

Osprey: An easy bird to watch in awe

BY BRUCE MCCAMMON

Bird migration is like a merry-go-round of seasonal treats. Every month provides another sample of birds to observe in north central Washington. Spring and fall are the most substantial periods to see new birds as they pass through heading to breeding areas to the north or warmer locations to winter-over.



Bruce McCammon is retired, color-blind and enjoys photographing the birds in north central Washington.

We know that spring is here when the American Robin arrives. Winter is near when the Dark-eyed Juncos appear.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology provides a good overview of migration dynamics here: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/the-basics-how-why-and-where-of-bird-migration/>.

Many birds nest and hatch their young in north central Washington in May, June and



July.

For good reasons, most birds make efforts to conceal their nests to protect their young.

The Osprey, however, has adapted to urban chaos and freely nests in open view.

Being near the top of the food chain, Osprey were an endangered species in the mid-20th Century. Like the Bald Eagle, Osprey populations have recovered after DDT and other pesticides were banned.

Today, because the Osprey diet is almost entirely made from fish, anyone can see Osprey at many locations along the Columbia River or other rivers and lakes.

There are at least three nesting pairs of Osprey in Wenatchee. The pair that is nesting on a man-made platform (thank you Chelan PUD) near the north end of the boat launch

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parking lot near Pybus Public Market offer residents and visitors a unique, up-close-and-personal opportunity to witness flight, feeding and nesting behaviors.

The Apple Capital Loop Trail is a major attraction for people during the summer months and the birds are on full display.

Once the chicks hatch, they stay in the nest for about 50 days as the parents bring fish to the nest. Then the chicks begin flight and hunting school as they prepare to make it on their own.

The evening that I took this photo at the Pybus nest site, a couple walked off the paved trail and across the grass to talk to me. I'm used to fielding questions like "What are you looking at?" or "Getting any good shots?" I enjoy opportunities to talk about birds or photography.

This couple, though, was unique. The man smiled and said, "We sure enjoy your bird articles in **The Good Life**."

I very much appreciated that feedback. This was a pleasant instance when birds, photos and words connected strangers on a public path.

I hope you are able to find an Osprey nest near you and that you take some time to watch these remarkable birds.

If you see a guy standing around with a camera and tripod, stop and say hello. You might make his day. Just sayin'.