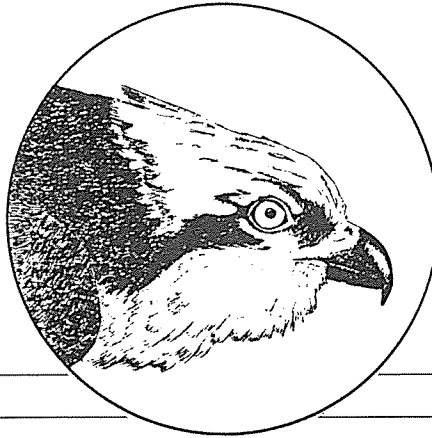


The International Osprey Foundation



Osprey Observer

SANIBEL ISLAND, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY, 1994

State wildlife expert to speak at annual meeting March 27

Brian Millsap, director of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's Non-Game Program, will be the featured speaker at the annual meeting of The International Osprey Foundation. Millsap's talk will be entitled, "Birds of Prey: A State Perspective."

The annual meeting is set for Sunday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Sanibel Community Center, Periwinkle Way. Please note the rescheduled date and disregard any other notices.

The keynote address is especially relevant as the osprey, along with the brown pelican, has declined sharply in numbers around Florida Bay.

According to published reports, Florida Bay was one of the last refuges of these species in the '70s when both were endangered. But while their numbers are increasing elsewhere, they're down drastically in Florida Bay. In 1973, there were 221 osprey nests in the bay; a check in October, 1993 showed only 70.

Researchers blame the draining of the Everglades which cut the flow of fresh water into the bay by at least four-fifths. Others say pollutants from agriculture and the cities are causing algae blooms that cloud the waters and obscure and drive away fish, which the birds feed on.

The bald eagle, however, seems to be thriving, perhaps because it feeds on small reptiles and birds as well as fish.

Millsap, who helped start the burrowing owl protection program in Cape Coral with Cindy Bear, of the Lee County School Board, recently was appointed to the board of the Raptor Research Foundation. He also has served on the National Wildlife Federation's Raptor Information Center.

The Osprey Foundation's eight-member board of directors is up for re-election during the short business segment of the meeting (see page 2).

Hartley Kleinberg, volunteer coordinator, will give an update on the osprey nest watch program. Seven volunteer groups monitor more than 70 nests around the islands, compiling data such as numbers of chicks fledged.

The foundation's project director, Mark "Bird" Westall, will give a brief synopsis of the 1993 nesting season.

David Loveland, president, will announce the recipient of the 1994 \$1,000 endowment for osprey research, chosen from 7 applicants from the United States and abroad.

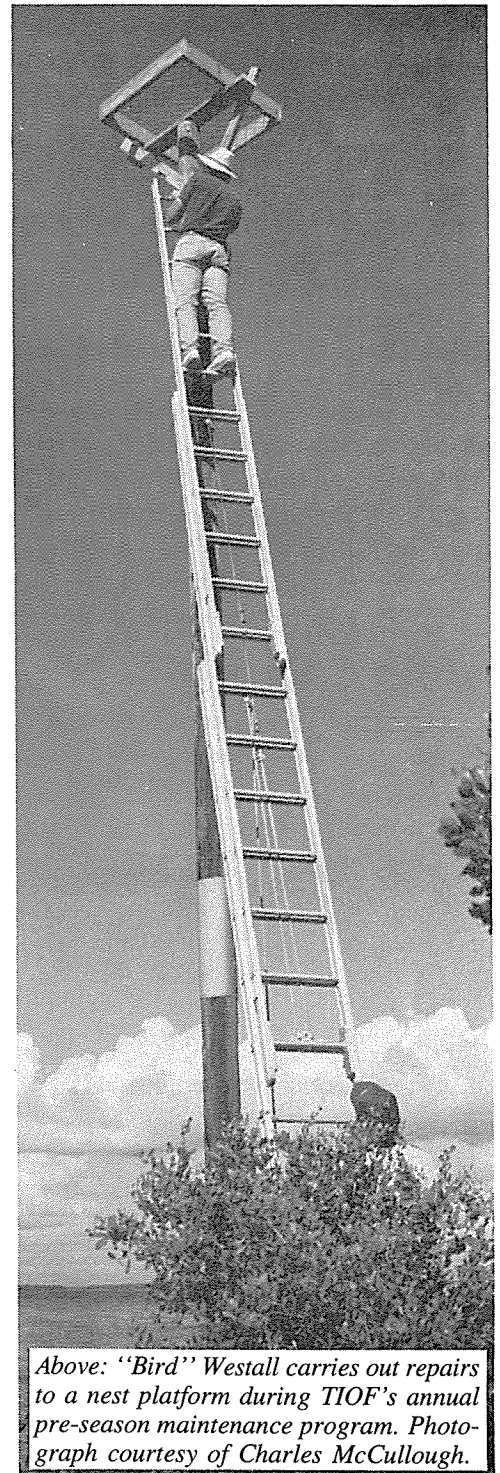
Members and non-members are invited to attend the meeting. A \$3 donation is requested of non-members.

Ospreys stable despite storm losses

In March, 1993, the Storm of the Century hit this area, just when many osprey nests contained chicks. Luckily for the Sanibel osprey population, 50 of the 75 nests are on artificial

platforms, which offer more protection and generally fare better in high winds.

However, several natural nests in the wildlife refuge were lost and it's (see **STORM**, page 4)



Above: "Bird" Westall carries out repairs to a nest platform during TIOF's annual pre-season maintenance program. Photograph courtesy of Charles McCullough.

OSPREY GLOSSARY

Adult description: 21-25 inches long (almost eagle-sized), males and females look alike, dark chocolate mantle with white chest (which can be somewhat streaked with dark brown), white head with a broad brown mask from eyes down cheeks and neck, eyes yellow, bill and talons black.

Immature description: Very much like adults, but brown upperpart feathers look as if the tips were dipped in cream-colored paint, eyes are orange, fledglings will be adult-sized.

Mating behaviors: Males will land completely on female's back.

Incubating: Only the adult bird's head (at most) will be seen sticking above the nest's edge.

Nestling: Young in the nest, will beg loudly (sometimes constantly) for food, may observe aggressiveness between siblings.

Brooding: Adult bird will appear to be standing or crouched low over the nest.

Shading: Adult bird is in the same position as brooding, but is more visible with wings spread out.

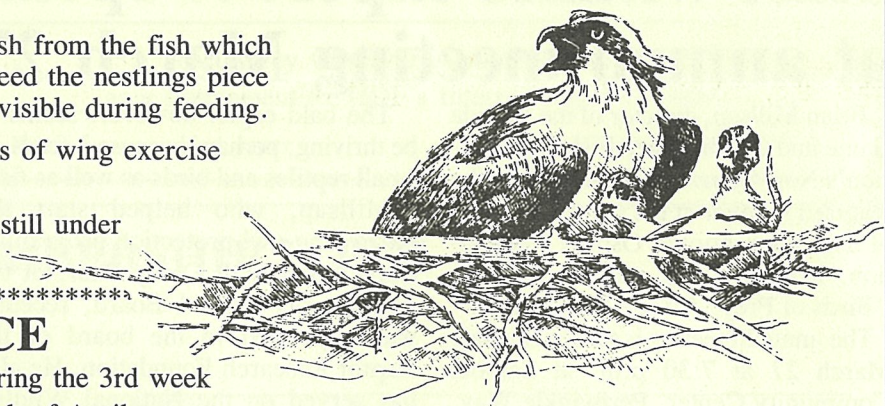
Feeding behaviors: Female will tear flesh from the fish which the male has brought, and she will feed the nestlings piece by piece; young may not always be visible during feeding.

Fledgling: Nestling after first flight; lots of wing exercise before fledging.

Post Fledgling: Period when young are still under parental care but are free-flying.

NESTING SEQUENCE

1. Egg-laying can occur anytime during the 3rd week of December through the 1st week of April.
2. Incubation is then 35 days.
3. Fledging is 8 weeks after hatching.
4. Post Fledging can last a few days to several weeks after first flight.



Slate for 1994 board

Election of a 10 member board will take place during the annual meeting. Members may make nominations from the floor.

Since the last annual meeting, Bob Southern and Rita Southern have resigned and Inge Glissman has been appointed. We thank the Southern for their service over the years.

The board has nominated Carolyn Herman and Jerry Nickerson to fill two vacancies.

The slate:

Norman Bowles, a retired medical pathologist, has been active as a volunteer with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, FISH and the City of Sanibel Wildlife Committee.

Inge Glissman, A Sanibel resident, has served as TIOF's secretary since she was appointed to the board in late 1993. The former executive secretary is a volunteer at the conservation

foundation.

Carolyn Herman is co-owner of Datafax Credit Service in Tampa. She volunteers at CROW, and is a member of Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and is on the board of the Audubon Society.

Hartley Kleinberg, who was director of electronic design at a division of ITT in New Jersey, is TIOF's volunteer coordinator and a nest monitoring group leader.

Erick Lindblad is executive director of Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and a member of the City of Sanibel Wildlife Committee.

David Loveland, TIOF's president since 1988, has been on the board for seven years. He is deputy division director of planning for the Lee County Department of Transportation.

Anne Mitchell is vice president and

newsletter editor for TIOF and a nest watch group leader. A former editor of the Sanibel-Captiva Island Reporter, she is an editor at the Fort Myers News-Press.

Jerry Nickerson is co-owner of Datafax Credit Service in Tampa. He is a member of Defenders of Wildlife, Greenpeace and World Wildlife and is on the board of Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation.

Norman "Tad" Sturgis formerly owned The Adirondack Store and Gallery in Saranac Lake, NY. He is involved in conservation and environmental projects on Sanibel and in Maine.

Mark "Bird" Westall is TIOF's treasurer and project director. He founded TIOF in 1981 and currently serves on Lee County's Eagle Technical Advisory Committee. He is a Sanibel City councilman.

TIOF lends a hand on Pine Island

When Operation Osprey — a plan to erect 40 nesting platforms — was launched on Pine Island in May last year, TIOF's project director Mark Westall was on hand to offer advice.

Westall was asked by Jack Gaddy, who heads the volunteer project, to suggest suitable locations for the platforms. Gaddy spearheaded the community effort after seeing local osprey populations hard hit when nests were destroyed by winter storms. Nests built on man-made platforms are known to produce twice as many chicks as those on trees. Nesting platforms also keep the birds off power poles, where they risk electrocution and can cause power outages.

The first pole was erected in May at St. James Civic Association. By July, there were a dozen on the island.

The Pine Island group designated the Saturday before Memorial Day as "The Day of the Osprey." They've set up a monitoring program and will turn in their reports on Osprey Day.

Lee County Electric Co-op has offered to erect poles at designated locations with voluntary crews on weekends and residents are being asked to sponsor a pole, which involves buying and assembling a \$26 platform kit.

* NOTE: Brochures explaining the design and construction of osprey platforms and how individuals can put one up are available from TIOF, P.O.

Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957. The brochure was published by Lee County Division of Environmental Sciences in conjunction with TIOF.

Thanks, fellas

We're indebted to Ed Coon and John Veenschoten, who delight the Westalls' captive osprey with offerings of fresh, local fish. The two give their unwanted, legal size fish to supplement the osprey's diet of frozen sardines. She's visibly pleased when she sees local mullet and other tasty treats for dinner, Janie Westall says.

She eats about three fish a day.

Get your lucky T-shirt

David Cone, pitcher for the Kansas City Royals, has found a new lucky T-shirt to wear under his game uniform.

After his black T-shirt with the four-leaf clover design failed to inspire his game, his dad Ed Cone, a TIOF member and nest watch volunteer, gave him an Osprey Foundation T-shirt. He wore it — and pitched a winning game.

Cone played in the World Series, pitching for the Toronto Blue Jays.

"Lucky" TIOF T-shirts are available for \$10. They'll be available at the annual meeting or by calling any board member.



Thanks, Pam

Pam Ellis has not only joined one of our nest monitoring groups on Sanibel this year, she also has volunteered to check nests on Captiva, where she lives. We call that going above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks, Pam.

You're due — please renew

We're trying to save on postage so, members, please accept this newsletter as a reminder to pay your 1994 membership dues. You'll find a renewal form on the back page.

Co-op covers live wires to save birds

Last summer, Lee County Electric Co-op announced it would start insulating the jumper wires on utility poles to save birds from electrocution.

Rubber hose-like devices will routinely be placed over the wires as future maintenance is carried out, the co-op said.

Credit for the move goes to Dr. John Kubisz, of CROW, who had campaigned for the insulation after seeing dead and injured birds at the base of some power poles. The first insulation was placed on Sanibel poles near the CROW headquarters, in the Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge and on Bowman's Beach Road in May.

The co-op also has erected fiberglass nesting platforms on some poles to prevent ospreys nesting close to power lines.

Endowment Honor Roll

The International Osprey Foundation awards a \$1,000 research grant each year. Donations for the endowment fund are always welcome, as are applications.

Here are the grant recipients to date:

1993 - Ruth Anne Elbert, for a project entitled "The Use of Avian Indicator Species to Monitor Environmental Mercury Exposure." Elbert is working toward a PhD in Ecology at the University of California, Davis.

1992 - Michael McMillian, graduate student at the University of West

Florida, Pensacola, for studies into the effects of pesticides on reproduction at Lake Istokpoga, Florida.

1991 - David J. Green, Behavioral Ecology Research Group, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, for studies into female osprey production decisions and male parental effort.

1990 - Gustavo Danemann, thesis-researcher with the Seabird Program at the Universidad Autonoma de Baja, California, Marine Biology Dept., La Paz, Mexico. He studied ospreys in the coastal lagoons of Baja.

Robert Bateman

All our members are special. Some are even famous. Like renowned artist and naturalist Robert Bateman, who is a contributing member of TIOF.



Canadian-born Bateman, who has been influenced by Andrew Wyeth, is noted for his paintings of birds and mammals. His work has been featured in Audubon, American Artist, Sports Afield and International Wildlife magazines.

In a letter to TIOF, Bateman says, "I applaud the worthwhile work you and your birding colleagues are doing monitoring the osprey nests! Keep up the good work!"

STORM (from page 1)

impossible to say how many chicks perished even though their nests remained intact.

The number of chicks fledged was down slightly but was well within the range of stability, said TIOF project director Mark "Bird" Westall.

The number of occupied nest sites on Sanibel in 1993 was 75, down from 80 in 1992. A total of 69 chicks fledged, 16 from natural nest sites and 53 from platform nests. That compares with 88 chicks fledged the previous year.

Of the natural nests, 53% were productive, compared with 68% of the artificial platform nests.

The storm may have contributed to a "first." A nesting pair in the wildlife refuge fledged three chicks at the end of July — the latest any chicks have been known to fledge in this area.

Westall thinks the parents may have lost their first offspring in the storm and went on to lay a second clutch at the end of April. The latest he's seen osprey lay eggs previously was the beginning of April.

The Osprey Observer is published annually as a supplement to TIOF's International Newsletter.

Printed on recycled paper

Editor: Anne Mitchell

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Please renew my membership in TIOF

Check membership category:

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ALL MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.
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