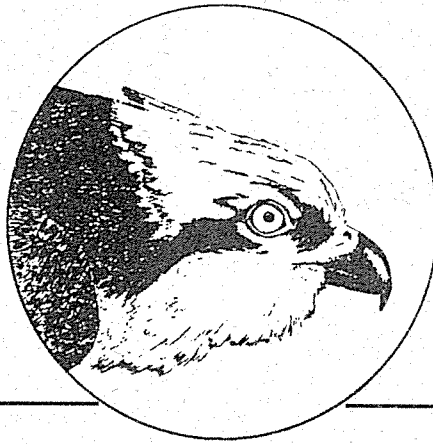


# THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION



# Osprey Observer

SANIBEL ISLAND, FLORIDA

JANUARY, 1998

## Raptor authority is featured speaker at annual meeting March 15

Keith Bildstein, director of research at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Kempton, Pa., which maintains the largest and most complete record of raptor migration in the world, will be the featured speaker at the International Osprey Foundation annual meeting March 15.

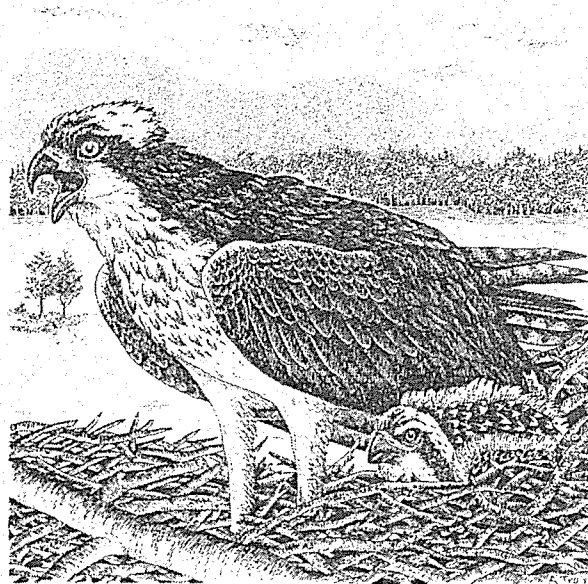


Keith Bildstein

Bildstein, who has a Ph.D. from Ohio State University, will talk about the sanctuary's Hawks Aloft Worldwide Program and how the annual raptor count has served as a model for monitoring raptors at far-flung watch sites.

Join us for this informative meeting starting at 7 p.m. at the Sanibel Community Association Center, Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, and preceded by a short business meeting.

Admission is free to members. A \$3 donation is asked of non-members.



*Left: Osprey chicks fared poorly last year. The illustration on the left and the landing osprey on page 2 are courtesy of Alessandro Troisi of Rome, Italy.*

## TIOF keeping close watch on island ospreys after low chick count in 1997

Last winter was a devastating one for Sanibel's ospreys. Some 80 nesting pairs fledged only 33 young instead of the usual 75-86 chicks as in previous years.

It is not clear what caused the high nest failure rate, but theories include the possibility that the severe red tide leading up to the 1997 nesting season may have depleted fish supplies that ospreys depend upon to build up body fat in preparation for nesting and, later, for feeding the chicks.

Water problems in the Everglades have caused osprey populations there to plummet since the early 1980s.

The big question as we go into Sanibel's 1998 nesting season is whether the trend will continue. If so, it could point to something more serious, since the osprey is an indicator of the health of the natural system.

TIOF's band of nestwatch volunteers will be checking on how the birds are faring beginning January 17 and

continuing into early summer.

"This year is a critical season because it will enable us to compare this year's numbers with last year's," said nestwatch volunteer coordinator Hartley Kleinberg. "We have to do a good monitoring job."

Kleinberg said "Ding" Darling Refuge staff also are monitoring the ospreys on refuge lands to ascertain the cause of the decline. The average mortality rate for osprey chicks is 25%-30%.

### Ospreys fledged on Sanibel


1994	84
1995	86
1996	77
1997	33

For comparison, our friends at the Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife reported an excellent summer

*(continued page 3)*



### TIOF 1998 CALENDAR

January 17	January 31	March 15
1998 nestwatch season begins	Deadline for TIOF endowment applications	Annual Meeting 

### TIOF ONLINE

Members can now learn more about the foundation via our website at <http://www.sancap.com/osprey/tiof.htm>  
E-mail: [ospreys@sancap.com](mailto:ospreys@sancap.com)

## Banded osprey may have originated in Westport

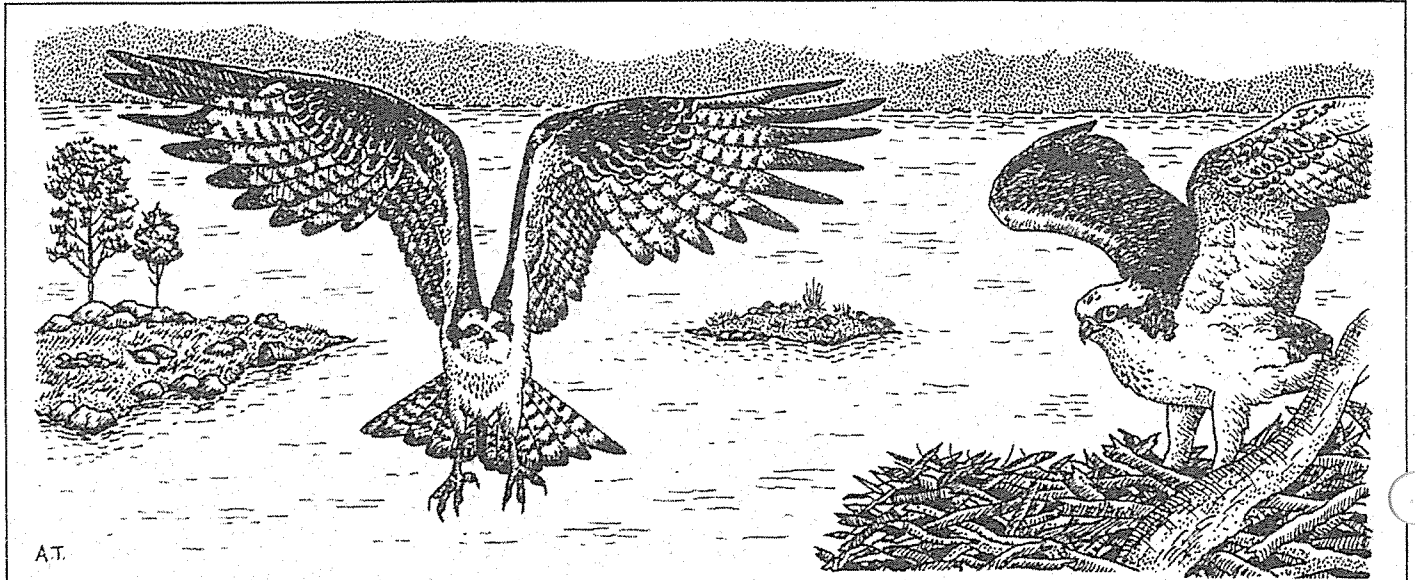
Last March in TIOR's International newsletter, we asked for help in identifying a band on the leg of an osprey photographed on Sanibel in November 1996 by Ellen Hanley of Fort Myers.

We received an answer from Gil Fernandez of Dartmouth, Ma., who has been working on osprey survival for more than 30 years in Massachusetts.

He says the osprey, with the numbers 485 visible on its band, could be one of three:

- #608-53485 that was banded as a nestling in 1983 in Westport, Ma. "In 1988 he was trapped and blue and black bands were placed on the other leg. We have since learned that such plastic rings are frequently lost.";
- #608-81485 that was born in Westport and banded as a nestling on July 6, 1988;
- #608-84485 that, likewise was born in Westport and banded as a chick on July 8, 1989.

"Reported recoveries of our birds in Florida support our assumption that the latter state is on their migration route," wrote Fernandez, who is author of the book, "Fish Hawk".



A.T.

### 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:** male will land completely on female's back.

**Incubating:** only the adult bird's head (at most) will be seen sticking above 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 the wings spread out.

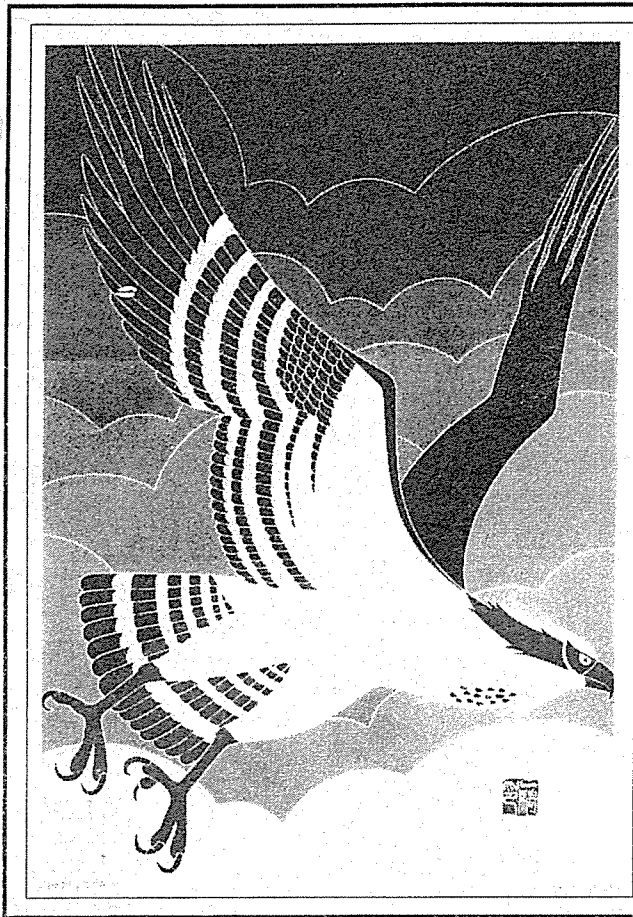
**Feeding Behaviors:** female will tear flesh from the fish which the male has brought, and she will feed the nestlings piece by piece; young may not always be visible during feeding.

**Fledgling:** nestling after first flight, lots of wing exercise before fledgling.

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

### Nesting Sequence

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



### **Ikki osprey poster available**

Here's your chance to own a signed, limited edition print of a soaring osprey by artist Ikki Matsumoto for just \$10 plus \$5 shipping and handling. It is one of just 2,000 and we still have a few left. To order, please use the coupon on the back.

## **Tim Gardner joins TIOF board**

We're fortunate in having Tim Gardner, a stalwart Sanibel conservationist and unstinting volunteer for wildlife, on the TIOF board.

Gardner is very active in island organizations, including Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and its surface Water Quality Monitoring Program and Small Mammal Survey. He also monitors loggerhead turtle nests and is a TIOF nest watcher, too.

You will find Tim at the Island Clean-Up Day every year; he hasn't missed one since he and his wife Carol moved here in 1988. Gardner also gives his time to CROW's emergency rescue efforts and is a volunteer at "Ding" Darling. The list goes on.

In his former career with the EPA in Washington, he was the Product Manager who took DDT and many other hard pesticides off the market in the '70s and '80s - for which we, and the ospreys, are grateful.

## **Resignation**

Norman "Tad" Sturgis has resigned from the TIOF board due to ill health. We wish him well and offer him our sincere thanks for all his efforts on behalf of the foundation and the nest watch program.

## **Endowment program**

TIOF has awarded \$9,000 in endowments since the grant program began in 1980. Here is the line-up of recipients.

**1997-Todd Katzner**, a graduate student at Arizona State University for raptor conservation studies in North-Central Kazakstan, home of four eagle species.

**1996 - Irina Utekhina**, a Ph.D. candidate with the Institute of Biological Problems of the North Magadan State Preserve in N.E. Siberia, for aerial surveys of ospreys and Steller's sea eagles in N.E. Siberia.

**1995 - James Berkelman**, a Ph.D. candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife Sciences for project entitled "Habitat Requirements of the Madagascar Fish Eagle"; and **Kimberly J. Fernie**, a Ph.D. candidate at McGill University, Dept. of Natural Resource Sciences, Wildlife Biology Program. Her three-year study is titled "Effects of Electromagnetic Fields Generated by Powerlines on Avian Reproduction and Development".

**1994 - Lauren N. Gilson**, a graduate student in raptor biology at Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. Grant to fund radio transmitters and

field housing in her study entitled "Behavioral Strategy Selection in Juvenile Ospreys" at Cascade Reservoir.

**1993 - Ruth Anne Elbert**, Ph.D. candidate in ecology at the University of California, Davis, for project, "The Use of Avian Indicator species to Monitor Environmental Mercury Exposure". Study area: Clear Lake, California, close to an old mercury mine.

**1992 - Michael McMillian**, graduate student at the University of West Florida, Pensacola, for studies into the effects of pesticides on osprey reproduction on 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, for study of ospreys in the coastal lagoons of Baja California, Mexico.

## **TIOF Board**

**President:** David Loveland

**Vice President:** Anne Mitchell

**Treasurer & Secretary:** Inge Glissman

**Members:** Norman Bowles

Tim Gardner

Lauro Greeno

Carolyn Herman

Hartley Kleinberg

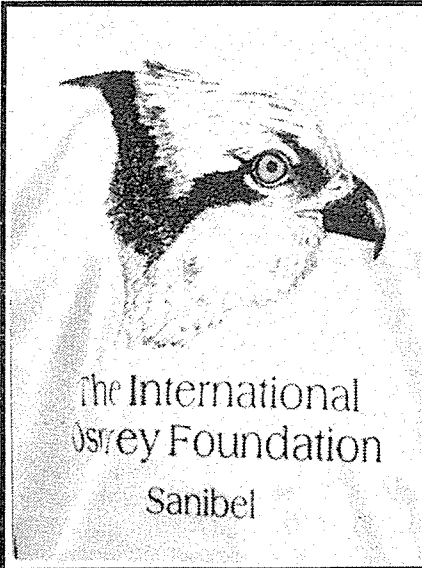
Jerry Nickerson.



## **chick count** (continued from page 1)

season with 75 young produced in 42 nests. However, in Cape Cod last summer, 22 nests and 15 nesting pairs produced only 20 young, about half of what was expected, according to the Cape Cod Times, Sept. 1.

It was a similar story in Connecticut, where for four years in a row, chick mortality on the 500 acre Old Lyme Island has soared. An article in the Hartford Courant last spring said the trend contradicts an otherwise upward trend for ospreys in Connecticut. It is believed the chicks starved to death.



### T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Our popular T-shirts in white, 100% cotton feature a large osprey head in brown with yellow eye. They make great gifts and souvenirs of Sanibel. Price \$15 each including shipping.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity : Small \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ Large \_\_\_\_\_ Extra Large \_\_\_\_\_

Total T-Shirts \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for T-Shirts -

**Ikki Osprey Poster:** Quantity Posters \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 each including shipping

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Posters

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Send with check or money order to:

**TIOF, P.O. Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957**

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

\_\_\_\_ Please enroll me as a member of TIOF

\_\_\_\_ Please renew my membership in TIOF

Check Membership Category:

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| ____ 1. Individual - \$10        | ____ 5. Contributing - \$100                     |
| ____ 2. Family - \$15            | ____ 6. Donor - \$250                            |
| ____ 3. Sustaining - \$25        | ____ 7. Life - \$500                             |
| ____ 4. Supporting - \$50        | ____ 8. Student ( To Under-graduate level) - \$8 |
| ____ 9. Corporate - \$25 or more |  |

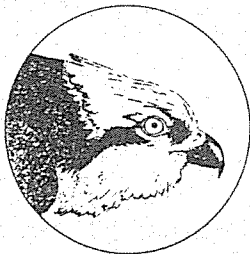
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_

ALL MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE  
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