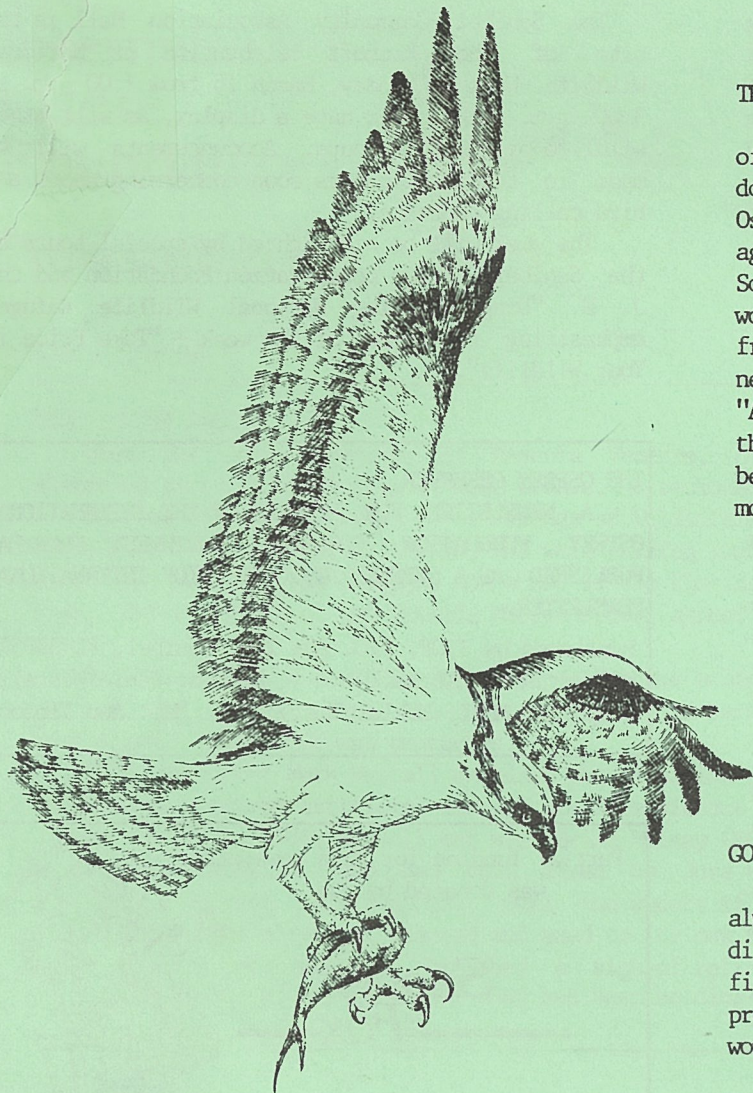


NEST SURVEYS

As part of TIOF's educational program, members are welcome to join in on nesting surveys during the Osprey breeding season of January through May. Banding of chicks takes place in March and April. Remember, though, the surveys represent a working day for TIOF. Call Janie Westall at 472-5218 for more information.

TIOF ANNUAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION WILL BE HELD AT 7:30 P.M., SUNDAY, APRIL 5, AT THE SANIBEL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION.



THE EMPTY NEST SYNDROME

Being a TIOF board member and current chairman of the Sanibel Planning Commission in the bargain does not necessarily give you any "clout" with Ospreys, as Bill Webb has learned. Over five years ago, he erected a nesting platform in his yard at Southwinds Drive, in the hope that new "neighbors" would move in. He's still waiting and his frustration is compounded by the fact that Osprey nesting on the islands has steadily increased (see "A Success Story" p.1). Some people are speculating that his purple front door is the problem, but Webb believes distance from Sanibel's bayside is the most likely reason.

GOIN' FISHIN'?

With two hungry beaks to feed, the Westalls are always in need of fish for their two permanently disabled Ospreys. Their regular diet is frozen fish, but a regular supply of fresh fish may provide a stimulus for the pair to breed. This would be a "first" for Ospreys in captivity.

Anglers are asked to save only LEGAL-sized fish between 4" and 12". Jacks are especially welcome, as are others, but no catfish please.

The fish humans don't want are generally the ones Ospreys prefer. If you have fish, call any board member.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as a member of TIOF

Please renew my membership in TIOF

Check membership category:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Individual/\$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Contributing/\$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Family/\$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Donor/\$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustaining/\$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Life/\$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Supporting/\$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Student (To undergraduate level)/\$8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Corporate/\$25 or more | |

NAME (Please Print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

All memberships and donations are tax-deductible.
Mail to TIOF, P.O. Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957, U.S.A.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Able-bodied people are always needed for a variety of duties involving Ospreys in the area of Sanibel and Captiva. TIOF can use help checking nests (often in difficult terrain). Volunteers are also useful in fishing to feed permanently disabled captive Ospreys and in picking up the donated fish. Please call Janie Westall at 472-5218 if you would like to help.

COLOR-MARKING SOUTHERN BALD EAGLES

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. banded and color-marked Bald Eagle nestlings last spring for the second year along the Texas Gulf Coast. The right wing of the nestlings were marked with a yellow patagial tag with an alphanumeric (T-01 through T-100). The left wing was marked with a light blue patagial tag with a yellow spot. In addition, all birds were banded with a #9USFWS rivet band on one leg and a color rivet band on the opposite leg. The color leg bands used in 1984-85 were red, white, black, green or combinations of these colors. All birds banded in 1985-86 were banded with a 3cm. red band. If you see or hear of an Eagle with such markings, please notify Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD 20708 and David W. Mabie, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., 715 S. Bronte, Rockport, TX 78382, (512) 729-2315. The date of observation, exact location, and if possible, the color of leg band and which leg it is on is of particular importance.

TIOF

P.O. Box 250
Sanibel Island, FL 33957
(813) 472-5218



Address Change Requested

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK CELEBRATION

The Sanibel Community Association Hall is the site of the kickoff celebration of National Wildlife Week on Sunday, March 15 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. TIOF will have a display, as will other wildlife-oriented groups. Announcements will be made in the local papers soon concerning photo and bird calling contests.

The week will be highlighted by special tours at the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, emphasizing the theme of the week - "Take Pride in Your Wildlife".

THE OSPREY OBSERVER

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION COVERING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA. PUBLISHED AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE TIOF INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER.

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