

Having osprey around shows we have a healthy fish population and a healthy Elizabeth River.



Osprey

***Pandion haliaetus* (Scientific name)**

Common Names: Osprey, fish hawk, river hawk and sea hawk

Size: Up to 2 feet in length with a wingspan to 6 feet **Lifespan:** Up to 30 years

Habitat: The Elizabeth River and shorelines, marshes, rivers and open waters.

Range: Found on every continent except for Antarctica.

Diet: 99% of their diet is fish. Osprey eat medium-sized fish including perch, shad and menhaden. Once an osprey spots its prey, it will hover in the air, beat its wings and then dive feet first in the river.

Appearance: The osprey's body is brown and white with a brownish-black back, black patches in its wings and a white head and belly. A broad black stripe, like an eyebrow is above its yellow eyes. Females have a "necklace" of brown-tipped breast feathers.

Predators: Adults are vulnerable to predators like eagles and large owls. Eggs and nestlings are vulnerable to raccoons, snakes and other climbing animals.

Flight: Osprey can be identified in flight by their crooked wings, white underparts and black eye stripes.

Voice: A piercing, chirping *cheep-cheep* or *yewk-yewk*. <https://ebird.org/species/osprey>

Osprey Cam from the Chesapeake Bay Conservancy:

<https://chesapeakeconservancy.org/what-we-do/explore/wildlife-webcams/osprey/>

What can you do? Keep marine debris and trash out of the Elizabeth River. Properly dispose and recycle trash, never release balloons, and clean up litter, especially plastic.

On-Line Resources

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Osprey/id>

<https://www.audubon.org/bird-guide>

<https://www.thespruce.com/osprey-identification-details-385985>



www.elizabethriver.org