

Osprey

(*Pandion haliaetus*)



Osprey

Instant ID

- A large white and dark brown raptor (bird-of-prey with talons for hunting)
- Has yellow eyes within a dark stripe under a white crest
- Wings are bent when in flight
- Feet are gray and talons are in the shape of the letter “X”

Native Niches

- Found in areas along salt, brackish and fresh waters
- Nests on trees, power lines or towers
- Cosmopolitan (found worldwide) species, excluding Antarctica

Favorite Foods

- Usually eats fish
- Also eats snakes, young alligators, amphibians and other similarly sized animals



Osprey

(*Pandion haliaetus*)



Osprey

Critter Characteristics

- The only member of Pandionidae (its family classification)
- Has specially shaped feet and curved talons to assist in holding prey
- Often mistaken for larger bald eagle because it has a white head and they share habitats
- Sometimes has prey stolen by bald eagles
- Its foot shape is unique among hawks

Population Protection

- Keep waterways clean and free of fishing debris
- DDT (a now illegal pesticide) caused a population drop, but osprey numbers are recovering

