

Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) are protected in Oregon by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA).

Ospreys are large hawks with slender bodies and long, narrow wings and legs. When in flight, ospreys have a distinctive kink in their wings, which makes an “M” shape when seen from below. Ospreys have brown upperparts and white underparts, with a distinctive dark spot at the “wrist” of the wing (visible in flight). The head is white with a brown stripe through the eye.

Ospreys feed almost exclusively on fish. They can be found along almost any expanse of water with fish, including rivers, lakes and marshes.

Ospreys nest near water, in large prominent snags or trees with broken tops. They will also nest on artificial platforms, including power line poles. Nest trees are generally large snags, up to 60 inches in diameter and 100 to 150 feet in height. Nest trees are generally taller than the surrounding forest, and must be able to support a large nest (4 to 6 feet in diameter and 1 to 2 feet deep). Ospreys prefer nest sites with easy access to open water areas.

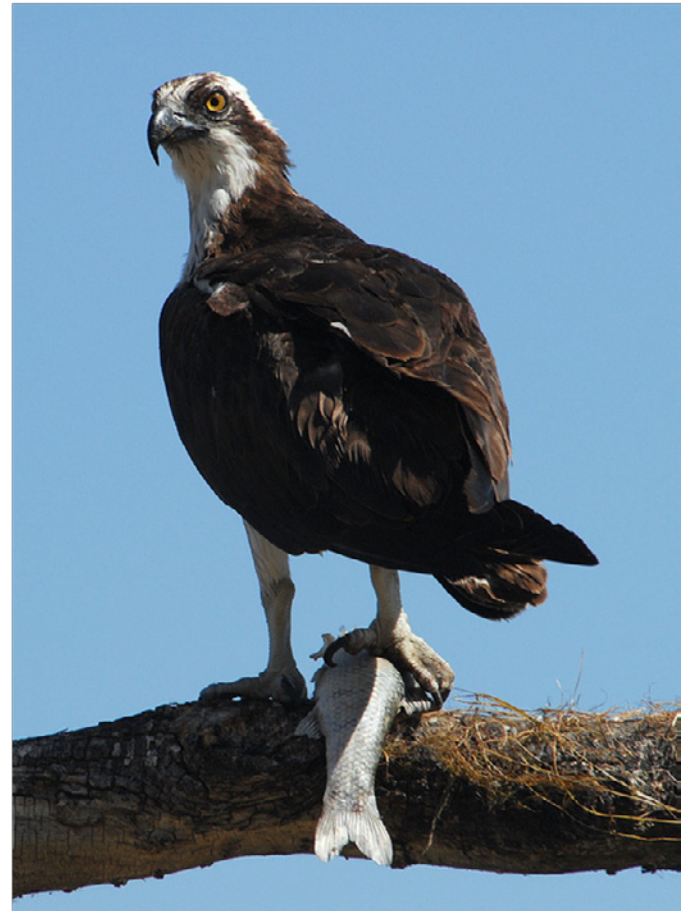


Photo by USFWS.

WHAT ARE SOME THREATS TO OSPREYS?

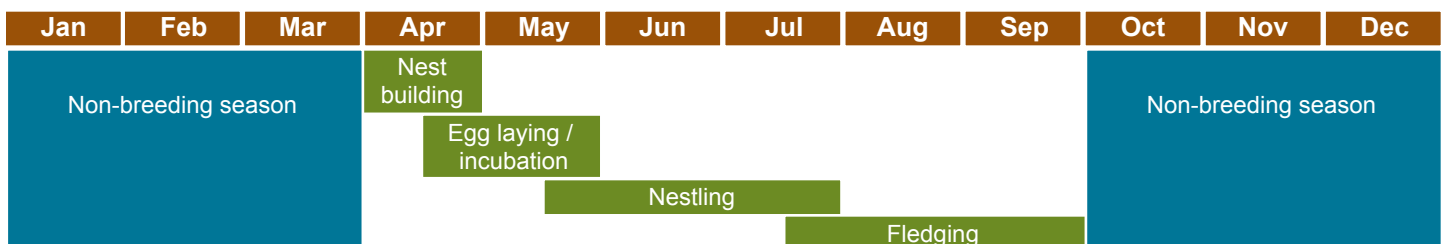
- Habitat loss (abundance of suitable nest sites near water)
- Human disturbances and man-made hazards
- Chemical contaminants, including pesticide poisoning
- Electrocution when nesting on power lines

WHAT IS MOST LIKELY TO DISTURB AN OSPREY?

Individual ospreys can be relatively tolerant of human activities, provided they are habituated to them. However, activities that are initiated during incubation and early nesting are more likely to disturb nesting ospreys. The late nesting season is also a critical time for ospreys as juveniles are prone to leave the nest too early.

WHEN DO OSPREYS NEST?

Critical nesting period:
Mar 1 - Sep 15



WHAT DOES THE FPA REQUIRE?

Protect the resource site including the active nest tree, the area within 600 feet of the nest tree, and any key components.

- Active nest trees are those that have been used by ospreys within the last 5 nesting seasons
- Key components are perching and fledging trees and replacement trees
- Seasonal restrictions apply

HOW DO I PROTECT THE RESOURCE SITE?

- Prohibit forest operations within 600 feet of the nest site from March 1st to September 15th.
- Retain the active nest tree.
- Retain no fewer than 8 additional trees as key components (perching, fledging and replacement trees).

Perching trees should:

- Provide maximum visibility of the surrounding terrain
- Contain structure that allows the osprey easy access
- Be within 600 feet of the active nest

Examples of perching trees include tall snags and trees with broken or dead tops, forks, or high lateral branches

Replacement trees should:

- Provide maximum visibility of the surrounding terrain
- Be large enough to support an osprey nest
- Protect the resource site from windthrow



Photo by George Gentry (USFWS).

SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

Cornell Lab of Ornithology:

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/osprey/id>

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/osprey.pdf

U.S. Geological Survey:

<http://fresc.usgs.gov/products/fs/fs-153-02.pdf>

Oregon Forest Practices Act <http://www.oregon.gov/odf/Pages/lawsrules.aspx>

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ABOUT OFRI

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991 to advance public understanding of forests, forest products and forest management and to encourage sound forestry through landowner education.

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