

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus



Size: 50 – 65cm; wingspan 1.5m. **Diet:** Fish.

Appearance: Large raptor with white body and brown wings. Female may have brown neckband. Juveniles are darker.

Where am I found (habitat): Coastal areas, estuaries, large wetlands.

Population numbers: more common in the north of Australia, much lower numbers in developed regions.

Other key information: Nests on rocky outcrops, or in large (often dead) trees. Breeding occurs from autumn to spring. The female broods the eggs for a month. One or two chicks fledge after 6 to 8 weeks.

DID YOU KNOW?

INTERESTING FACT # 1
Long standing nests can be 2 metres across, and a similar size in height.

INTERESTING FACT # 2
The osprey hunts for fish by soaring high over the water, then glides down and with wings folded plunges feet first up to 1 metre below the water. The fish is held by strong claws and carried back to the feeding site.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP THIS SPECIES SURVIVE?

The main threats to ospreys in Australia are believed to be:

- the loss of traditional nest sites;
- reduction in quality and quantity of food;
- effects of pesticides;
- shooting;
- collision with power lines.

Old trees should be preserved, and development should be prohibited near known nest sites.

Nests should not be closely approached during breeding times as this may cause the adults to abandon the nest.

Markers on power-lines that cross known flight paths may reduce bird strike.

Many ospreys are nesting on man-made structures when traditional nest sites are not available.

Compiled by Imelda Jennings.