



DECEMBER: OSPREY (*PANDION HALIAETUS*)

Egg collection, extensive timber harvest and shooting dramatically reduced populations of this fish-eating raptor at the turn of the 20th century. In the 1950s, further mortality and egg shell thinning issues arose due to the concentration of DDT and other pesticides in the food chain. The osprey was therefore added to Wisconsin's endangered species list in 1972. However, the ban on DDT and restoration of nesting sites have helped the population increase. Additionally, the DNR has partnered with power companies to provide nesting platforms for osprey on transmission lines. This program has been very successful, and over 75% of nesting ospreys use an artificial nesting structure.

- Ospreys are common near water, as they specialize on fish prey. They are the only raptor in North America to feed almost exclusively on fish.
- Ospreys migrate long distances to their wintering habitats in the southern United States and Central and South America. While data from their overwintering range is limited, satellite tracking indicates that ospreys utilize rivers, lakes and estuarine habitat near tropical forest.
- Currently, the osprey population is considered stable. As a testament to their recovery, ospreys were reclassified as "threatened" in Wisconsin in the 1980s and are currently listed as a species of special concern.
- Annual aerial surveys allow wildlife managers to monitor nest sites and assess the state's population.