



OSPREY

Pandion haliaetus



The Osprey is a bird of prey that specializes in capturing and eating fish. The feet of this species are equipped with especially long talons. In addition, the undersides of the feet are covered with tiny projections called spicules. These create a sandpaper-like surface that aids in grasping their slippery prey. Osprey have dense, oily plumage that keeps them dry when diving for fish. Osprey build bulky nests of sticks on structures such as dead trees. In many areas they readily build their nests on man-made structures such as power poles, billboards, and communication towers. Nesting platforms are often purposely built for their use.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

The Osprey has a body length of about 22 inches, with a wingspan of 57-67 inches. Females are about 20% heavier than males.

WEIGHT

Osprey weigh between 2.5 and 4.5 lbs.

FOOD HABITS

The diet of the Osprey consists almost entirely of fish. When a fish is located, the Osprey will hover briefly before diving toward the surface of the water and grabbing the fish with its feet.

HABITAT

Osprey can be found in any area that provides suitable nesting sites and easy access to shallow water.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The Osprey is found on every continent except Antarctica. (They don't breed in South America or Southeast Asia, but some do spend the winter in those areas.) During the winter, Osprey migrate to warmer areas where open water can be found.

FUN FACT

Osprey have specialized nasal valves that prevent water from entering their nostrils when they dive to catch fish.