



Osprey

Where Do We Live?

Osprey are **raptors**, or **predators**, that are found on every continent except Antarctica and live near the coast, lakes, and rivers.

Where Do We Nest?

Osprey nest in open areas on the tops of trees, cliffs, utility poles, and human-built platforms. Pairs will return to the same nest year after year.

What Do We Look Like?

Osprey have brown feathers on the backs and wings, a white chest, a white head with a brown stripe, a severely hooked beak, yellow eyes, long legs, and long, narrow wings. Females have a ring of brown feathers around the throat.

What Do We Eat?

Osprey are **carnivores** and mostly eat *live* fish. They circle over shallow water and hover before diving, feet first, grabbing fish with their **talons**.

What Are Our Natural Enemies?

Great horned owls and bald eagles **prey** on osprey. Raccoons and snakes prey on eggs and chicks.

Do We Have Special Features?

Osprey are **adapted** to life near water and fishing. Long legs help grab fish in water. Strong, bent wings allow them to fly out of water carrying heavy prey. Reversible outer toes, hooked talons, and barbed pads on the feet grab slippery fish. Osprey are able to close their nostrils when diving.

Did You Know...

- Osprey eggs are cream or pink-brown with reddish-brown spots.
- Osprey lay 1-4 eggs per **brood**, or group of young, and only one brood per season.
- A group of eggs is called a **clutch**.
- Osprey eat both freshwater and saltwater fish.
- Osprey get the water they need to survive from the fish they eat.
- Osprey fly holding their catch head forward.
- Osprey cannot dive deeper than 3 feet.
- After years, an osprey nest can be 10 feet deep and 6 feet wide.
- An adult osprey can grow to 22 inches long and 4 ½ pounds.
- The wingspan of an adult osprey is about 6 feet.
- Osprey pairs often stay together for life.
- Female osprey are larger than males.
- Eastern osprey migrate to South America while western osprey **migrate** to Central America.
- Osprey were endangered due to the use of the pesticide DDT. DDT was banned in the United States in 1972, and osprey populations are now mostly stable.
- **At the Vanderbilt Mansion there is an osprey nest on the bell tower.**

