



RI OSPREY REPORT

Volume 3 · 2012



The Rhode Island Osprey Monitoring Project by July Lewis



Photo by Butch Lombardi: eastbayimages.com

Welcome to The Audubon Society of Rhode Island's annual Osprey report! Initiated by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) in 1978, the Rhode Island Osprey Monitoring Project records the breeding success of Ospreys and documents the population's recovery from the effects of the pesticide DDT. With the cooperation of RIDEM, Audubon assumed management of the project in 2010.

2012 Project Highlights

In 2012, Osprey monitors reported 178 successfully fledged young, the highest number in the history of the project. The previous high was in 2010 with 171 fledged young. In our region, studies have estimated that the breeding rate needed to balance adult mortality is 0.8-1.0 fledged young per active nest. Rhode Island had 1.4 fledged young per active nest in 2012, indicating that population growth is likely to continue. The complete monitoring results can be seen on page 2.

This year we kicked off the season with an Osprey monitoring orientation. It was terrific to see everyone all together! We reviewed the basics for new monitors, and introduced the new website for the Osprey Monitoring Project: www.riosprey.info. The website has all the information on the program, including the monitoring training man-

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Did You Know?

- OSPREYS WILL GENERALLY PAIR FOR LIFE AND "DIVORCE" IF MATING IS UNSUCCESSFUL
- FEMALE OSPREY WILL CHOOSE HER MATE BASED ON NEST QUALITY AND LOCATION
- OSPREYS HAVE A ROTATING OUTER TOE FOR HUNTING
- PAIRS THAT LOSE THEIR EGGS OR YOUNG MAY BUILD ALTERNATE "FRUSTRATION" NESTS

An Intern's Story By Tegan Mortimer

I was not unfamiliar with Ospreys when I started my summer internship with the Audubon Society. I grew up in coastal areas of southern New England, especially the Bristol area. I would always check out the nest right next to Rt. 114 in Barrington to see if there were birds on it. What I didn't know was how remarkable these birds are and how enthusiastic people are about them.

I was responsible for visiting all the

nests in the northern part of the state. This was roughly 70 nests in Bristol, Warren, Barrington, Cranston, Providence, and Warwick as well as a few in neighboring Massachusetts. Many of these nests had scant descriptions and directions at best. There were many times when I felt a bit strange driving slowly down residential streets peering into people's backyards in the hope of catching a glimpse of the nest that was

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RI Osprey Report



Photo by Butch Lombardi:
eastbayimages.com

“HE FLEW, CIRCLED A BIT, THEN WENT OFF TO THE WATER TOWARDS THE POTTER’S POND AREA, AND I LOST SIGHT OF HIM.”



Photo by Peter Green:
providencerraptors.com

Osprey Rescue by Jennifer Brooks & July Lewis

In Mid-July, an emaciated Osprey, covered in feather lice, was found in Westerly and taken in by the Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island. Jennifer Brooks, the director of The Wildlife Clinic, took charge of the bird’s care. A week later, another Osprey, apparently a sibling, was found in similar condition. Sgt. Thomas M. Silvia, a state environmental police officer and husband of Osprey monitor Tracy Silvia, rescued this Osprey (see photo) and transported it to Brooks.

According to reports of monitors in the area, the parents of these young Ospreys had recently stopped returning to the nest. We don’t know if it was due to death, illness, injury, or if they simply left. We don’t know if the young birds were affected by illness or if they were simply too inexperienced to feed themselves adequately. Their condition was so poor that Brooks did not have much hope that they would survive. And indeed, the second Osprey died after only one night at the clinic.

However, the first Osprey recovered. He ate well and put on weight, and at the beginning of September, Brooks decided to release him. Since Ospreys often provide fish to a fledgling from another nest, the best strategy was to find

a nest where the parents were still feeding. This was a challenge so late in the season, but we got a tip that the pair at the Succotash Water Tower in Wakefield was a good bet. “I ended up releasing him there,” said Brooks, “But he was not interested in hanging out at a nest! He flew, circled a bit, then went off to the water towards the Potter’s Pond area, and I lost sight of him. I hope he followed the lead of the other Ospreys in the area after that. I know a lot of what they need to do is instinctual, so I just have to hope he figured it out. There is only so much you can do!”

For more information on how you can help injured wildlife, contact the Rhode Island Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island at 401-294-6363 or www.rwildliferehab.org.



Photo by Thomas Silvia (Please note that a raptor should be transported in a closed box. They can cause serious injury.)

2012 Monitoring Results by Eric Walsh

In 2012, 70 volunteers monitored 200 known nest sites. Of the 126 active nests, 96 produced at least one fledgling. A total of 178 young Ospreys successfully fledged. The RI breeding population produced an average of 1.83 fledglings per successful nest and 1.40 fledglings per active nest.

There were 59 inactive nest sites and 15 “housekeeping” nests. A “housekeeping nest” is a nest with Ospreys present but no observable incubation. Often these nests are built by sub-adult Ospreys.

The town with the greatest number of active nests (18) and fledglings (32) was South Kingstown. Barrington had the second greatest number of active nests (17), with 25 fledglings recorded within its borders.

Osprey Nesting Results Over Time

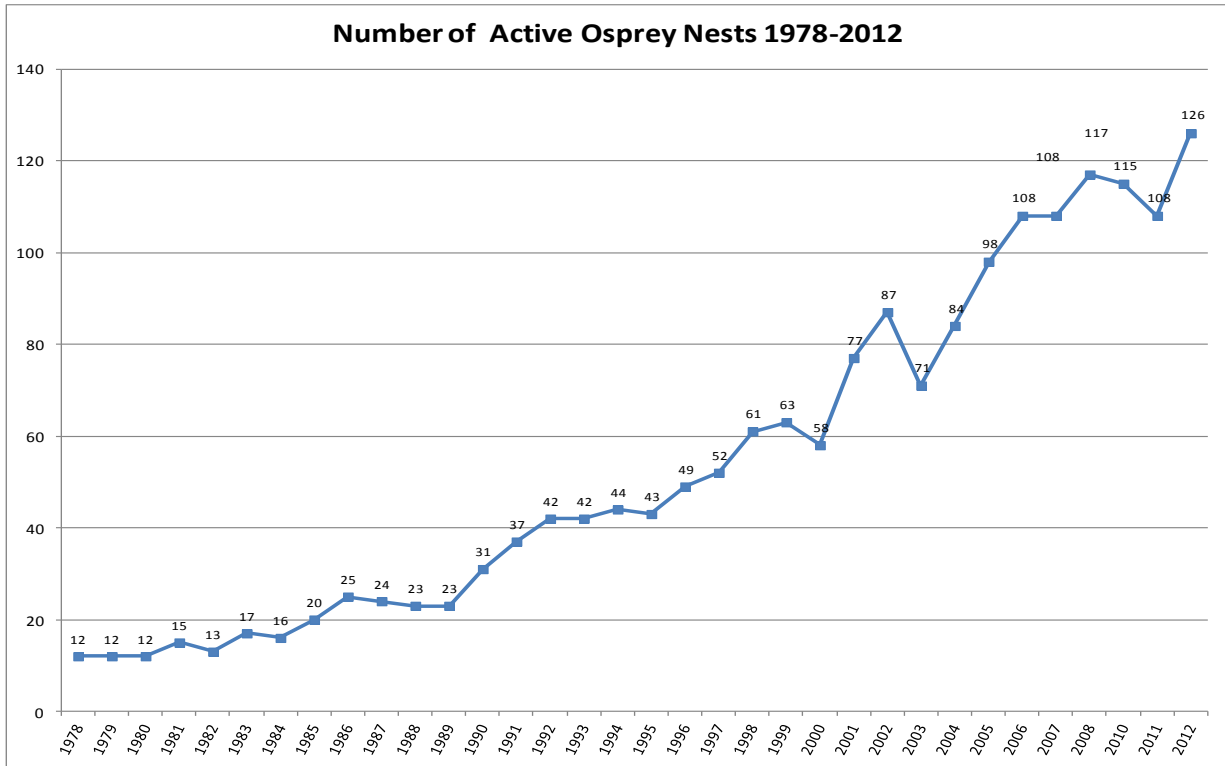


Figure 1. The total number of active osprey nests since the RI Osprey Monitoring Project began.

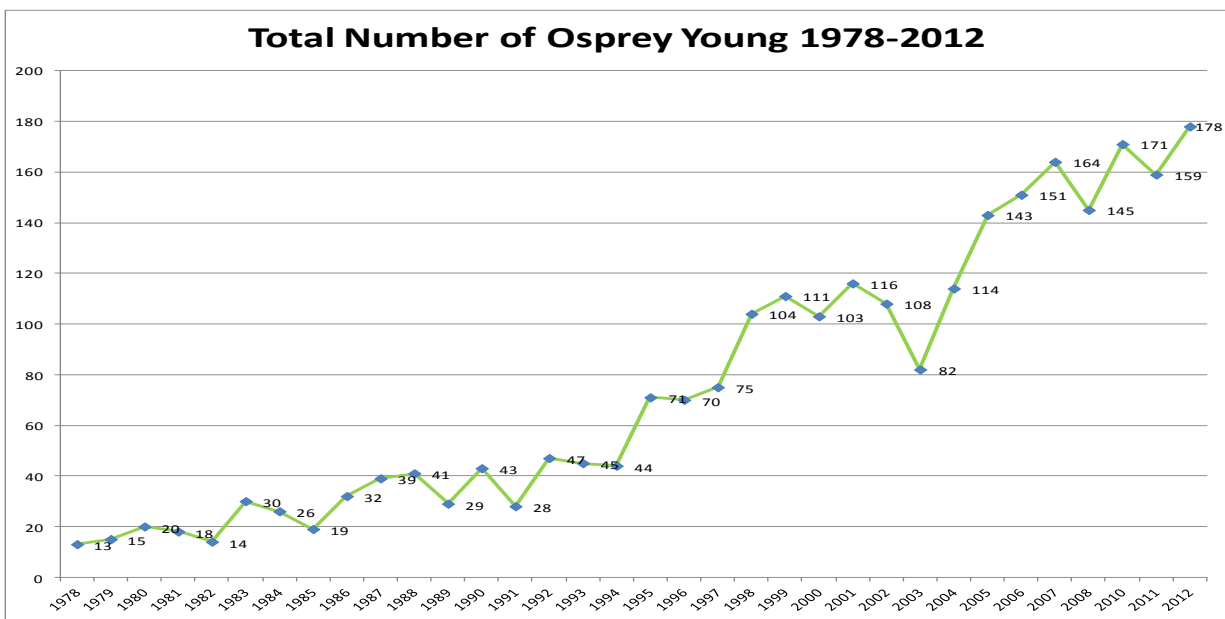


Figure 2. The total number of fledged ospreys documented each year since the RI Osprey Monitoring Project began.

RI Osprey Report

Rhode Island Osprey Nesting Activity 2012

Nest Sites Observed: 200

Successful Nests: 96

Active Nests (eggs and incubation/includes Successful): 126

Housekeeping Nests (Osprey present no incubation): 15

Inactive Nest Sites: 59

Total Fledged Young: 178

Average Number fledged young per active nest: 1.40

Average Number fledged young per successful nest: 1.83

City	Nest	Final	Fledged	
Barrington	100 Acre Cove (Cove Ave)	Active	0	
	100 Acre Cove (Isl)	Successful	2	
	100 Acre Tongue S	Successful	2	
	Adam's Pt.	NotActive	0	
	Allins Cove E	NotActive	0	
	Allins Cove W	Successful	2	
	Barneyville Rd	Successful	2	
	Barrington H.S.	Successful	1	
	Brickyard Pond	Successful	2	
	Cranesbill	NotActive	0	
	George St./Nockum Hill	Successful	2	
	Johannis Farm Midway	Successful	3	
	Johannis Farm N	Successful	2	
	Johannis Farm S	Successful	2	
	Little Mussachuck Creek 1	Active	2	
	Little Mussachuck Creek 2	NotActive	0	
	Nagtegaal Nest	NotActive	0	
	Osamequin	Successful	2	
	Palmer River (Silviera)	Active	0	
	Rumstick Pt.	Active	0	
	Smith's Cove	Successful	1	
	Sowams Tree Nest	Active	0	
	Total			25

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
Block Island	Block Island Power	Successful	2
		Total	2
Bristol	Audubon EEC	NotActive	0
	Audubon EEC Tree Nest	Active	0
	Mill Cove	Successful	3
	Mill Gut	Successful	3
	Mill Gut Tree Nest	Active	0
	Musselbed Shoals Light	Successful	2
		Total	8
Charlestown	Burdickville East	Active	0
	Burdickville West	Active	0
	Burdickville Westest	NotActive	0
	Quonochontaug Pond	Successful	1
	Rt. 2 & Rt. 112	Successful	2
	Shumankunuc Rd.	NotActive	0
	United Nuclear	NotActive	0
	West Pond	Successful	1
		Total	4
Cranston	Niantic Ave Cell Tower	Housekeeping	0
		Total	0
East Greenwich	American Legion Post	Active	0
	Arlington RV park	Successful	2
	Uncle Bob's Self Storage	Successful	2
		Total	4

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
East Providence	Bucklin Hill	Successful	3
	Bucklin Hill North	NotActive	0
	Catamore Blvd.	Successful	1
	East Bay Manor	NotActive	0
	Marnoch Drive	Housekeeping	0
	Mink Road	Active	2
	Mobil Tank Farm 1	Successful	2
	Mobil Tank Farm 3	Successful	2
	Omega Pond	Active	0
	Pierce Field	NotActive	0
Total			10
Exeter	Metcalf Marsh	Successful	2
Total			2
Glocester	Killingly Pond	NotActive	0
Total			0
Hopkinton	Dow Memorial Field	Successful	2
	Hopkinton ACO/DPW	Housekeeping	0
	Narragansett Way N	Successful	1
	Narragansett Way S	NotActive	0
	Potter Hill East	Successful	1
	Potter Hill West	NotActive	0
	Potter Hill Wester	NotActive	0
	Tomaquag	Successful	1
	Wood River Golf Course	Successful	2
Total			7

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
Jamestown	Beavertail	NotActive	0
	Fox Hill Farm	Successful	1
	Jamestown South Pond	Housekeeping	0
	Jamestown Water Tower South	NotActive	0
	Lawn Ave. School	Housekeeping	0
	Marsh Meadows	Housekeeping	0
	Neale Farm	NotActive	0
	North Bayview Dr.	NotActive	0
	O'Farrell Farm	NotActive	0
	Palmieri Property	Successful	2
	Petrie Property	NotActive	0
			Total
Lincoln	Valley Falls Pond	NotActive	0
			Total
Little Compton	Goose Wing Beach	NotActive	0
	Haeffenreffer 1	NotActive	0
	Round Pond	NotActive	0
			Total
Middletown	Coddington Cove	Successful	1
			Total
Narragansett	Canonchet Farm	Successful	1
	Christofaro Park	Successful	2
	Galilee Bird Sanctuary	Successful	3
	Galilee Escape Rd.	Successful	2
	Indian Rock Rd.	Successful	2

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
Narragansett	Lake Canonchet	Active	0
	Long Cove	Active	0
	Narragansett Elem. School	Successful	2
	Narrow River Mouth	Successful	2
	Pt. Judith Pond Sunnybrook Farm	Active	0
	Salt Pond Plaza	Successful	2
	Sprague Park	Successful	2
	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Active	0
	Total		18
Newport	Freebody Park	Successful	3
	Gooseberry Beach	NotActive	0
	Hazard Marsh	NotActive	0
Total		3	
North Kingstown	Bailey Rd.	Successful	2
	Mainsail Drive	Successful	1
	McGinn Park	Successful	2
	North Kingstown Dog Pound	Active	0
	North Kingstown High School #1	Successful	3
	North Kingstown High School #2	Successful	1
	Northrup Road	Successful	2
	Pendar Rd.	Active	0
	Quonset - Allen's Harbor	Successful	2
	Rabbit Island	NotActive	0
	Ryan Park	NotActive	0
	Snuff Mill Rd. & Rt. 1A	Successful	1
	Total		14

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
Portsmouth	Bay Point Inn/DPW Cell Tower	Successful	1
	Bristol Harbor Rock	Successful	1
	Carr Point Left Field	Active	0
	Carr Point Right Field	Successful	1
	Hog Island	Housekeeping	0
	Jepson Rd. Substation	Successful	2
	Melville	NotActive	0
	Portsmouth Fire Dept	Housekeeping	0
	Summit Road	NotActive	0
	Town Pond 1	NotActive	0
	Town Pond 2	NotActive	0
	Town Pond 3	NotActive	0
	Total		
Providence	Port of Providence	Successful	1
	Roger Williams Park	Housekeeping	0
Total			1
Prudence Island	Coggeshall Cove	Housekeeping	0
	Nags Creek N	Housekeeping	0
	Nags Creek S	Successful	2
	Potter Cove	Successful	1
	Sheep Pen Cove	NotActive	0
Total			3
Richmond	Beaver River/Rt. 138	Successful	1
	Buttonwoods Rd.	Successful	1
	RPE Waste Services Cell Tower	Successful	2
	Rt. 95 /Old Switch Rd.	Successful	3
Total			7

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
South Kingstown	Billington Cove	Successful	2
	Broad Rock Athletic Fields	NotActive	0
	Factory Pond	Successful	3
	Great Swamp IMP #1 (Water)	Successful	2
	Great Swamp IMP #2 (Water)	Successful	1
	Great Swamp IMP #3 (Water)	Successful	3
	Great Swamp IMP #4 (Water)	Successful	3
	Great Swamp IMP #5 (South)	Housekeeping	0
	Great Swamp IMP #6 (South)	Successful	2
	Great Swamp IMP #7	NotActive	0
	Great Swamp IMP #8	NotActive	0
	Great Swamp IMP#9	NotActive	0
	Great Swamp Platform 1	NotActive	0
	Great Swamp Platform 2	NotActive	0
	Great Swamp Range	NotActive	0
	Great Swamp Substation	Active	0
	Jerusalem Lab	Successful	1
	Old Mountain Field	Successful	1
	Pettaquamscutt Cove West	Successful	1
	Pond St.	Successful	2
	Potter's Pond	Successful	2
	Pt. Judith Pond Smelt Brook	NotActive	0
	Ram Pt. Marina	NotActive	0
	Shannock Rd	NotActive	0
	Succotash Water Tower	Successful	2
	Theatre by the Sea	Active	0
	Trustom Pond Isl.	Successful	3

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
South Kingstown	Trustom Pond Pt.	Successful	1
	Turner Cove 1	Successful	3
	Turner Cove 2	NotActive	0
Total			32
Swansea	Merriman's Pond 1	NotActive	0
	Merriman's Pond 2	Successful	2
Total			2
Tiverton	Fogland Marsh	NotActive	0
	Ruecker Refuge	Active	0
	Tiverton Land Fill	Successful	2
Total			2
Warren	Belcher Cove Middle	Successful	3
	Belcher Cove N	Successful	2
	Brown St.	NotActive	0
	Cell Tower Near FedEx	Housekeeping	0
	Fatima High School	Successful	1
	First Student Nest	Active	0
	Jacob's Point	NotActive	0
	Kickemuit Middle School	NotActive	0
	Market St. Land Nest	Successful	2
	Palmer River Rock	NotActive	0
	Palmer River Tree Nest	Active	0
	Swansea Golf Club N	Active	0
	Swansea Golf Club S	Successful	3
	Veterans Field Nest	Successful	2
	Wujick Farm Nest	Successful	1
Total			14

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City	Nest	Final	Fledged
Warwick	Barry's Nightclub	Active	0
	CCRI	Successful	2
	Mickey Stevens	Successful	1
	Pawtuxet River-Electronics Drive	Successful	1
	Rocky Hill School	Housekeeping	0
	Total		4
West Greenwich	Big River Mgt. Area	Active	0
	Hazard Rd.	NotActive	0
	Super 8 Motel	NotActive	0
Total		0	
Westerly	Avondale	Active	0
	Breen Road Island	Successful	1
	Little Maschaug Pond	Active	0
	Maschaug Pond	Active	0
	Misquamicut West	NotActive	0
	Napatree Pt. W	Successful	2
	Pee Wee Football	NotActive	0
	Rt. 78 & Rt. 91	NotActive	0
	Tom Harvey Rd.	Successful	1
	Westerly Police	Successful	1
	White Rock Rd.	Housekeeping	0
	Winnapaug	Successful	2
	Winnapaug Breach Dr.	NotActive	0
	Total		7

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EAGLE HELPS OSPREYS

As part of an Eagle Scout project, Charley Winner of Barrington built an Osprey platform on Warren Land Conservation Trust land along the Palmer River. Charley coordinated the project with Osprey monitor Butch Lombardi of the Warren Conservation Commission, enlisted the assistance of fellow scouts, and received support from the Seekonk Lowes and the Warren Conservation Commission.



Photo by Ann Adler

The Rhode Island Osprey Monitoring Project

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ual, new Google Earth map, and new online data submission tool. The 2013 orientation will be on Saturday, March 9 at 10 AM at the Environmental Education Center in Bristol—save the date!

We received a generous grant from the Rhode Island Foundation that enabled us to hire three interns. Tegan Mortimer, Kaitlin Pizzi, and Jesse Ryan Taylor visited every nest site in the state, took GPS readings, and wrote detailed directions and a description of each site. We were able to eliminate some sites as inactive, streamlining our monitoring efforts. The detailed directions will be very valuable when communicating with volunteers, especially new volunteers. The interns also provided supplemental monitoring where needed. Tegan worked on an additional project: developing a model to predict likely Osprey nesting areas. Since Ospreys that

nest in remote areas may not be seen and reported, this model will help us to identify sites to search for undiscovered nests. Kaitlin, Tegan, and Jesse did a terrific job and we are grateful for their contribution to the program.

The Rhode Island Osprey monitoring program would not be possible without the volunteer monitors who provide detailed reports on each nest. We are very thankful to them for their dedication to Osprey conservation.



Photo by Peter Green:
providencercaptors.com

GET INVOLVED :

Support the Rhode Island Osprey Monitoring Project!

Audubon needs your help to continue this important program.

- Volunteer to monitor an Osprey nest: Commit to observe one or more nests every two weeks from April through July. Monitors are especially needed in southern RI. Contact July Lewis to find a nest that needs a monitor: jlewis@asri.org or 401-949-5454 x3044.
- Donate supplies: Spotting scopes, binoculars, and GPS units are all very much needed to improve monitoring. Powerful computers that can efficiently run GIS software may also be needed; contact July Lewis for details.
- Become a member: Your tax deductible membership dollars help support not only the Osprey program, but education, conservation and advocacy programs across the state. A membership form is on the back page of this publication, or you can go to www.asri.org to join or donate online.

Rhode Island Osprey Monitoring Website

All monitoring forms, information, instructions, maps and updates can be found at: www.riosprey.info

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An Intern's Story

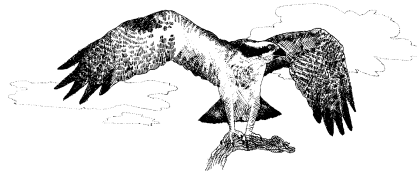
supposed to be there. The best thing about searching for Osprey nests is how well they stand out in satellite imagery. With a little bit of practice, it's a piece of cake to pinpoint the position of a nest using the characteristic shadow of the nesting platforms. The resilience of Ospreys is clearly shown in the variety of structures on which they choose to nest. In my section alone I saw everything from natural tree nests on the Palmer River and on Prudence Island, to nests in heavily built-up areas such as the Pawtuxet River-Electronics Drive nest, which is on top of a cell tower right next to I-95.

These birds would hardly be a success if it weren't for people who are so enthusiastic about them. You will always get questions and stories about the Ospreys if you stop to look at them. And if you are looking at an Osprey nest in Warren, someone may come up and tell you

their cousin, Butch Lombardi, does a lot with the nests! The Palmer River in Warren has one of the highest densities of Osprey nests in the state. I had the honor of getting a personal kayak tour of the Palmer River with Butch Lombardi. These nests really have to be seen from the water in order to appreciate them.

It was a great privilege to get to see some of the hidden gems of Rhode Island this summer and to meet and work with so many enthusiastic Osprey lovers. I hope that the work the interns did this summer will greatly increase the success of the Monitoring Program in the future.

"THESE BIRDS
WOULD HARDLY
BE A SUCCESS IF
IT WEREN'T FOR
PEOPLE WHO
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Order an Osprey License Plate and Support Environmental Conservation through Education

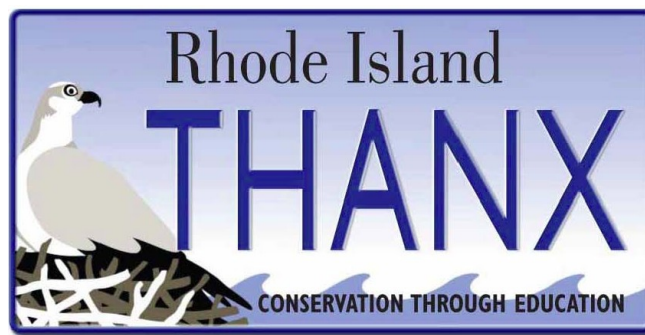


Plate Fee is \$41.50*

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Note: A \$10 fee will be added upon renewal of your registration to support environmental education.

Visit www.asri.org and click on the Osprey plate for your form to order an Osprey plate.



AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND

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Connecting People with Nature

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island was founded in 1897. Today, with 17,000 members and supporters, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island is dedicated to education, land conservation and advocacy. Audubon independently protects or owns almost 9,500 acres of woodlands and coastal property embracing diverse natural habitats. More than 33,000 students from area schools participate annually in our educational programs. A voice in statewide ecological issues, the Society actively fulfills its environmental stewardship through preservation and protection of Rhode Island's natural heritage.

Audubon is a donor-supported organization. Everything we do is made possible by the generosity of donors like you. If you value programs such as Osprey monitoring, the conservation of wildlife habitat, good environmental policy, and school programs that teach kids about the amazing natural world around them, then please join us and become a member today.

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