

Did You Know?

Ospreys may live for over 20 years.

Osprey pairs typically mate for life and lay 2-3 eggs per year. They build nests — which can be up to 13 feet wide — on top of tall structures like trees or telephone poles. Incubation takes about 40 days; young Ospreys remain in the nest for about 50 days before fledging.

Osprey feet have talons and special barbed pads that evolved to hold slippery fish. With head and feet lunging together, they dive as deep as three feet underwater to catch a fish.

Ospreys are generally seen in the San Francisco Bay Area from late February through August. Fewer are seen in winter, when most migrate south.

Ospreys are protected under federal and state laws. Like Bald Eagles, Osprey numbers plummeted in the 1950 and 60s when the pesticide DDT caused their egg shells to become fatally thin. Since DDT was banned in 1972, their numbers have rebounded.



Become an Osprey Ally

Join Golden Gate Audubon Society to learn about Ospreys and other wild birds. Come on one of our 150+ free bird walks each year or take one of our birding classes. Volunteer with us to restore habitat, introduce children to wildlife and nature, and protect Bay Area birds.

The oldest Audubon chapter on the West Coast, Golden Gate Audubon has been inspiring people to protect Bay Area birds since 1917.

For volunteer opportunities,
see goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

For upcoming bird walks and field trips,
see goldengateaudubon.org/field-trips.

To join Golden Gate Audubon,
see goldengateaudubon.org/join.

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OSPREYS of San Francisco Bay

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Threats to Ospreys — and how you can help

ENTANGLEMENT

Plastic “mono filament” fishing line can last over 600 years. Discarded fishing line remnants are a serious hazard — often entangling, injuring, and killing birds and other wildlife. Please recycle used fishing line and join Golden Gate Audubon Society in actively promoting fishing line recycling efforts around the Bay. You can find mono filament recycling bins at many local fishing sites, but more are needed. For recycling bin locations, see www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/PDF/CleanGreen/Fishing_Line_Recycling_Ca.pdf.



You can help protect and welcome these remarkable birds.

The “Fish Eagles” of San Francisco Bay

Meet a majestic resident of the San Francisco Bay ecosystem — the Osprey.

Ospreys — sometimes known as “fish eagles” — have been seen around the Bay for a long time. But only in recent years have they started nesting on San Francisco Bay shores.

With a wingspan of five to six feet, an Osprey is a dramatic sight. There are no records of Osprey nesting by San Francisco Bay before 1990. But in 2012 there were over fifteen nests along the north part of the Bay, and in 2015 there were more than thirty nests!

You can help protect and welcome these remarkable birds.



CLEAN WATER

Ospreys rely on fish to survive, and fish need clean water. Don’t dump motor oil or other household products in storm drains, which lead into the Bay. Avoid pesticides in your yard. Don’t put old medications down your sink or toilet: Take them to a proper disposal facility such as those listed by stopwaste.org (Alameda County), sfenvironment.org/residents (San Francisco), or your own county.

RESTORE HABITAT

Have fun outdoors helping restore our shoreline! Golden Gate Audubon holds numerous beach clean-ups and habitat restoration events each month. See goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

SAFE NEST SITES

Seeking tall nest sites in urban areas, Ospreys sometimes choose inappropriate locations such as maritime cranes. Golden Gate Audubon is working with shoreline property managers to install safe nesting platforms for Ospreys.

When an Osprey pair is disturbed at their nest, they may abandon the site. Avoid getting too close to an active nest or engaging in activities that may unsettle the birds during this sensitive time.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientists predict that climate change will reduce the amount of suitable Osprey habitat by more than half by 2050. You can help by minimizing your personal use of fossil fuels and supporting sustainable energy solutions.