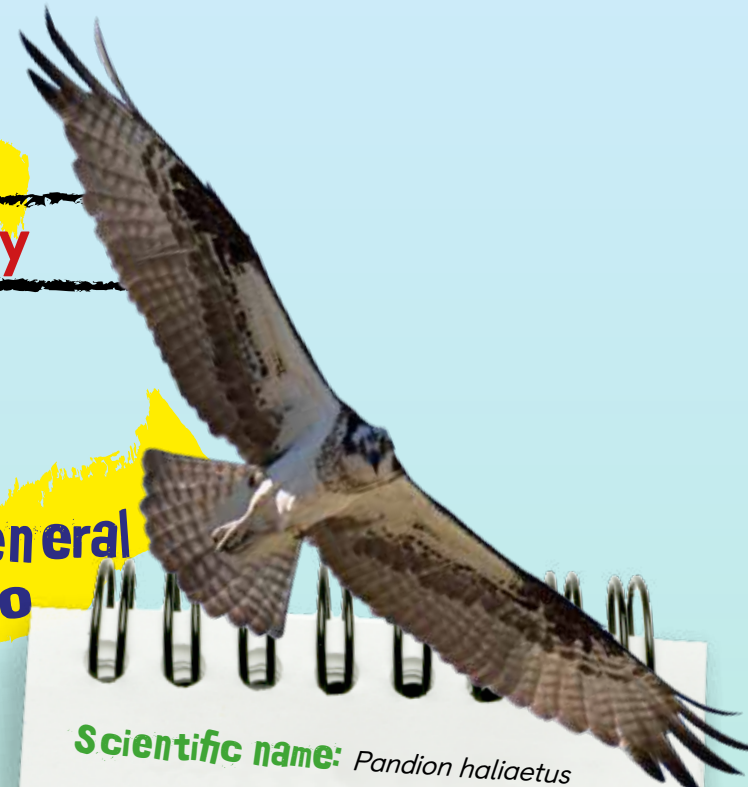




giving  
nature  
a home

**Name:**

**Osprey**



## History

Shooting, habitat loss and people collecting their eggs, caused ospreys to become extinct in the UK. By the middle of the 19th century, they had disappeared from England, and in 1916 the last nest was recorded in Scotland. They did not return until Scandinavian birds bred in Scotland in the 1950s, by which time killing ospreys had been made illegal.

Since then, the RSPB and other groups have been protecting ospreys and they have returned to areas of England, Scotland and Wales to breed (the ones in Rutland were reintroduced by people). Around 240 pairs now breed in the UK. Vandals and egg thieves continue to be a threat to these birds in some areas.

## What is special about this bird?

Ospreys have spiny feet and long, arched, needle-sharp claws to help them grab slippery fish from rivers and lakes.

## General info

**Scientific name:** *Pandion haliaetus*

**Size:** An average of 56cm long with a wingspan of 158cm (the average armspan of a 9-year-old child is 1.3m).

**Weight:** Average weight is 1.5kg.

**Where they live:** Ospreys are found all over the world, near fresh and salt water. They migrate to the UK from Africa in late March and April, and leave again in August and September. One of the most famous osprey nest sites is at RSPB Loch Garten in Scotland. You can also see them in Cumbria and Rutland in England, and Porthmadog in Wales. They sometimes stop in Northern Ireland, so people have put up nesting platforms in trees to encourage them to stay.

**How long they live:** Typically, they live up to nine years. The oldest recorded bird lived for 20 years and 11 months.

**What they eat:** Mostly fish – sometimes very big ones – which they catch and carry away!

**Conservation status:** The osprey is on our Amber List, which means that we have some concerns about it.

## Fascinating fact

Ospreys can close their nostrils when they dive, reaching a depth of up to one metre.