

Sanibel Island, Florida

March 2005

LCEC comes to the rescue after hurricane damages osprey platforms

After Hurricane Charley hit Southwest Florida August 13, many osprey nesting platforms were damaged and destroyed.

With only a few months before the ospreys started claiming their nest sites for another season, the Lee County Electric Co-operative, at TIOF's request, replaced and/or repaired 31 platforms and erected seven new ones on Sanibel. Also thanks to Asplundh, which contracts with LCEC.

LCEC did the work at its own expense.

Karen Ryan, spokeswoman for the utility, said LCEC also helped out in other areas, taking care of about 60 nesting platforms between Pine Island and Marco Island. "About half of them required a new pole," Ryan said.

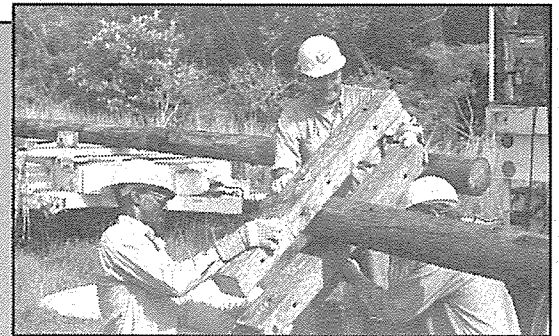
She estimates the cost of replacing a pole and platform at \$400.

"TIOF gave us the specs for a platform that can be built for less than \$50," Ryan said.

The crews carefully worked around power lines, long reaches over water and other obstacles to make sure the island ospreys would be sitting pretty once they got down to the serious business of raising their young.

The electric co-op is also very obliging when it gets requests from customers

Lee County Electric Co-operative



keep ospreys from building nests on or near power lines, which can lead to power outages and osprey deaths.

"Another reason we do it is that it's the right thing to do," said Ryan.

Over the years, the utility has erected about 200 poles in the five-county area.

who would like a platform on their property. All they're required to do is provide the platform (see "Platform Brochure") and LCEC will do the rest, subject to these requirements:

- The site is on the customer's property
- Customer must obtain any required permits
- The site must be accessible to an LCEC truck

Ryan said requests are usually referred to TIOF for guidance in siting poles where the ospreys are most likely to use them. Be patient. The process can take from several days to several weeks.

The utility has a vested interest in erecting platforms because they help

Platform brochure

The electric co-op, very kindly and with the help of Rick Joyce from Lee County Division of Environmental Sciences, redesigned and printed a new brochure that details how to make and erect an osprey platform and where to site it for best results.

The brochures were last printed in 1991 so it was time for a face-lift. And what a nice job they did. You can write us for a copy, or download it from the TIOF Web site.

Annual meeting set for March 20

Dr. Jerry Jackson, Whitaker Eminent Scholar in Science at Florida Gulf Coast University, will be the featured speaker at TIOF's annual meeting on Sunday, March 20. His topic will be "Ospreys, People and Barrier Islands."

An ornithologist, his research has focused primarily on the behavioral ecology of birds with special emphases on endangered and threatened species and invasive exotic species. He is host of "With the Wild Things," a radio feature that airs in Southwest Florida on WGCU/WMCO public radio.

A short business meeting will precede Dr. Jackson's presentation.

All are welcome. There is a \$3 admission fee for non-members.

The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in the Sanibel Community House, Periwinkle Way, Sanibel.

The spirit of the osprey

We had four chicks that hatched in this nest. Since the fourth was the smallest, lack of food and brutal aggression from the first chick, the fourth eventually died. Not only was it heartbreaking to see what the fourth chick went through, his passing was a blessing, until the hen fed the fourth chick to the other three. Somehow I think his spirit lives on in the three chicks. (Of course this is a woman's perspective.)

Kathy, Long Island, NY

The song of the osprey

I have a story you may enjoy. We live in a location where ospreys live, so hearing them is a daily occurrence. Yesterday however, one sounded like it was in the house. While the bird could not be seen, it was evident that one individual was sitting in the canopy near the house and responding to another bird. I listened for the other bird and sure enough I could hear it.... From next door, I could hear the muted tones of the neighbor boy learning the famous 10-note phrase of the Mexican Hat Dance on his trumpet. Each time the music would stop, the bird would respond. By then the boy was ready to go again, and so the exchange went until the bird decided that there was not going to be romance or that the invader could not be repulsed.

Tom Roberts, Clearwater

An osprey down on Lake Barkley

Last March, Ed Ray and a group of students in grades 3-5 at Caldwell County Elementary School in Kentucky, were featured at TIOF's annual meeting. The children, under Ed's guidance, are involved with an award-winning osprey recovery program. What's so remarkable is that until recently, Lake Barkley, where the project is based, did not have a single osprey nest for 50 years. This is an excerpt from a letter Ed sent to TIOF President Tim Gardner last year. TIOF gave Ray's KEEP project (Kentucky Environmental Education Projects) a \$500 grant.

As you know I feature ospreys during my eco-cruises and named my boat "Osprey". I think my boat earned the name 5-28-04 during my 4 p.m. trip. As we approached the nest with three chicks where the present live cam is operating, I was surprised to find the adult female down in the water about 30 feet from the navigation light nest location. She was thoroughly waterlogged and struggling to stay above water. She could not lift her wings out of the water but was able to use about the first 1/3 of her wings to swim. I slowly circled her to observe her and her reaction to my boat. She did not make an effort to get away so I slowly approached her with the bow and then turned so I could bring her alongside. She swam toward my boat. I took hold of one wing and turned her so I could pick her up from the rear. She struggled very

little as I took her legs in my hand to prevent a possible grab with her talons. She had no broken wings or legs and there was no blood or other visible injuries. I felt her chest and she was plump indicating she had been eating well and hence probably not sick. I placed a towel over her head to help calm her even though she was not acting stressed or overly-excited. I carried her up to the base of the nest support tower to the wooden nav. light base about

four feet below the nest. I positioned her toward the tower so she would not immediately have a clear lane to jump into the lake. She stayed right where I released her. I



think she was too exhausted to move. We backed away and saw the male come in and feed the chicks but without her the chicks would have been left alone as the male fished. I watched her slowly recover during trips over the next several hours. During my last check she moved to the far end of the platform and was looking up as if she was thinking of flying and behaving more normally, and drying out well. The next day when I went to the nest I was relieved to see her flying and doing her normal nesting duties. She can be seen live again at our nest cam site on the internet having recovered fully. It feels good to have been in the right place at the right time. **Ed Ray**

The 2004 nesting season in Southwest Florida

Sanibel ospreys

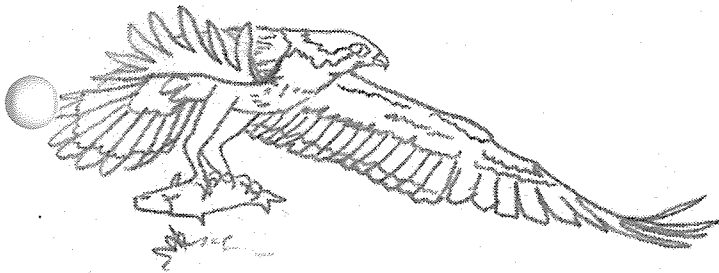
Sanibel's osprey population had some minor setbacks in the 2004 nesting season with 90 chicks fledged, compared with 122 fledged in 2003. Very cold weather at the start of the nesting season may have contributed.

Five volunteer nestwatch groups monitored 98 nests every two weeks starting in January and continuing until the last chick was fledged. Of those, 81 were active nests, meaning that eggs were laid.

Many of the island's successful nests are on man-made platforms, while a few are in trees, on chimneys and on special dishes.

Here's the breakdown of active nests:

- Platform 59
- Natural 32
- Dish 3
- Chimney 4



Alessandro Troisi

Pine Island ospreys

Eagles take their toll on osprey survival

This season was an unusual one on Pine Island.

A spring storm did significant damage to nests.

For those of us who were repeat-watchers, we observed a later nesting season, fewer chicks hatched and of these, fewer survived, more inactive nests, and more nests with adults that did not produce any chicks.

- Total nests monitored: 95
- Total chicks hatched: 112
- Total chicks fledged: 95

Of those that did not survive:

- 8 were blown down in a windstorm
- 1 tree was cut down
- 1 osprey was observed being eaten by an eagle.

Seven nests had three chicks each. However, only three nests fledged all three chicks.

One nest that attracted a great deal of attention on Pine Island was an abandoned osprey nest that was inhabited by a great horned owl that fledged two chicks in late March.

Pine Island has experienced a large increase of nesting eagles and also an increase in eagle thieves taking fish from ospreys. Some of us wonder if the eagles are at least partly to blame for the decrease in numbers this year.

We did have a good year and look forward to the next one.

Participating were John Nyhus, Sandy and Matthew Werner, Rich Little, Jane Erskin, Richard Graham, Joanne Niven, Fred Jansen, Bonnie Edmund, Joyce and Bill Plechaty, Judith Sage, Katey Roy, and Marsha Perlman, coordinator.

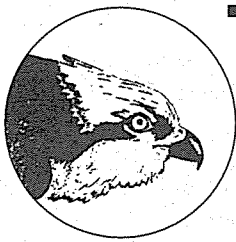
Joyce and Bill Plechaty reported in December that they will replace Marsha Perlman as coordinator. Perlman's home on Pine Island was severely damaged by Hurricane Charley on August 13, 2004.

TIOF life members

Mr. and Mrs. Porter Goss
Dr. Eugene Majerowicz
Dr. Harvey Rothstein
Mr. Charles Rubright
Mr. Jim Fowler, San-Cap Nature Calendar
Ms. Margaret Smith
Mrs. Carmen Sanchez
Mr. and Mrs. William Alquist
Mr. Dwight Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. David Ladd
James and Martha Kannry
Robert and Rita Southern

TIOF board

Tim Gardner, President
Anne Mitchell, Vice President
Inge Glissman, Treasurer/Secretary
Mark "Bird" Westall, Project Director
Jerry Nickerson, Webmaster
Hartley Kleinberg, Volunteer Coordinator
Debbie Friedlund

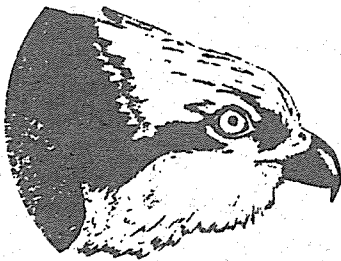


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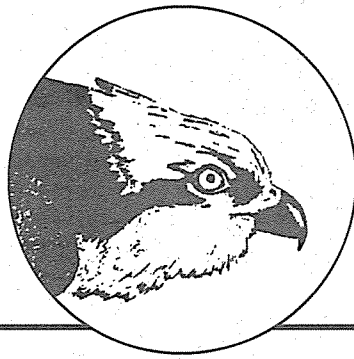
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Summer Research Assistantships in Raptor Biology

The Raptor Biology program has summer stipends for students in the Raptor Biology program. Stipends of up to \$1,000 per individual will be awarded to those students pursuing thesis research during the summer months who otherwise are not receiving substantial salary support through full-time employment, grant funds, fellowships, or other sources.

Eligibility: A student is eligible to receive these summer funds during the first and second summers in the program and only if their thesis proposal seminar has been given and their written proposal has been approved by their thesis committee before the summer research period commences. An application is required each year, and funding is contingent on availability of funds. The student must be working on their thesis research during the summer months (this would include analyzing data and writing reports and manuscripts in addition to actual data collection).

Applications for Summer 2005 awards are due by 11 June 2005 and should be submitted to: Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Biology, Boise State University, Boise, ID 83725 or via email to: jbeltho@boisestate.edu.

Raptor Research Foundation meeting in Green Bay this year

Date: 12-16 October 2005

Place: Cofrin Center for Biodiversity, KI Convention Center, Green Bay Wisconsin.

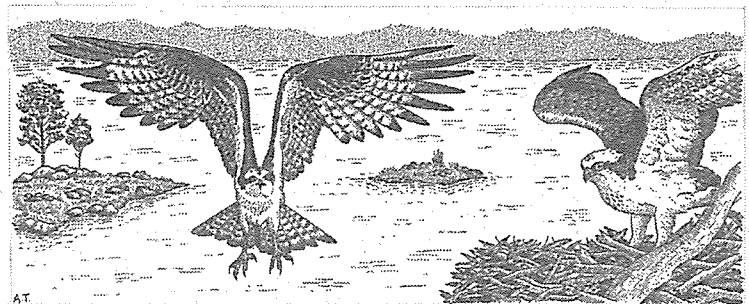
An annual meeting is held in a different North American location each year where up-to-the-minute research results are presented, society business is conducted, and social events are scheduled to permit personal contacts between individuals interested in similar problems regarding birds of prey.

Students, especially, benefit from having the opportunity to meet and learn from experts in the field. RRF meetings traditionally occur in the autumn and occasionally are held jointly with other ornithological societies.

The 2006 meeting will be held Oct. 2-7 in Veracruz, Mexico, and the 2007 meeting is scheduled for Sept. 12-16 in Allentown, Pa.

Poland is venue for raptor conference in September

The 5th Eurasian Raptor Research Foundation Conference is planned for Sept. 13-17, 2005, in Poznan, Poland. For more information, visit <http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor/conferences.htm>



Alessandro Troisi

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Research endowments

TIOF has awarded \$19,000 in endowments since the grant program began in 1990. Deadline for application is Jan. 31 each year. For details about applying for the \$1,000 grants, write TIOF at P.O. 250, Sanibel, FL 33957, or e-mail tim@islandwater.com

Previous recipients:

2004 — Heidi Lynn Alderman, for "Osprey as a Model of Mercury Accumulation in Top Predators in Aquatic Ecosystems"; and **Heather R.L. Lerner**, for "Phylogeography of the Endangered Harpy Eagle and Conservation Implications."

2003 — Ernesto Ruelas Inzuna, for "Trends in Osprey Populations Derived from Migration Counts in Mexico 1991-2003"; **Sara Ress** for "Use of Stable Hydrogen Isotopes to Identify and Assesdss Yearly Variation of Natal Origins among Raptors migrating through the Florida Keys"; and **Claudia Burns**, Sanibel Island, for wildlife coloring book.

2002 — Ruth E. Tingay for "Population Dynamics and Behavioral Ecology of the Critically Endangered Madagascar Fish Eagle: Implications for Conservation."

2001 — Dr. Mark Martell for "Radio Collaring Osprey and other Raptors"; and **Michael McMillian**, for "Time Budget Analysis of Osprey Sub-colonies at two South Florida Lakes; a sink and a source."

2000 — Frank Quamen for "Factors Influencing Nest Site Selection and Reproductive Success of Ospreys in Wisconsin"; also **Michelle Donaghy Cannon**, for "Ecological Correlates and Benefits of Cooperative Polyandry in the Galapagos Hawk."

1999 — Sarah M Karpanty for "A Survey of the Diurnal Raptor Communities of four Reserves in Madagascar."

1998 — Dale Trexel for a study, "Genetic Population Structure in the Swainson's Hawks."

1997 — Todd Katzner — for raptor conservation studies in North-Central Kazakstan, home of four eagle species.

1996 — Irina Utekhina — For aerial surveys of ospreys and Steller's sea eagles in N.E. Siberia since 1991.

1995 — James Berkelman for "Habitat Requirements of the Madagascar Fish Eagle"; and **Kimberly J. Fernie** for "Effects of Electromagnetic Fields Generated by Powe Lines on Avian Reproduction and Development."

1994 — Lauren N. Gilson — for "Behavioral Strategy Selection in Juvenile Ospreys at Gascade Reservoir."

1993 — Ruth Anne Ebert for "The Use of Avian Indicator Species to Monitor Environmental Mercury Exposure."

1992 — Michael McMillian for studies into the effects of pesticides on reproduction on Lake Istopoga, Florida.

1991 — David J. Green for study of female osprey production decisions and male parental effort.

1990 — Gustgavo Danemann for study of ospreys in coastal lagoons of Baja California, Mexico.