



Lake Tawakoni State Park

# OSPREY

*Pandion haliaetus*



The osprey is a bird of prey that can be found on every continent except Antarctica. It is nicknamed "Seahawk" because it can be seen repeatedly around large bodies of water in search of food.



## OSPREY

*Pandion haliaetus*

The osprey is dark brown above and white below, with a white head and dark eye stripe.

They nest along fresh or salt water. Ospreys prefer human structures such as poles, duck blinds or manmade nest platforms to build their nest.

They lay one to four eggs. The eggs are creamy white to pink-cinnamon in color with reddish brown spots. The first chick can hatch up to five days before the last chick. The older chicks rule the younger chicks, making it hard for the younger chicks to survive if food is scarce.

Ospreys eat mostly fish. They hover over water and plunge feet-first to snatch their prey. The pads of their feet are barbed, helping them to grasp fish. Often they carry the fish head-first, making it more aerodynamic.

During the 1950-1970s there was a dramatic decline in the osprey population from pesticide poisoning and eggshell thinning. Since the ban of DDT, osprey populations have recovered.