



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at
<http://tourism.oregonstate.edu/>

Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program
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Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/osprey-pandion-haliaetus/

By colliiek2

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What lives in those exposed large, stick nests built on power poles, communication towers, and large trees? Most likely an Osprey.

As you can imagine, a bird with a nearly 6-foot wingspan builds a big nest. Now imagine the bird adding a bit more to its nest each year. In the end, it is hard to imagine a nest becoming, over time, 10–13 feet deep and 3–6 feet in diameter!



Osprey image from Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Nest Challenges

Osprey build big nests and will build on any natural or man-made structure that meets its needs. Sometimes, what looked like a good choice doesn't work out. Osprey nesting has caused power and service outages. There is always a risk of being electrocuted or collisions.

An Osprey's nest contains more than just sticks we can see. Moss, bark, vines, grass, and lichen make the nest comfortable. But the birds will also add in other interesting things such as fishing line, baling wire, Styrofoam, and sometimes even plastic containers. Baling wire and fishing line can be fatal if the birds or young become entangled.

Nesting platforms and mitigation techniques reduce these conflicts and increase the number of birds and survival. The species is considered a conservation success story.

Where to see them

You can find Osprey nests near a lake, pond, swamp, reservoir, river, etc. Live fish is key part of their diets unlike other raptors. They will also eat other smaller birds, snakes, voles, squirrels, muskrats, and salamanders.

Feet first!

Osprey are amazing fishers. Part of their fishing success, compared to other hawks, is undoubtedly due to an unusual toe/claw placement that helps them grip fish tightly. Their real success, however, is in technique.

The technique? Osprey dive feet first into shallow waters (up to about 3 feet) and grab a fish. They will also do this in deeper water where fish swim near the surface. Osprey have water-resistant feathers are the only raptors that dive.

Amazing Migration

In recent years, the number of Osprey residing year-around on the Pacific coast has increased. Normally, the birds would migrate as far south as Honduras. Researchers have found that some Osprey will migrate around 160,000 miles in their lifetimes. They are not sure what is causing this change.

Protection

Osprey are an amazing raptor and are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) 16 U.S.C. Sections 703-712 of 1918 (as amended). All active nests (incubating adult, eggs, or young present) of migratory bird species are also protected by the MBTA. In Oregon, Osprey are protected by both state statute and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife administrative rules. Oregon Revised Statute (ORS 498) protects osprey from take, disturbance and harassment. Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 635-044 0130 categorizes osprey as Nongame Protected Wildlife. It is unlawful for a person to hunt, trap, pursue, kill, take, catch, or have in possession, either dead or alive, whole or in part, any Nongame Protected Wildlife.

References and where to find out more...Check the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife site at <https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/raptors> and be sure to download their “Living with Wildlife” brochure at https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/osprey.pdf. Another excellent resource is the All About Birds page by the Cornell Lab (see <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Osprey/id>).