Annual Meeting March 25 To Feature A Live Bald Eagle

The annual meeting of The International Osprey Foundation on Sunday, March 25, will be an opportunity to meet a live bald eagle!

Lynda White, the featured speaker, is bringing Francis, a bald eagle, to the meeting. Her talk is titled, Radical Raptors: Amazing Adventures with Birds of Prey.

“Caring for wild raptors is often difficult, heartbreaking work, but it has also provided some pretty incredible moments as well, from the awe-inspiring to the downright hilarious. This presentation highlights some of our radical raptor encounters,” White says.

Since 1998, White has served as the Audubon EagleWatch Coordinator at Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Florida. The program is designed to educate volunteer citizen scientists in general eagle nesting biology, applicable laws, identification of nest threats, monitoring techniques and the verification of previously unrecorded active eagle nests, providing valuable information on the nesting habits of Florida’s bald eagles. These data are shared with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Her leadership skills in teaching and training volunteers is known statewide and has led her to conduct presentations to high schools, elementary schools, Eagle Scout ceremonies, veterinary conferences, birding festivals, eagle releases from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, and Audubon chapter meetings. She travels with a live bald eagle, one whose injuries were too severe to permit successful release back into the wild. For many people, this is their first and only close-up meeting with a live bald eagle.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. at a new venue, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) auditorium at 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road, Sanibel. All are welcome to attend. A $3 donation is asked for non-members.

Platform Moved To Protect Ospreys

The new location of platform

A request by Tim Gardner, president of The International Osprey Foundation, has led to the relocation of an osprey nesting platform installed by Lee County after completion of the new Sanibel Causeway.

The platform was near the Punta Rassa boat ramp on the north side of the high rise bridge and was potentially a danger to birds using it.

“The platform itself was just about even with the bridge and two ospreys were hit by cars as they tried to land on the platform,” Gardner wrote to county Department of Transportation officials.

Happily, they were quick to respond to Gardner’s request. The pole and platform were relocated – in time for the January start of nesting season – on one of the causeway islands, well away from the bridge.

Betsie Hiatt responded that she and Roger Clark of Lee County Parks and Recreation would have a contractor relocate the pole. “The area is wide open to the water, removed from causeway traffic, and not frequented by a lot of traffic or recreationists,” she said.

Sanibel Island Osprey Population

1996-2011

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<th>Year</th>
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Nesting Season 2011

A total of 122 osprey chicks and four eaglets fledged in last year’s winter nesting season.

Of 101 nests monitored, 72 were active, of which 2 were eagle nests.
Dear TIOF,

Sometimes your day doesn’t go quite as planned. For Brian Johnson, Citizen’s Union in New Jersey member and Preserve Manager at the Natural Land Trust’s Glades Wildlife Refuge, today was one of those days.

Last night’s high winds led to reports of downed osprey nests in Fortescue, which led to a flurry of phone calls and emails, and Brian happened to be closest to the action. He found the fallen natural nest, slogged over 800 yards through the marsh on foot, and was able to retrieve two healthy medium sized chicks. Working with others, Brian identified two foster nests, where he skillfully relocated the birds to new families.

Another much larger nest in Fortescue also blew down, and Brian checked that one, too. Sadly, it was too late for the chicks there, which were crushed by the huge nest when it collapsed on top of them. This nest was in a platform and should have been maintained by human intervention to a smaller size. In this case, the winds took care of that, and the very same adult osprey that lost their young still had plenty of nest to work with, and seem to have willingly adopted one of the displaced chicks.

Brian has offered to keep an eye on the nest, as this pair of adults has a propensity to build too large. He can downsize it when they are wintering in South America. We aren’t sure who is responsible for this nest but are thrilled with Brian’s willingness to help.

Many thanks to those who helped on the ground and with ideas and information, especially Ben Wurst of Conserve Wildlife Foundation, who provided a great deal of guidance. As it happened, Jane Morton Galetto was at an Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee meeting when she received word from CU Trustee Tony Klock who had read about the fallen nests on Facebook in a post by CU member Steve Byrne. Jane conferred about fostering the birds to other nests with Kathy Clark of the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife and Veterinarian Erica Miller of Tri State Bird Rescue, also a CU member, who were at the same meeting. Tony remained in contact with Brian as he rescued the birds and helped identify foster nests.

Thank you for your heroic efforts, Brian, and thanks again to all involved.

Lillian Armstrong
Executive Director,
Citizen’s United, New Jersey

Editor’s note: TIOF has given AHWF two grants.

Watch Sanibel Ospreys On Live Streaming Video

Birders and other nature lovers now have a new way to get close up with the ospreys. Ocean’s Reach Condominium Resort on Sanibel Island has installed a video camera over its on-site osprey nest. People who click on the Ocean’s Reach web site www.oceansreach.com will be able to view up close and personal the osprey pair that is making that nest their home for a fourth year.

On Christmas Day, the female laid her first egg, on December 26th the second, and subsequently a third. Three chicks hatched in mid-February.

Nationally recognized osprey expert Mark “Bird” Westall, project director for TIOF, provided technical advice on when to install the camera to least disturb the birds, and location and height of camera above the nest.

Westall started monitoring ospreys on Sanibel in 1979. “Since then we’ve built artificial platforms around the Island and these sites produce twice as many chicks as natural ones.”

The Ocean’s Reach webcam will provide live streaming video 24/7. Viewers will see the what’s in an osprey nest, plus live action of the pair on the nest, and nurturing their chicks. The nest can also be viewed on the web site of the J. N. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Refuge www.fws.gov/dingdarling/.
Sanibel NestWatchers
Every two weeks in the winter, rain or shine, TIOF NestWatch volunteers monitor each nest in their territory to get a count on how many chicks are in the nest and how many survive and learn to fly. It gives a constant snapshot of the health of this bird and the surrounding waters from which it feeds. Seven nestwatch groups check 132 osprey nests. Some have as many as 17 members, others as few as one. If you would like to join one of the smaller groups, call coordinator Debbie Friedlund at (239) 472-6667.

TIOF Grants Awarded In 2012
• Sharon Matola, Belize, Central America: $500 to continue her project, “Belize Harpy Eagle Restoration Program.”
• CROW, Sanibel, $1,000 for Repair and Maintenance of the Osprey Flight Cage.
• Matthew Hanson, Boca Raton, Florida: $1,000 for “Study of foraging ecology of Bald Eagles in Everglades National Park.”
• Alejandro V. Baladrón, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Funes, Argentina: $1,000 for his “Study of Breeding success of the Burrowing Owl in natural and modified environments of the Flooding Pampas of Argentina.”
• Cathy Viverette, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA: $1,000 for study “A Comparative Phylogeography and Landscape Genetic Analysis of Chesapeake Bay Bald Eagles and Osprey Populations.”
• Kathlene St. Clair-McGee, Clark Ford, Idaho: $1,000 to help sponsor the American Heritage Wildlife Foundation.

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Claudia Burns is a one-woman NestWatch team who rides her bicycle to monitor 15 nests every two weeks throughout the winter.

She’s been nest watching for about 30 years and for the last 15 or so years has covered the extreme east end of the island, from Lindgren Boulevard to the Sanibel Lighthouse. She also checks nests from Lindgren to Casa Ybel Road and keeps an eye on the eagle nest behind Dairy Queen as well.

“Going by bicycle is also good exercise, and earns me lunch (or late breakfast) at the Lighthouse Cafe or Gramma Dot’s,” says Burns.

Another solo NestWatcher is Charmaine Yeadon.

There are seven NestWatch groups in all. Some have as many as 17 volunteers.

Thanks to all the NestWatch volunteers.

Audubon Osprey Counts
The Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society’s 2011 Christmas Bird Count was 427 ospreys (Pandion haliaetus). The 10-year average from the annual counts is 298 and the 25-year average is 275.

That shows a thriving and healthy population on the islands.
T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE
Our popular T-shirts in white, 100% cotton, feature a large osprey head in brown with yellow eye. Price is $15 each, including shipping.

Name ________________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________
City __________________________ State ________ Zip ________________
Quantity: Small ________ Medium ________ Large ________ Extra Large ________
Total T-Shirts ___________ Total Amount Enclosed $ ___________

Send with check or money order to:
TIOF, P.O. Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as a member of TIOF
Please renew my membership in TIOF

Check Membership Category:

1. Individual $20
2. Family $25
3. Sustaining $30
4. Supporting $50
5. Contributing $100
6. Donor $250
7. Life $500
8. Student (to undergraduate level) $8
9. Corporate: $25 or more

Name ________________________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________________________
City __________________________ State ________ Zip ________________
Country ____________________________________________________________________

MAIL TO: TIOF, P.O. Box 250, Sanibel, FL 33957, USA