

Photo by Howie Williams



## How Ospreys Live A Full Life

It takes a perfectly crafted recipe for an osprey to grow into a thriving adult. We share fish as a means of food with Osprey, and they rely on our man-made nests for shelter. Therefore, it is important for us to recognize our role in their survival.

Nests are built in open areas near water where their main food source is found. Most pairs nest on man-made nesting platforms. Others nest on structures that likewise offer them protection from floods and predators.

Most ospreys mate for life and migrate south during the winter. In mid-March, they return to the same nest sites, year after year.

They can reveal the health of marine and estuarine ecosystems through their vulnerability to the effects of pollutants in the environment. Since they feed on many of the same fish as people, the health of their population can indicate a clean, healthy environment for people.



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[www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org](http://www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org)



Photo by Ray Hemmesy

Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting New Jersey's rare wildlife. We carry out research projects, develop management plans, encourage conservation practices and educate residents of our state about the wildlife living on their doorstep.

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## Monitoring New Jersey's Ospreys And How You Can Help



Photo by Brian Kushner

# Only **50%** of Ospreys survive to reach adulthood.



Photo by Ben Wurst



Why We Need

# The Fish Hawk

Ospreys are an indicator species. The health of their population is directly linked to the health of our environment along New Jersey's coast.



Photo by Northside Jim



## Monitoring New Jersey's Ospreys

### Recognizing Threats and Tracking Populations

Each year, biologists and volunteers conduct surveys in mid-summer to record the number of active nests. These surveys are conducted to determine the overall size and health of the state population.

Approximately 80% of the population is surveyed. Young are banded with USGS aluminum bird bands for future tracking. Unhatched eggs are collected for contaminant studies that show the degree to which ospreys are exposed to environmental contaminants.

Ospreys are protected under both state and federal laws. Federally, ospreys are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. Sections 703-712).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the federal regulatory agency authorized to enforce the provisions of this Act under which all active migratory bird nests (incubating adults, eggs, or young present) are protected.

For more info, visit [fws.gov](http://fws.gov).

In 1974, there were only 50 active nests in New Jersey. Today there are over 550.



Photo by Eric Hance

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1. Ospreys have a dark eye stripe and yellow eyes. Females are larger than males and are similar in appearance. Females often have a dark "necklace" of brown feathers on their breast. Females stay close to nests while eggs and young are present.



Photo by Eric Hance

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2. Male ospreys do 100% of the foraging during the entire nesting season from April to August. Ospreys often use trash as nesting material. They are often seen carrying sticks or fish to nesting areas along the coast.

## How You Can Help

### Adopt and sponsor a platform

Severe weather and saltwater can take a toll on nesting platforms. High winds, coastal flooding and storm surges associated with hurricanes and nor'easters can easily destroy any old nesting platform. To help ensure these structures remain intact, individuals or groups can "adopt" existing nesting platforms to ensure they will remain in good condition. Suitable nest sites are crucial to maintain a healthy and sustainable nesting colony. With state and federal budget cuts there is little funding available to help manage nesting platforms. With your support we can ensure the Osprey population remains in good condition.

### Reduce Your Impact

One of the easiest ways to help is to be a steward of your environment. Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. Don't release balloons. If you see litter, pick it up. Talk to others about marine debris.

### Report a new nest

Reporting a new nest is key to managing the population. Nest sites can be reported by submitting a Sighting Report Form to New Jersey Fish and Wildlife or you can report it on our website:

► [conservewildlifenj.org/osprey](http://conservewildlifenj.org/osprey)

### Volunteer

From constructing nesting platforms to installing them, we could use your help! Opportunities vary throughout the year, and occur on weekdays and weekends, to engage residents in our wildlife conservation initiatives.

Visit: [www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org](http://www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org)

Ospreys return to the same nest site year after year.