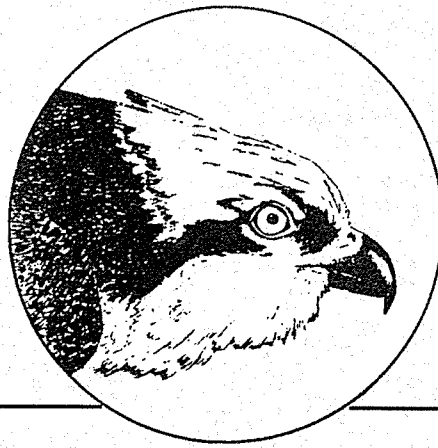


THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION



Osprey Observer

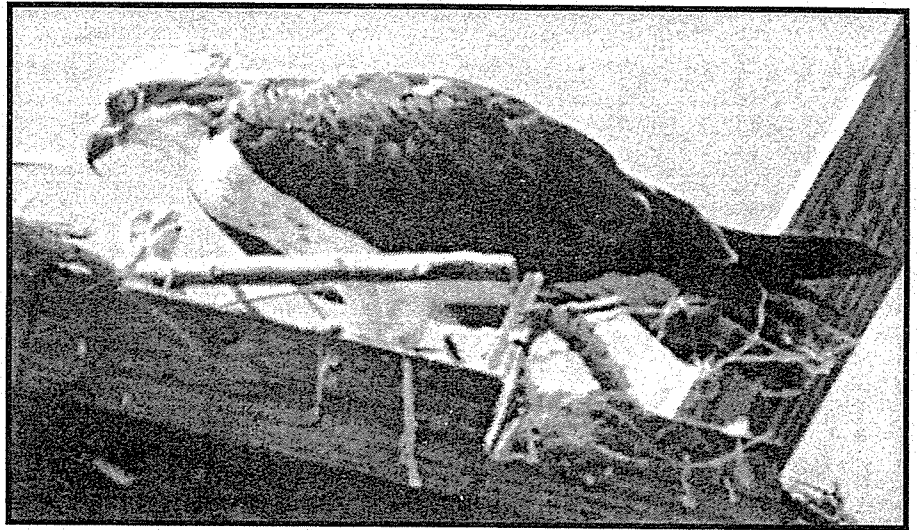
SANIBEL ISLAND, FLORIDA

MARCH, 2000

Sanibel ospreys continue to thrive

Some 75-80 active osprey nests exist on Sanibel. In 1999, the number of chicks fledged was 82, marking a return to more normal numbers after a dramatic and unexplained decline in 1997, a year when red tide killed off a good many fish in the weeks up to the nesting season (*see chart*).

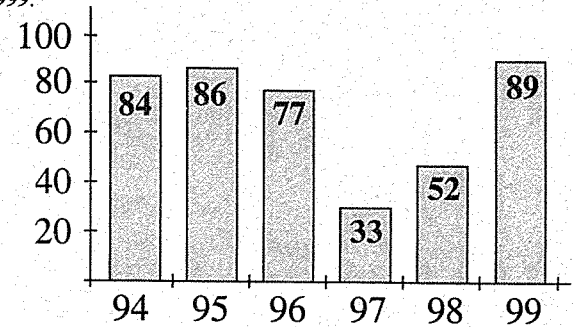
The 2000 nesting season got off to a good start and though the winter has been cool, weather conditions have been generally favorable for the nesting birds. Volunteers monitoring the nests are reporting normal nesting behavior and the potential for a good batch of young ospreys.



This photograph of an osprey feeding her chick was shot by Bud Wagner of Sanibel. The nest is on a platform on Bud and Jane Wagner's property. The chick hatched in early May, 1999.

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. Fledging is 8 weeks after hatching.
4. Post fledging can last a few days to several weeks after first flight.



Observing ospreys in action

By Tim Gardner
President, TIOF

Ospreys are migratory birds that have a worldwide distribution. Every continent except Antarctica hosts ospreys during different stages of their life-cycle. They are found near the seacoast or by large bodies of water where they feed on either fresh or salt-water fish.

A young osprey spends the first seven or eight weeks of its life confined within the nest. It will

probably have one or two siblings which may be very different in size and is fed by its mother which stays in close attendance, tearing into small pieces the fish provided by her mate.

I enjoy the description of the display flight of the male osprey given by Roy Dennis in his book:

"It is a most beautiful spectacle although often difficult for us to observe.

After catching a fish, the male gains height as he returns to the nesting area

(ACTION continued on page 2)

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 exhibit 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 fledging.

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



We are grateful to artist Alessandro Troisi, of Rome, Italy, for the use in this newsletter of his fine ink drawings of ospreys.

(ACTION continued from page 1)

and while still several kilometers away he starts his display. To me the display call is very distinctive; it's a high-pitched pee-pee-pee-pee and if I search the skies I will see him soaring majestically, maybe a thousand feet above, as he moves in sweeping circles closer and closer to the nesting site.

He climbs several hundred feet upwards with rapidly beating wings, then hovering briefly, with fanned tail, he performs a breathtaking dive showing the fish grasped in outreached talons. He pulls out of the dive and powers skywards to repeat the performance. All the time his calling can be heard by his mate and finally his last stoop takes him in a long power dive right to the nest where the fish is presented to his mate."

I enjoy this description so much because every winter day that goes by on Sanibel, I hear and observe this exact behavior!

By the age of two weeks, the chicks are able to move around the nest and at a month they are very active, preening and exercising their wings. Gradually the wing-flapping increases until they are able to lift a little off the nest and then take their hesitant first flight.

For at last two weeks after fledging, the young ospreys return to their nest for food brought in by the adults. Usually the young stay in the area near the nest as they improve their skill in the air and begin to make attempts to catch fish for themselves nearby.

The osprey is a fascinating raptor. Ospreys have very keen eyesight which is about eight times better than that of humans. They also have a keen sense of hearing and they make a broad range of sounds. An osprey's talons are lethal weapons, perfectly designed for catching, holding, and carrying prey.

TIOF online

Join TIOF on the Internet at <http://www.sancap.com/osprey/tiof.htm>, or e-mail us at ospreys@sancap.com/

Here are some more raptor-related websites you might want to check out:

<http://www.salamander.com/~rrp> (Raptor Resource Project, peregrine falcons, with new osprey section.)

<http://www.raptor.cvm.umn.edu/newwebdev/meeen/highway/meeen.html/>

<http://www.nu.com/eagles/eagles.htm> (Camera on nesting eagles).

<http://www.nspco.com/nspbird.htm> (Camera on nesting peregrine falcons).

President's message

As your new president, I would like to tell you a little about my background. In my working career, I was manager of agricultural pesticides at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington. I was the person responsible for banning DDT (and many other hard pesticides) in the mid seventies. Now here we are almost thirty years later and I am president of the International Osprey Foundation - life is full of ironies.

My wife, Carol, and I moved to Sanibel in 1988, and I have been very active in all of the environmental organizations on the Island. Another irony is that we moved from Clam Bayou to Osprey Court in December!

I would like to begin by going back to basics and start with our Mission Statement:

The International Osprey Foundation is dedicated to the continuing recovery and preservation of the Osprey, others in the raptor family, wildlife and the environment as a whole.

After being a volunteer for TIOF for about ten years, it is a delight for me to serve as President. I am grateful that there are so many ospreys to monitor today and am also grateful to those who helped these birds so much in installing nesting platforms over all of these years since DDT was banned.

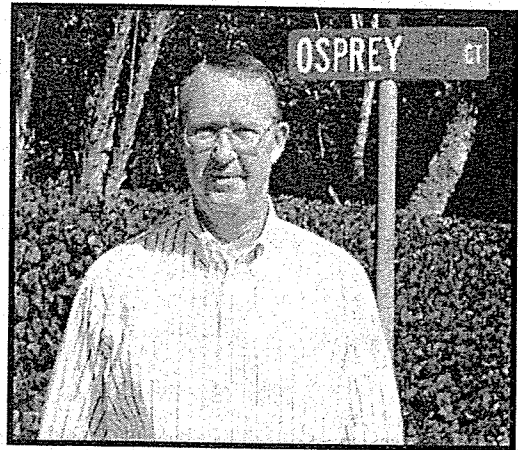
Westall back on board

Mark "Bird" Westall has rejoined the board of The International Osprey Foundation. His role as research director will include handling technical issues and working with our many international members involved in research. Westall will also answer the many questions the foundation receives from TIOF supporters and osprey observers, many of which come over the Internet.

He can be contacted at TIOF, PO Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957, or by e-mail at ospreys@sancap.com

Erecting an osprey platform

Many Sanibel residents have erected nesting platforms on their property and have been successful in attracting these magnificent birds to their own backyards where they have the joy of watching the



Tim Gardner

When the partnership between predators and prey is operating efficiently, a balance is maintained in their populations. Predators depend upon prey for their food supply. In turn, the population of the prey is strengthened, as the sick and weak are taken out. This leaves the strongest ones to reproduce. Without predators, the numbers of the prey species would quickly overpopulate, causing overcrowding, disease, and starvation.

Raptors are especially valuable to people as an important source of rodent control. When something disrupts the food chain at the bottom, it is magnified at each succeeding level. When it reaches the top, the disturbance appears as a major environmental disruption. This makes raptors and other predators especially vulnerable when the food chain becomes unbalanced; this is why raptors serve as important environmental barometers.

Thanks to past president

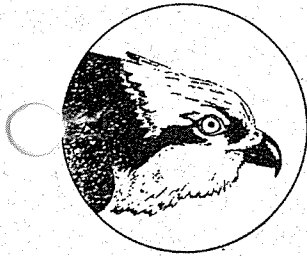
In September, David Loveland resigned as president of The International Osprey Foundation due to "competing commitments" in his life, including his increasingly demanding work as a planner with the Lee County Department of Transportation.

David has been a tireless TIOF volunteer and board member for many years. We are grateful for his support and will surely miss him.

The board elected Tim Gardner as its new president.

ospreys build nests, lay and incubate eggs, feed their young, and, finally, send them off on their own.

For information about design, construction and erection of platforms, contact TIOF at P.O. Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957.



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MEMBERSHIP FORM

____ Please enroll me as a member of TIOF

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____ 2. Family - \$20 ____ 6. Donor - \$250

____ 3. Sustaining - \$25 ____ 7. Life - \$500

____ 4. Supporting - \$50 ____ 8. Student (To Under-graduate level) - \$8

____ 9. Corporate - \$25 or more

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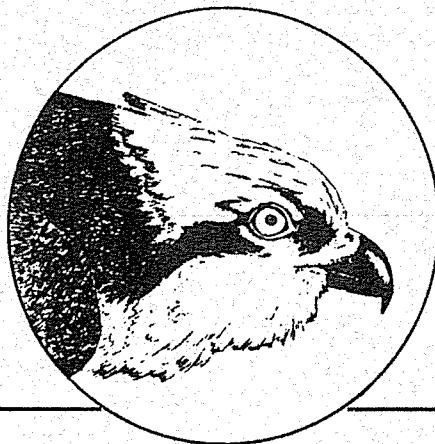
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THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION



International Newsletter

SANIBEL ISLAND, FLORIDA

MARCH, 2000

Florida ospreys may migrate after all

Using satellite telemetry to monitor the movements of Florida ospreys

Mark Martell, of The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota, will be the featured speaker at The International Osprey Foundation's annual meeting on Sunday, March 19.

Martell will discuss his project in which satellite telemetry is used to monitor the movements, migration, and non-breeding season locations of ospreys nesting in Florida.

The study may show that contrary to popular opinion, some Florida ospreys do, in fact, migrate.

In April 1999, radio telemetry units attached to four adult female ospreys nesting on Lake Istokpoga in south-central Florida revealed that in late July all four birds left their breeding areas and migrated to South America, ending up in Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia. This was the first documentation that Florida ospreys migrate.

Martell hopes to raise some funding for the \$480,000 ongoing project while on Sanibel in March. Mark "Bird" Westall, research director of The International Osprey Foundation, will assist in trapping Sanibel ospreys as a portion of the project.

The Raptor Center will work with local osprey experts in Florida, including Mike McMillian of Archbold Research Station, Lake Placid; Brian Mealey, Miami Museum of Science & Space Transit Planetarium, Miami; and Monica Folk, TNC - Disney Wilderness Preserve, Kissimmee.

The goal is to fit 48 Florida ospreys with 30-gram, solar-powered satellite telemetry units each costing \$10,000 and is expected to provide three years of data on each bird. The project total is \$480,000.

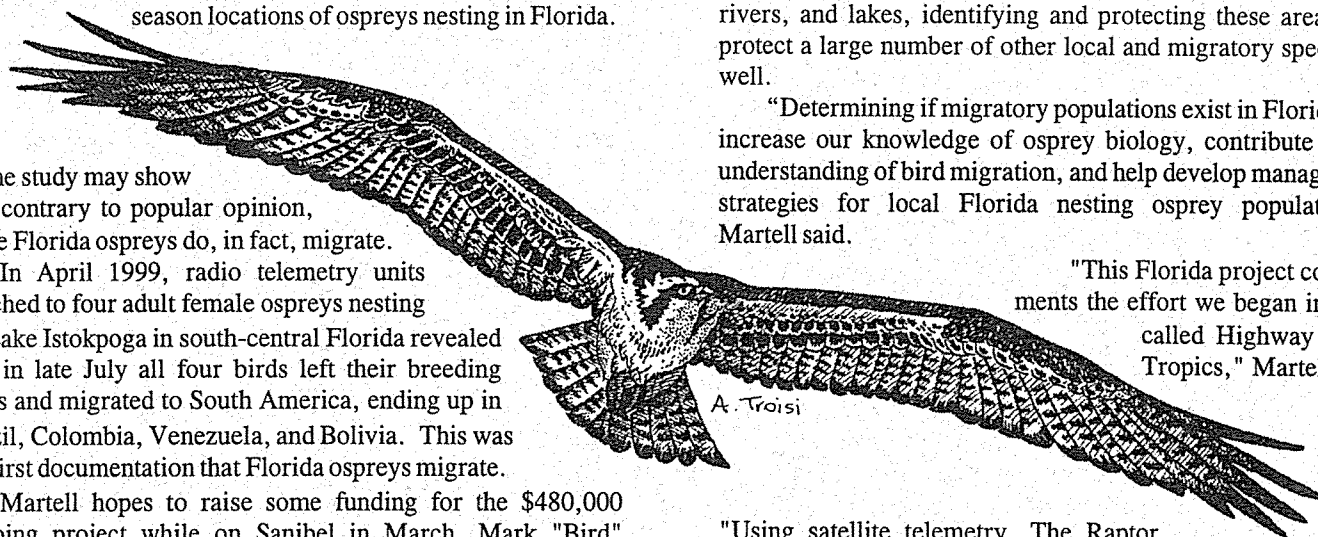
This information, when integrated with data collected on ospreys from the Western, Great Lakes, and Eastern populations, will present a clearer picture of osprey migration and conservation needs at both the state and national level, according to Martell. He said environmental education programs incorporating this information "in real time" on the Internet (<http://www.raptor.cvm.umn.edu>) are providing an opportunity for schoolchildren, as well as the general public, to become

involved in science and osprey conservation.

Threats to ospreys such as shooting, poisoning, and habitat loss still exist on their wintering grounds and along their migration routes, making it important to document their movements and habitats. Because ospreys use wetlands, large rivers, and lakes, identifying and protecting these areas will protect a large number of other local and migratory species as well.

"Determining if migratory populations exist in Florida will increase our knowledge of osprey biology, contribute to the understanding of bird migration, and help develop management strategies for local Florida nesting osprey populations," Martell said.

"This Florida project complements the effort we began in 1995 called Highway to the Tropics," Martell said.



"Using satellite telemetry, The Raptor Center, along with other cooperating organizations, has tracked over 100 ospreys from Minnesota, Oregon, New York, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Maine along their migration routes. "This unprecedented study has given us information on the location of migratory pathways and wintering areas from the three primary U.S. osprey populations: East Coast, West Coast and Midwest," he added.

OBJECTIVES:

- Determine to what extent the Florida Osprey population migrates;
- Determine if breeding location or gender affects this behavior, and,
- Determine if individuals migrate to the same location and on the same schedule each year.

METHODS:

Over a three-year period, the study will track a total of 48 Ospreys: 6 males, and 6 females from each of the following locations: Lake Istokpoga, Sanibel Island, Florida Bay, and Orlando/Kissimmee.

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According to Mary Jean Cowing, her department does not consider itself a document delivery service, but it can make a modest number of copies for the public, the cost payable by Visa and Mastercard only. "We only copy those documents not covered by copyright restrictions," she added. For more information, contact her at (208) 426-5218, phone or fax.

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Madagascar study nets \$1,000 grant

Sarah M. Karpanty, studying at the State University of New York at Stonybrook, is the 1999 recipient of a \$1,000 grant from The International Osprey Foundation. Karpanty, of SUNY's Department of Ecological and Evolutionary Biology, used her grant money to help finance her study, "A Survey of the Diurnal Raptor Communities of Four Reserves in Madagascar." TIOF has awarded \$11,000 in endowments since the grant program began in 1990. Deadline for application is Jan. 31 each year. For details, write TIOF at PO Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957.

Annual meeting of TIOF

WHEN: Sunday, March 19, 7 p.m.

WHERE: Sanibel Community Association,
Periwinkle Way.

ADMISSION: Free to TIOF members, \$3 donation for non-members.

