



DIURNAL - Active during the day

OSPREY
Order Falconiformes
Family Pandionidae



The Osprey is not as large as an eagle but they are still an **impressive bird of prey with striking field marks**. Any large black and white hawk-like bird seen near large lakes or rivers in the state should be considered an osprey unless you can be sure you are not looking at a bald eagle.



Ospreys are black above and white below with a **white head marked by black cheek patches**. In flight their “wrists” are black against the white underside and **their flight silhouette has a distinct crook** (or squashed “M”) in the wings.



Superb fishers, **osprey hover** high above the water before dropping to the water to grab a fish with their talons, sometimes submerging momentarily to grasp their prey. **Unique scales on their feet** help them hold the struggling fish while they fly back to a perch or their nest, turning the fish face-forward to reduce wind resistance.

Ospreys don't soar as well as other birds of prey. **Their flight resembles a sea gull's slow wing beats**. The wingspan is up to 6 feet and they stand 20-24 inches from head to tail, but are noticeably thinner than eagles and perch in a slightly horizontal position, giving the impression they are about to take off.

Osprey calls are high-pitched whistles. Their nests can be seen on treetops, utility poles, billboards, channel buoys & other high structures, natural or man-made. They are quite tolerance of human activity, but will duck down in the nest when there is too much commotion.

The stick nests are loose, bulky and lined with bark or grasses. Some nests, which are used year after year, are decorated with seashells or pieces of fish nets. The female lays an average of three white or pinkish eggs with brown spots.

