

Topic:

## Osprey

QC-0504

Resource:

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**Basics:** With help from conservation programs Ospreys status has improved from “endangered” (in 1970) to “threatened”. When spring arrives calls are everywhere. One we often hear around the water is a high-pitched whistle “cheep, cheep” or “yeck”. It's the return of the Osprey! The Osprey or Fish Hawk is a large “bird of prey” or raptor. With it-s 6-foot wing span, dark colored back and light crest it is a welcome sight along the coast and on lakes and ponds in our area. Ospreys are recognized in flight by their slightly V-shaped wings with black markings Just beyond the bend of the V.

**Question:** *Where do these birds live and when can I see them?*

**Answer:** If you see a huge nest (the nest can weigh up to ½-ton) on a pole or crown of a tree, near the water, that’s an Osprey’s home. Ospreys begin nesting in early spring. The males arrive back in our area in mid-March. The females arrive about 2 weeks later. They have returned to the same area in which they themselves were fledged, making their home within 5 miles of the nest in which they were raised.

**Question:** *How close is too close?*

**Answer:** A canoe or kayak is a great way to observe Osprey and other wildlife. It is best to observe them from a respectful distance. Different pairs tolerate different conditions. Ospreys make a whistle-like call. They will call to sound the alarm of an intruder. If you hear this you are too close. If they are disturbed too often they may abandon the nest and eggs.

**Advanced Concepts:** You may want to get more information on the following:

- What do Ospreys eat?
- Where do they go in the winter?
- How old are they when they first return to begin breeding?
- What caused the decline in their populations?
- What can we do to help these birds and similar wildlife?

*For more information contact*

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