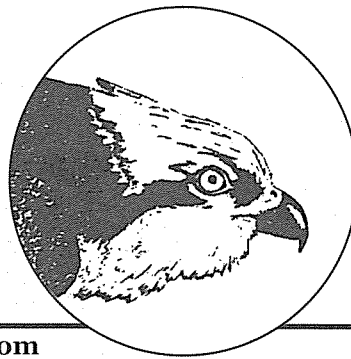


The International Osprey Foundation



Osprey Observer

Sanibel Island, Florida • www.ospreys.com

March 2008

'Ospreys of Pelican Island' is Topic for Annual Meeting March 16

Bob Montanaro, the office manager for the Pelican Island Audubon Society in Vero Beach, Florida, will be the keynote speaker at The International Osprey Foundation's annual meeting on Sunday, March 16.

The title of his presentation is "Ospreys of Pelican Island: An Exploration into the Life of the Fish Hawk." The program uses still photography and digital video set to music to celebrate the osprey nesting experience by following two pairs of ospreys nesting on the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge from mating through fledging the young. "The program also shows a little of what Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge and its other wildlife are like," Montanaro said.

Montanaro handles all aspects of the day-to-day running of the Audubon chapter. He is also a volunteer at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge and Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge. In addition to being, respectively, the 2004 and the 2006 volunteer of the year at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, he



also serves on the board of directors of the Pelican Island Preservation Society, which is the friends group for the refuge. He also serves on the planning committee for the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival which is an annual one-day event that draws 4,000 to 7,000 visitors to learn about the national wildlife refuge system, about local wildlife and habitats, and environmental issues and concerns.

Montanaro spends most of his free time pursuing his interest in ospreys in an attempt to document through still and video photography the activities of the ospreys residing at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

He received a BA in European and Asian history from the University of Central Florida and an MA in U.S. history from Florida State University. He also attended the Academy of Art in San Francisco.

The meeting will take place at the Sanibel Community House and will begin at 7 p.m. with a short business meeting followed by the speaker. Admission is free to members; a \$3 donation is requested of non-members.

Sanibel's Ospreys Produced Fewer Chicks In 2007

Sanibel's ospreys had a tough 2007 nesting season, producing only 45 chicks that survived to leave the nest. That's about half as many chicks as in 2006 and only a third as many as 2003's bumper crop of 122.

Sanibel and the surrounding area has been beset with water pollution problems from the estuary to the bay to the gulf. However, the cause of the decline in chicks is unclear.

TIOF President Tim Gardner notes that a big drop in chicks fledged occurred 24 years ago during a similar drought.

Thirty-one TIOF volunteers monitored 93 nest sites of which about 59 had active nests. In addition to the 45 osprey chicks, the watchers noted two bald eaglets had fledged.

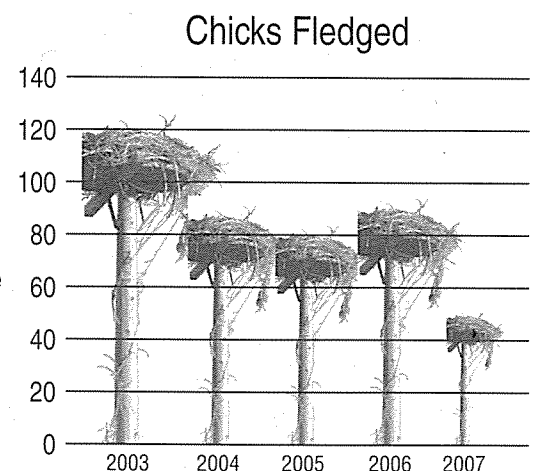
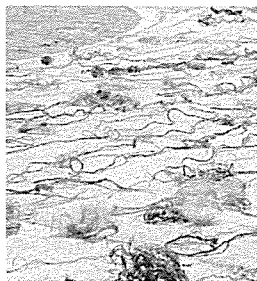


Photo by Jason Cheever



Quarter Mile of Twine

Thought you might want to see these pictures. This is baling twine measured from a 23-year-old nest that blew down this summer here in Missoula, Montana. Unfortunately, three nestlings died in the incident. Our high school students, along with Dr. Erick Greene (Ecology Prof. University MT) sifted through the stick pile and



found over a QUARTER MILE of twine! We are creating a pamphlet today to circulate to all ranchers and land stewards in our area etc. We are taking this osprey project very seriously. I will send you our heavy metal analysis from this season's work as soon as it comes in.

*Rob Domenech, Executive Director,
Raptor View Research Institute,
Missoula, MT 59801*

Report from Gold Beach

I live in Gold Beach, Oregon where osprey come to breed each season. They are the most incredible bird, and give me great joy watching them fish.

Two years ago I had an up close and personal experience with one. I was sitting on a log on the beach watching them fish, when one came up with a smelt and headed directly toward me. At the last moment he turned to my left and perched on an arm of a dead tree branch. I froze. He then proceeded to kill the still moving smelt and eat it, drawing a flock of seagulls to the sand not far away. When they got too close he would spread his wings and screech at them. It raised the hair on the back of my neck. When he finished his fish, he preened and cleaned, and took off; after which a riot broke out among the seagulls for the fish remains. It was an altogether incredible experience for me.

The birds seemed to produce healthy offspring last year, and I can hardly wait for the breeding pairs to return. On my days off I take my binocs and look for them. So far no luck, but soon.

Enjoyed the picture gallery on your website. Keep up the good work. This incredible raptor needs to be preserved.

*Your friend in Gold Beach,
Bonnie*

Bonnie reports that Gold Beach, Oregon, was having a banner year in 2007, with more nests than ever before. Within the five-mile radius of her home she has spotted 43 active nests of which she is monitoring 19. All are natural nests. One osprey pair took over a bald eagle's nest.

Report from Mt. Vernon

The first Mount Vernon baby flew on 3 July at 0900. The second has been doing test flights. I hope to see it in the air tomorrow. I went over to Belle Haven Marina just south of Old Town, and they have three baby osprey near eye level on a pylon. Those have not had lift off yet!... I have started reading "Return of the Osprey". Wonderful! I am so excited to be a part of your organization. Mount Vernon will join shortly. Our web cam will be up after they migrate this year, and ready for the adults return in March! I will keep you posted.

*Dana,
Mount Vernon*



How to Rescue a Sick, Injured or Baby Raptor

Please note that all wild birds, including raptors, are protected under state and federal laws. It is illegal to harm, harass or possess any wild bird. You are allowed to rescue a wild bird but you must get it to a permitted facility as soon as possible. The quicker the bird is in qualified care the better its chances are for release.

- Raptors can be very dangerous, even sick, injured and/or young birds. They have very sharp talons and beaks. **BE CAREFUL.**

- Please note the location where the bird was found; this information will be necessary in order to return the bird to its home once it has recovered.

- For baby raptors, please note the exact location it was found; mark the spot if possible. Look up into the trees to see if the nest and/or adults are there. Every attempt should be made to reunite families.

- Get a box that is slightly larger than the bird. Poke lots of air holes into the sides. Place the box over the bird.

Carefully slide something flat under the box in order to contain the bird.

- If you do not have a box, throw a towel or blanket over the bird.

BEWARE of their talons and beaks.

- Do not attempt to give the bird food or water. Transport it to a wildlife rehabilitator right away in a dark, warm (room temperature) container with breathing holes in it.

TIOF 2007 Grants

Last year TIOF awarded three \$1,000 grants for two projects in the United States and one in Australia.

The recipients:

Isabel Caballero of Naperville, Illinois to pursue her project, "Assessment of Genetic Variability on Extirpated and Reestablished Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) in the Midwestern United States."

Robert Domenech, Raptor View Research Institute, Missoula, Montana, to continue his "Citizen-Science Osprey Project."

Terry Dennis in South Australia for his project, "To Establish Ongoing Support for Research Initiatives and Field Trials of Artificial Nesting Platforms, to Benefit Isolated and Endangered Australian Osprey Population at the Extreme Edge of its Breeding Range in Australia."

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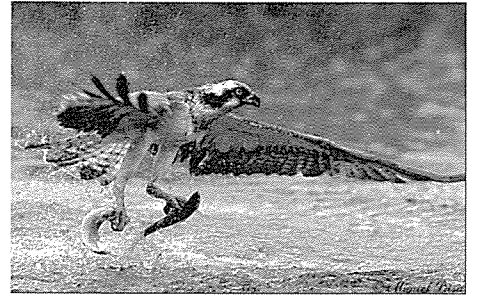
Memorials

We are grateful to the following for memorials given to TIOF on behalf of a loyal member who passed away:
Ms. Delores Jean Hayek, Cheyenne, Wyoming;
Mrs. Yvonne Temsik, Red Feather Lakes, Colorado;
and Wyoming Education Association, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Freeman Davis: One in a Million

The International Osprey Foundation board is sorry to lose the services of Freeman Davis, a longtime nestwatch volunteer.

The board would like to thank Freeman for "always being a mainstay in our world", in the words of TIOF President Tim Gardner. "Your record-keeping has always been perfect and you have always shown up rain or shine . . . sleet or snow too! You have been an exemplary volunteer in every way, and your interest, kindness, dependability, and willingness and eagerness to help are unexcelled," Gardner adds. "You are one in a million."



Christmas Bird Count

Spotters for the Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count on Sanibel and Captiva on December 20, 2007, noted 288 ospreys. That compares with 189 in 2006. The 10-year average is 291 and the 20-year average is 260.

Osprey Platform Goes For \$1,500

An osprey platform donated to the Captiva ABC sale by the board of The International Osprey Foundation sold for \$1,500 to Peter Koury. Warren and Shirley Stanton of Captiva arranged for the donation and pledged to buy a membership in TIOF.

They say there are many ospreys near where Koury lives and they plan to keep an eye on bird activities there.

The money goes to the Captiva Civic Association toward its work in maintaining Captiva's unique ambiance, community pride and protection of the island ecology, said Debbie Wells, auction chairperson.

Utility Develops Avian Protection Plan

Lee County Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LCEC) is proactively working toward protecting birds of prey and other large birds such as great blue herons from potential power line risks, in accordance with both the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Eagle Protection Act. In support of this objective, LCEC initiated this Avian Protection Plan (APP) in 2002 to protect birds from potential electrocution hazards and collisions on their existing power grid.

The purpose of this APP is to identify the relative level of risks to raptors and other large birds that may use power poles for perching. One of these structures is common by both resident and migratory birds, particularly for foraging. Many raptor species hunt from stationary perches and migratory birds use power poles for resting during migration; some species may select certain pole configurations for nesting. All of these uses increase the vulnerability of larger birds for potential electrocution.

As part of the APP effort, an independent consultant examined distribution structures to identify pole configurations that may present a risk to perching raptors and other large birds that may move through the LCEC service territory. These field examinations documented low-, medium-, and high-risk structures based on the specific electrical configuration relative to the pole location, associated habitat types, topography, and bird use. These data were compiled to identify the appropriate short-term and long-term plans for bird protection. This approach allows LCEC to pursue the appropriate retrofitting procedures in accordance with its long-term maintenance program. This APP also identifies areas of potential future outages, thereby increasing the electrical reliability of the system.

The overall goal of collecting these data is to identify potential problem areas for retrofitting, based on survey samples within the service territory. The biological data are necessary to determine how to prioritize the retrofitting. This approach, combined with raptor-safe new construction, will minimize electrocutions and associated outages as LCEC incorporates this plan into its long-term maintenance and operational program, according to an LCEC spokesperson.

Pine Island Ospreys Fledged 90 Chicks

By Joyce and Bill Plechaty

The osprey nesting season for the year 2007 was very similar to the previous year's without the high windstorms. In previous years we lost several nests due to some episodes of high winds and in another case a resident cutting down a tree with an active nest. The nests located in Norfolk Pine trees are particularly susceptible to extreme weather conditions. We only lost one nest to tree cutting. However, it was not an active nest.

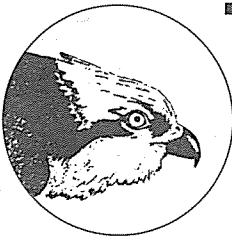
Last year we had two dish nests moved to stand-alone locations from electrical poles by the electrical company. Both of these new dish nests went unused last year. We were hoping that some birds would find them attractive during this upcoming season but so far they do not seem to be getting any activity. Perhaps we will get a late nester.

The problems experienced on Sanibel and Captiva did not seem to have any significant impact with the nesting activity on Pine Island and Matlacha. We have about 100 nests pinpointed. However, due to some private property restrictions we are not able to effectively monitor all of these nests. It is possible to observe activity in some cases but not get an accurate nesting result. These nests are not included in the overall monitored number.

We also had some fall-out in our volunteer group and did not receive a final report on several nests. These also were not included in the number monitored.

During the 2007 season, 93 active nests were successfully monitored of which 85 had nesting activity with 94 eggs hatched and 90 birds fledged. Ten of the nests monitored had activity but did not result in any eggs hatched. There were a couple of reports of chicks either falling out of their nest or being crowded out. None of these survived. We also had one report of an egg falling out of the nest and one incident of an eagle dining on an osprey chick. Needless to say neither of these survived either.

Most all of our volunteers have committed to continue and expressed enthusiasm for the 2008 nesting season.

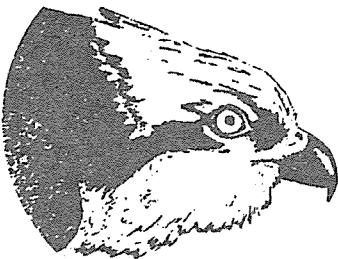


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