

Bergman Slough meets the main breeding-site requirements for Ospreys. It contains shallow water with nearby trees suitable for nest construction. The Osprey's diet consists almost exclusively of fish, which it captures near the water's surface (Johnsgard 1990). Although adults will leave the nest if excessively disturbed by humans (leaving the nestlings vulnerable to predation), they can usually tolerate humans and will readily accept artificial nest platforms. For example in Wisconsin in 1992 two-thirds of nests were on manmade structures (Ewins 1994).

The Cook County Forest Preserve District erected an Osprey nesting platform at Bergman Slough the first week of April in 1999 and is considering erecting another in south-

west Cook County.

Ospreys are monogamous and exhibit strong site fidelity to their eyrie (Johnsgard 1990). Adult mortality averages 10-15% per year. More importantly young Ospreys usually return to within 30 miles of their natal site to breed (Ewins 1994). They remain in Central or South America as 1-year-olds. As 2-year-olds, about 30-50% of Ospreys return to the vicinity of their birth, but do not breed. Breeding first occurs between 3 and 5 years of age.

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Mississippi Kite Breeds in Calhoun County

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Every outing of our Saturday birding group leads to some natural wonder. Led by Helen Wuestenfield, from Jerseyville, Illinois, we explore a wide range of habitats from Pere Marquette State Park to the lower reaches of the Illinois River and the nearby Mississippi River. In July 1998, one of our group, Lou Hanes, took us to see a Mississippi Kite's nest (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) near his home in Calhoun County. He had found this nest while tracking adult kites in the area.

The nest was one mile east of Red's Landing on the Mississippi River and due west of Hardin, Illinois. It was in a mile-long strip of bottomland forest by the edge of a bayou. We watched from the oppo-



The Mississippi Kite breeds in southern Illinois. It occasionally wanders north after the breeding season. Daniel T. Williams took this photo of the Mississippi Kite at Rock Cut State Park in Winnebago County (northern Illinois) on 1 August 1998. See Field Notes for two more photos.

site bank, about 50 yards away. The nest was a tangle of small sticks about 45 feet high in a cottonwood tree. Lou spotted the well-hidden nest while watching the parents fly in to feed the single chick. One adult, before delivering its prey, slammed it against a limb with its beak. Apparently, this was to kill or soften the small animal for the chick to eat. (Lou said "marinate.")

The adults sometimes sat in a nearby dead tree to rest or preen. All three birds were quiet except during one later visit, when one adult moved to a distant tree in plain view and gave a 2-note whistle. This behavior seemed more like a distraction display than an alarm call.