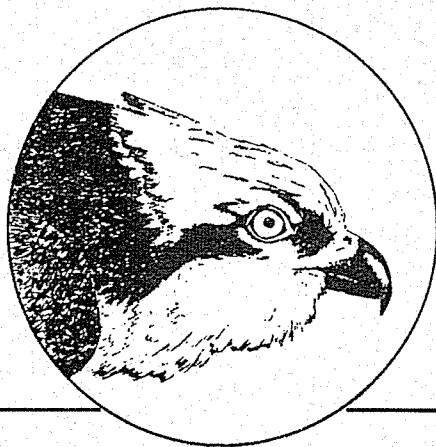


THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION



International Newsletter

SANIBEL ISLAND, FLORIDA

MARCH, 2001

Migration study poses many questions

Since Mark Martell, of The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota, started fitting radio telemetry units to ospreys - including three on Sanibel last year - he admits he has "more questions than answers" about their migration habits.

Martell monitors the movements, migration, and non-breeding season locations of ospreys nesting in Florida. Currently he is tracking about 18 birds, including some from Istokpoga and Florida Bay in addition to the Sanibel ospreys.

Two of the island birds, both female, dispersed within Florida; the male remained on Sanibel. The theory that the males remain to protect their nesting territory is not borne out, Martell said, since in other areas birds of both sexes migrate in roughly the same ratios.

"In fact, in northern states, males and females defend against their own sex but not against each other. It's the female's job to keep other females out," he said.

Data seems to suggest that the later-nesting birds are the ones that migrate. "But we don't know the cause and effect," Martell said. It's a chicken/egg situation.

"It may be that they have some built-in push to migrate and that gets them back (to their nesting area) later."

Martell said that may also be true of some Sanibel ospreys, but they don't happen to be the ones he fitted with radios.

One of the Sanibel birds stopped transmitting in July. He doesn't know why, but speculates that the radio failed or the bird died.

Here's an interesting detail: an osprey from Bar Harbor, Maine, spent the winter in Lee County, according to Martell, and another, from New York State, migrated to the Vero Beach area.

"So even though people see ospreys all the time in South Florida, some may in fact be northern birds wintering there," Martell noted.

"There's more nest switching going on than we previously thought in areas where there are a lot of nests."



These nesting osprey were captured on film by Roger Inghram, of Grangeville, ID.

Research has already shown that contrary to conventional wisdom, some Florida ospreys do, in fact, migrate. The study also shows that so far, only Istokpoga birds migrated out of Florida. Some ended up in Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia. Others remained in state. The one that went to Venezuela in April 1999 has not returned, leaving Martell with yet another question.

Martell will return to Sanibel again in March or April this year to fit a solar-powered radio to at least one more osprey. A Minnesota resident with a home on Sanibel is providing the funding.

Martell said he's limited by money, since each osprey fitted with the transmitter costs \$10,000.

Anyone willing to make a tax-deductible contribution to the study may contact Martell at The Raptor Center, University of Minnesota, 1920 Fitch Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

KEEPING TABS

If you want to keep tabs on Sanibel's ospreys, you can access the Highway to the Tropics Website (www.raptor.cvm.umn.edu).

These are the birds' numbers: 800, 395, 224

NOTE: 395 was last heard from in St. Lucie County before it stopped transmitting in July.

OSPREY BIBLIOGRAPHY

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For more information, contact Mary Jean Cowing at (208) 426-5218.

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Raptor Research Foundation to meet in Winnipeg

The 2001 annual meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation is scheduled for October 24 - 27, 2001 at the Radisson Hotel Winnipeg Downtown, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

For more information, log onto

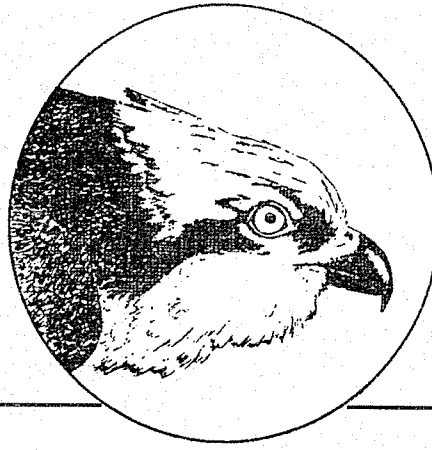
<http://www.networkx.net/~sparrow/rrf2001.html>
or call 204-945-7775.

Raptor conference to be held in Spain

Seville, Spain, will be the venue for the 4th Eurasian Conference on Raptors September 25 - 29, 2001, sponsored by the Raptor Research Foundation.

Papers on all aspects of raptor biology, conservation and management are solicited for both oral and poster presentations. They should be postmarked by July 1 to: Giulia Crema, Estacion Biologica de Donana, Avda. de Maria Luisa s/n, Pabellon del Peru, 41013 Seville, Spain, or tel +34 95 4232340. For guidelines, log onto www.ebd.csic.es/~busta/call.html

THE INTERNATIONAL OSPREY FOUNDATION



Osprey Observer

SANIBEL ISLAND, FLORIDA

MARCH, 2001

Return of the Osprey author to speak at annual meeting

While we in Southwest Florida almost take our osprey population for granted, in most parts of the United States these raptors are only just starting to thrive after decades on the brink of extinction due to the effects of DDT.

So fascinated was David Gessner with four pairs of ospreys he encountered and studied in Cape Cod, where the birds practically disappeared for many years, he was inspired to write a book.

“By then my mail order telescope had arrived, and looking through its lens I could enter the nest, see the intense yellow eyes of the birds and the way they stabbed at the fish they held in their snowshoe-like talons.”

Gessner will be the speaker at The International Osprey Foundation Annual Meeting March 18, 2001. His book, Return of the Osprey, describes how, over the course of a full nesting season, Gessner immerses himself in the lives of four pairs of ospreys — and witnesses the dramas, large and small, of nest life.

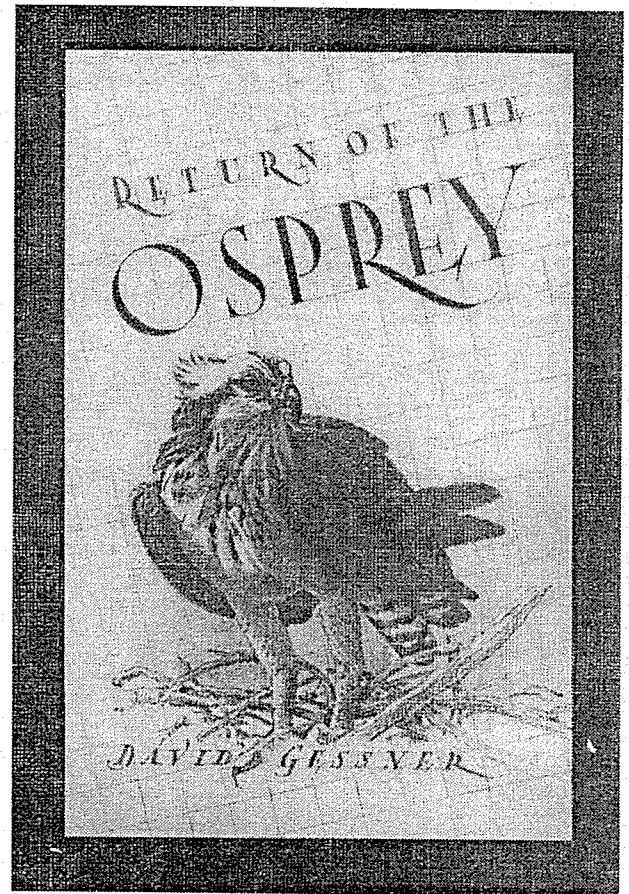
The 304-page book is being published March 30 in hardback by Algonquin, at \$23.95. It is a Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

TIOF Annual meeting

WHEN: Sunday, March 18, 7 p.m.

WHERE: Sanibel Community Association, Periwinkle Way

SPEAKER: David Gessner, author of a new book,
Return of the Osprey



TIOF president on Mosquito Control board

Tim Gardner, president of The International Osprey Foundation, was elected to the Lee County Mosquito Control Board in November.

It is a fitting job for Tim, who had a long and illustrious career with the Environmental Protection Agency before he retired to Sanibel. He was influential in having the pesticide DDT banned in the United States.

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.

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.

Endowment program

TIOF has awarded \$1,000 in endowments to 13 candidates since the grant program began in 1990. Deadline for application is January 31 each year. For details, write to: TIOF, P. O. Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957. Previous recipients.

2000 - Frank Quamen, University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, for study, "Factors Influencing Nest Site Selection and Reproductive Success of Ospreys in Wisconsin"; and **Michelle Donaghy Cannon**, of Jonesboro, Ark., for study, "Ecological Correlates and Benefits of Cooperative Polyandry in the Galapagos Hawk".

1999 - Sarah M. Karpanty, studying at the State University of New York at Stonybrook, for study, "A Survey of the Diurnal Raptor Communities of Four Reserves in Madagascar."

1998 - Dale Trexel, a master's degree candidate in the Conservation Biology Program at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, for a study entitled, Genetic Population Structure in the Swainson's Hawks.

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, for "Effects of Electromagnetic Fields Generated by Power lines 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 Frazer 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.

Island ospreys on the up and up

Sanibel's osprey population continues to thrive, according to data collected by volunteer nest monitors with The International Osprey Foundation. Groups of volunteers check 77 nests that are accessible on foot. It is done every two weeks throughout the nesting season, which typically runs from January through May, or even later.

This year's nesting ospreys appear to be faring well as of late February. The winter weather, while unseasonably cold in January, has been dry and not too windy, which bodes well. And as usual, several new nest sites have been identified.

Some birds got an early start on their nesting, beginning the process long before Christmas.

After a disastrous nesting season in 1997, when red tide was prevalent and only 33 chicks fledged,

How to care for an injured osprey

If you find an injured osprey, please remember the following advice:

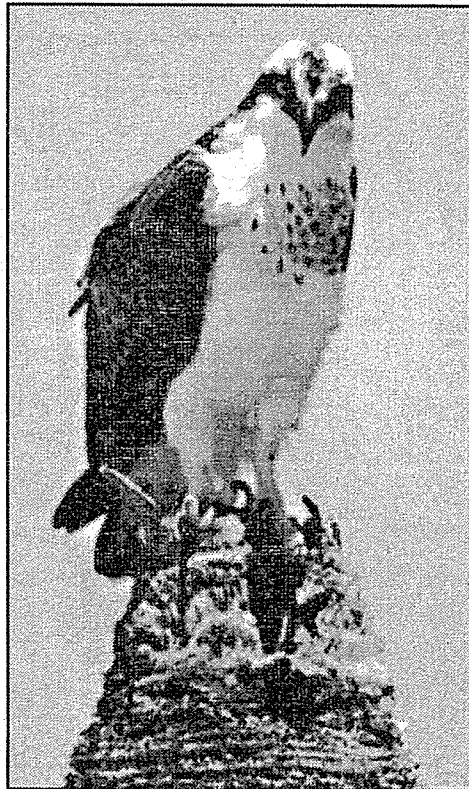
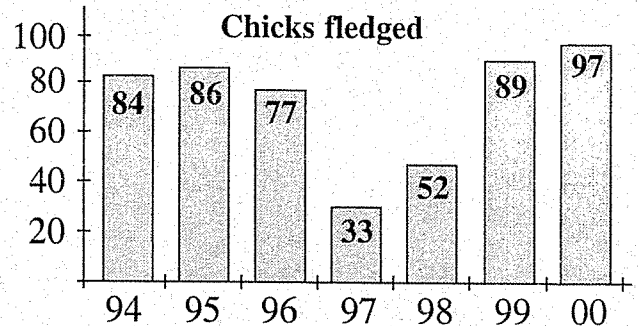
1. Try to keep a watch on the bird and call for help.
2. Have the helper fetch:
 - a small towel
 - a large dark colored towel or blanket
 - leather or thick gloves
 - a strong wooden or cardboard box with holes for ventilation
3. Put on the gloves. Place the small towel near the osprey's talons, ensuring that it grips the towel with both talons. Then cover its head with the large towel or blanket. In darkness, the bird will relax and be easy to gather up. Place it in the box for transport to the nearest raptor or wildlife rehab center or an avian vet.

(Thanks to the Georgian Bay Osprey Society for this information)

the numbers have gradually returned to more typical levels. In fact, 2000 saw a bumper crop of 97 chicks survive and leave their nests.

The nests themselves include 23 in natural sites, such as trees, 51 from nests on artificial platforms, and 3 on other structures such as chimneys.

For more information about the nestwatch program, contact coordinator Hartley Kleinberg at 472-5810.



This osprey perched on a dead palm tree trunk was photographed last April in the Bailey Tract by Bob Kitchen.

Down to earth parents

A pair of ospreys has nested on the Bimini top of a pontoon boat that's moored in Safety harbor, near Barnacle Phil's Restaurant, North Captiva. The couple was seen adding to a copious nest made possible by the large expanse of canvas afforded by the boat's canopy.

Ospreys usually prefer a higher vantage point, but this pair may have become used to a lower altitude lifestyle by nesting for a number of years on a structure on one of the boat docks in the area.

Our grateful thanks to TIOF's Life Members

- Representative and Mrs. Porter Goss
- Dr. Eugene I. Majerowicz
- Ms. Margaret Smith
- Mr. Jim Fowler, Sanibel-Captiva Nature Calendar
- Mr. Charles Rubright
- Dr. Harvey Rothstein
- Ms. Carmen Sanchez





The International
Osprey Foundation
Sanibel

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Our popular T-shirts in white, 100% cotton feature a large osprey head in brown with yellow eye. Price is \$15 each including shipping. The Ikki Matsumoto poster depicts an osprey.

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