

THE DENNIS PULESTON OSPREY FUND: SPRING 2005

BY DAVID SHORE

The Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund (DPOF) Osprey Camera, now in its third season, has been operational since March 13. This year we had to replace the camera since it was damaged by a power surge caused by a lightning strike last August. There is a link to an Adobe PDF document, on the DPOF Main (home) web page, that contains pictures of the installation being completed at the nest site.

The response to the camera web site has been very positive. There are many more participants posting to the Observation Database and the Message Board already contains hundreds of threads that people from all over North America, the UK, and even Australia have contributed to.

Visitors from many places, including two entries from Cuba, have signed the Guest Book! The postings on the Message Board are not limited to the birds on the DPOF camera nest, but include osprey cameras in

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A pair of ospreys arrived at the nest on March 18, but it does not appear to be the same pair that was there the prior two years. They have different markings and they are behaving differently than last year's pair. Many of the observers from the past season have posted observations and messages noting the different behavior and most agree that this is a new pair. The osprey pair has settled into a routine of nest maintenance, courting, feeding and mating, with the female spending a lot of time on the nest. On April 11, the female laid the first egg of the season and the pair has been taking turns incubating it, although the female spends the most time on the egg. Since the pair took up residence, they have had to chase off other birds that intruded at the nest, some of them ospreys. Some observers speculate that at least once it may have been a returning adult osprey from last year, but there is no way to tell for certain.

*Osprey landing at Bellport Yacht Club –
photo by Peter Hutchins*



Europe as well as the US and Canada and they discuss many different species of birds and other animals. The contributors have spent many hours researching answers to the questions posted and have even posted facts that they have discovered that were not part of a discussion. The regulars have been e-mailing each other and some have even taken to visiting each other when they travel. The mission statement for the DPOF states, "The Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund will encourage research about ospreys on Long Island, improve their nesting opportunities and educate the public about them. The Fund recognizes that for ospreys to be successful they must have a viable and healthy habitat in which to live." It has not only raised awareness to Long Island ospreys but to ospreys around the world!

Some sample postings from the Observation Database, the Message Board and the Guest Book:

Marie in Vancouver, BC

Observation Database 4/5: There are wonderful sounds as the day comes to a close. Red-winged blackbird, great horned owl, and the "chew, chew, chew" of the cardinal. I think I heard another osprey off in the distance. I was delighted to hear the "tu tu tu" of the greater yellowlegs a moment ago...life on the marsh is growing.

Celeste on Long Island, NY

Observation Database 3/23: Our lovely "spring" weather continues.....winds, sleet and rain, etc....All is quiet...however as I am typing this an osprey just flew in, with back to cam, he suddenly lifted up and I can hear calling in the distance...I now hear the rooster, but the constant chirping of the osprey is closer and then farther away in sound and insistent sounding.

Tiger in London, England

Message Board 4/12: Message thread: How did everyone find the Osprey Cam? I have been following the Rutlan site virtually since it started in July 1999. It has links to a lot of osprey sites and this was one of them. I came in just as chick # 4 was losing its battle for life last year and that was it.....an addict.



Osprey enjoying the restoration of Beaver Dam Creek – Marty Van Lith



The camcorder team – David Shore, Will Throwe, Tom Throwe, Tom Ludlam, and Rick Mohlman.

Freddy in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

Guestbook: I am glad to see a web site about the ospreys that we count every year at our station in Gran Piedra.

The Foundation is pleased to announce that the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund web site is again operational. Our ospreys arrived on schedule on March 18th and have started to raise their family. Last year was a great success and you can view comments from the many individuals who visited the site during the 2004 season by logging on via www.postmorrow.org.

We include here an article by David Shore a member of the DPOF committee, who discusses the website and an article by Art Cooley about Dennis and the significance of the effort.

Thanks to the Gesso Foundation

We are very grateful to the Gesso Foundation for their contribution to the Fund, which enabled us to purchase a new camera. Last fall the camera was damaged by a storm, fortunately after the ospreys had left their nest.



Art Cooley, Environmental Defense

Dennis Puleston, whom we honor with this website and these wonderful pictures of ospreys, was an inveterate traveler. In many ways, he was like an osprey; he had a home range where he kept close to family and friends, and he had migratory homes, which in Dennis' case, could have been any one of the seven continents. All his friends knew when he was to be away and looked forward to his returning and to viewing his slides. During his slide presentations, we knew that we would learn about wildlife especially the birds.

Many reasons existed for participating in Dennis' presentations...not unlike Hugh Johnson's admonition, in his classic book about wine, suggesting two reasons for studying grapes; one, to learn about what you are drinking and two, to learn about geography. True, we also would learn about geographic places that stirred our imagination. At first they were just names; then they became places we wanted to visit like: the Seychelles, Deception Island, Point Wild, Moffin Island, the Northwest Passage, Moorea and Ternate, to name a few. In his later years, Dennis traveled to Antarctica more than 35 times; that is at least 70 crossings of the Drake Passage, that infamous body of water between the tip of South America and the Antarctic Peninsula. We listened to Dennis to learn about the birds and soak up some geography, sometimes while sipping a glass of wine.

When Dennis traveled to Antarctica, as with many travelers, it became his seventh and last continent. But, the osprey that nested near his home may have exceeded any wildlife sighting he experienced. And, the osprey, a traveler like Dennis, is no slouch; it nests on six continents. Before man appeared on earth, 13 million years ago, avian paleontologists tell us that fossils of ospreys occurred in both Europe and North America suggesting their widespread distribution. While the fossil species seems to have been less robust than the present one, it is, nonetheless, a fish-eating hawk. Today, ospreys occur throughout the world. Generally, they breed in the Northern Hemisphere (Eurasia and North America), and these birds migrate south into equatorial and southern latitudes for the winter (South America and Africa). Others that live in the Southern Hemisphere tend to be non-migratory. A perplexing problem for biologists is the question of why some ospreys don't remain on wintering grounds to breed. Similarly, Dennis didn't stay on his wintering grounds either.

Remembering the first osprey I ever saw is impossible, but I do remember the photo taken of one when I was 12. According to Alan Poole, Roy Wilcox, and a handful of other bird banders, had banded more than 40% of all ospreys worldwide. Just after World War II, Roy took me to Gardiners Island, so he could band even more ospreys. With his camera, I took a photo of him next to an osprey nest that had been built directly on the ground. There are no land predators like raccoons or foxes on Gardiners so ground nests were common and many of them had been used for years, if not decades. The nest was taller than I was. His camera was on a tripod, which made the taking easier. We were standing in the densest colony of nesting raptors in the world, an estimated 300 pairs. Gardiners Island was the epicenter of colonial nesting ospreys. On that day began

with encouragement from others, especially Dennis, my life long love of birds...and ospreys especially.

In 1962, a friend took me to view an osprey in Scotland where it nested for the first time since 1916. It was a magical day dimmed only slightly by the concertina wire around the base of the nest to ward off egg thieves. By the end of the 20th century Scottish ospreys were on the rebound. English ospreys nested for the first time in more than a century and a half in the year that Dennis died, 2001. Assisted by an artificial nest site built on the shore of Bassenthwaite Lake in the Lake District, nesting ospreys returned to England. For three years this nest has been successful and has contributed to the tourism of the area. (Details of these efforts can be seen on www.ospreywatch.co.uk.) Public concern for and research on the osprey has increased dramatically.

Dennis Puleston continued the research that Roy Wilcox had begun on Gardiners, and it was here, using eggs that had not hatched that discoveries were made about the effect DDT was having upon osprey reproduction. These eggs analyzed by Dr. Charles Wurster, at Stony Brook University, led us to form the Environmental Defense Fund (now Environmental Defense). Our aim was to ban DDT, a purpose that was accomplished in 1972 when the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, William Ruckelshaus, banned this destructive pesticide nationwide. This decision, with the subsequent decline of DDT in the environment, led to the recovery of three fabulous species: the osprey, the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle.

The combination of banning DDT and an aggressive reintroduction program heralded the return of the osprey. Both Michael Male in film and David Gessner in print have titled their efforts, *The Return of the Osprey*. Today, Ospreys are rebounding in those areas where DDT use has been abolished. In other places ospreys are challenged by habitat destruction, egg collecting and nest disturbance, but attitudes have changed. Consequently, Ospreys will continue to thrive on six continents for years to come.

Another threatened raptor is found on six continents...the Peregrine Falcon. It was decimated by the use of DDT. The peregrine, aided by the ban on DDT and a reintroduction program, has returned to areas not generally thought of as 'the wilds.' Surprisingly, peregrines returned to cities. New York City claims to have the highest con-

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centration of peregrine falcons of any place in the world with 15 nests in 2004. In some cities and at some sites, TV cameras have been installed to show the world their nesting behavior. A quick search on Google reveals numerous animal video camera locations. Indeed, the number of animal cams seems to proliferate on a reproductive schedule all its own.

Bald eagles are veritable 'stay-at-homes' compared to peregrine falcons and ospreys, occurring only in North America; but this fact does not detract from their beauty, majesty or skill as fishermen.

Viewing for the first time, a picture Dennis had taken in Alaska of an eagle swimming ashore with a salmon in one talon, I looked on in disbelief. Surely, the bird would drown. Not only did the bird swim to shore; it climbed onto a large rock where it dined on freshly caught salmon. Years later, privileged to see the same event in Alaska, I was no less amazed by the swimming ability of a bald eagle.

In the early nineties, Dennis called some friends to report a young eagle at Howell's Point in Bellport, NY. A group met, as so often happened when Dennis was home, to find the eagle. It was not hard; the eagle was sitting on the shoreline and a mockingbird, ever attentive to intruders into its territory, initiated a ruckus. Indeed, the small, confident songbird flew repeatedly into the back of the eagle trying to drive it away. The eagle barely noticed. One of our group 'sensed' that the eagle looked hungry; how that was possible remains a mystery. One of our group went off to the local market for chicken and, when she returned, Dennis volunteered to toss the chicken parts in front of the eagle. Within minutes, the majestic eagle hopped to one of the chicken chunks, grasped it in its talon and flew off to a nearby tree for a late breakfast. Startled, we observed nature in progress.

In 1970, the *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine declared, "Saving the bald eagle may be beyond our powers." In 1963 in the lower 48 states there were less than 562 nesting eagle pairs. By 1999, an equal



Osprey enjoying winter in Florida – Marty Van Lith

number existed in the Chesapeake Bay; in 2003 there were 760 pairs. Nationwide, in the lower 48, in 1998, there were 5,787 pairs; by 2003 there were 7,678, a 33% increase in just 5 years. In 33 years, since Texas prophesized their demise, the eagles were not only saved but came back gloriously. Data provided by Environmental Defense seeks to remove the bald eagle from the threatened list and to focus attention on more endangered species occurring on privately-owned lands. This program, "Back from the Brink," can be found on the web.

This week, the Associated Press reports that 10 bald eagles have been released on Santa Cruz Island in the Channel Islands, off California, where they had originally occurred until high DDT levels decimated their population. It is hoped that the bald eagles will deter golden eagles that are feeding on an endangered native fox. Ironically, the money that is funding this project was provided by a chemical company, in 2000, that had polluted the waters off Los Angeles with DDT; a company that EDF had successfully sued to stop dumping DDT into the ocean in the 1970s.

Dennis, the Founding Chair of Environmental Defense Fund, was proud of the effort to remove DDT from the environment. He lived a long and productive life, and he lived long enough to see the restoration of three of the most magnificent species in the world. His legacy continues as each of these species continues to flourish. It is in recognition of his love of wildlife that we share the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund website with anyone interested in nature.

Is it too soon to uncork the bottle of wine in celebration, because so many bird species are continually threatened by the actions of humans, the only species in the history of the world capable of changing entire ecosystems? Or shall we offer a small toast to our successes...and to future successes? In the United States, two of the most magnificent raptors with the widest possible worldwide distribution are increasing and our national symbol is on the road to recovery. Yes, there is cause to celebrate. Cheers!



VOLUNTEER STUDENTS FROM WESTHAMPTON BEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Many volunteers participated last year in planting native grasses as part of the Beaver Dam Creek Restoration Project.

We are looking for volunteers for this years plantings as well. The planting effort will be this June. If you are interested please call the Foundation. The project is funded in part by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation through a grant from Senator Caesar Trunzo.

THE HAMLET ORGANIC GARDEN

An organic farm, properly speaking, is not one that uses certain methods and substances and avoids others; it is a farm whose structure is formed in imitation of the structure of a natural system that has the integrity, the independence and the benign dependence of an organism"

- Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land"

"Deep in the heart of Brookhaven Hamlet there exists a little farm that all people are welcome to join." (Taken from the Hamlet Organic Garden brochure) Known as the "HOG" (Hamlet Organic Garden) it is formed as a CSA or Community Supported Agriculture. This means that the community comes together and agrees to support the effort of the farmer (Steve Hillis) by paying for a seasons worth of produce. Each week members of the CSA can pick up their share of vegetables (and sometimes fruits, bread or honey).

The farm is on land owned by the Puleston family that has been farmed for many years. It is adjacent to land owned by the Post-Morrow Foundation known as Longmeadow Farm that has also been used as farmland. This year the HOG will be using some of the Foundation's land to expand the ability of the farm to meet the needs of their membership.

The HOG is "Certified Organic" by NOFA, an organization dedicated to assist the organic farm movement.

(The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) is a non-profit organization of nearly 4,000 farmers, gardeners and consumers working to promote healthy, organic farming practices and a cleaner environment. NOFA has chapters in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.)



Waiting for Spring



Winter scene



Farmer Steve Hillis, Sean Pilger, Jill Garrick, Board of Directors, The Hamlet Organic Garden

WHAT IS COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)?

CSA is a partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters, which provides a direct link between the production and consumption of food. Supporters cover a farm's yearly operating budget by purchasing a share of the season's harvest. CSA members make a commitment to support the farm throughout the season, and assume the costs, risks and bounty of growing food along with the farmer or grower. Members help pay for seeds, fertilizer, water, equipment maintenance, labor, etc. In return, the farm provides, to the best of its ability, a healthy supply of seasonal fresh produce throughout the growing season. Becoming a member creates a responsible relationship between people and the food they eat, the land on which it is grown and those who grow it.

This mutually supportive relationship between local farmers, growers and community members helps create an economically stable farm operation in which members are assured the highest quality produce, often at below retail prices. In return, farmers and growers are guaranteed a reliable market for a diverse selection of crops.

CSA reflects an innovative and resourceful strategy to connect local farmers with local consumers; develop a regional food supply and strong local economy; maintain a sense of community; encourage land stewardship; and honor the knowledge and experience of growers and producers working with small to medium farms. CSA is a unique model of local agriculture that has developed from many different influences. More than 30 years ago in Japan, a group of women concerned about the increase in food imports and the corresponding decrease in the farming population initiated a direct growing and purchasing relationship between their group and local farms. This arrangement, called "teikei" in Japanese, translates to "putting the farmers' face on food." A similar community farming approach has been successful in Europe. A variation of this concept traveled from Europe to the U.S. via the biodynamic community. This method was adapted locally and given the name "Community Supported Agriculture" at Indian Line Farm, Massachusetts, in 1985. There are now over 1000 CSA farms across the US and Canada.

University of Massachusetts Extension Service webpage
www.umassvegetable.org

The ideas that informed the first two American CSAs were articulated in the 1920s by Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), and then actively cultivated in post- WW II Europe in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. The ideas crossed the Atlantic and came to life in a new form, CSA, simultaneously but independently in 1986 at both Indian Line Farm in Massachusetts and Temple-Wilton Community Farm in New Hampshire.



The overall philosophy of the TW Farm evolved from some of Steiner's ideas spelled out in his anthroposophical writings. Some of the farm's key ideas are

New forms of property ownership—

a community through a legal trust holds the land in a common. The trust then leases its property long-term to farmers who use the land to grow food for the community.

New forms of cooperation—

A network of human relations replaces old systems of employers and employees as well as replacing the practice of pledging material security (land, buildings, etc.) to banks.

New forms of economy — (associative economy).

The guiding question is not "how do we increase profits?" but rather "what are the actual needs of the land and of the people involved in this enterprise."

Taken from the Rodale Institute Website, www.newfarm.org
Community Farms in the 21st Century; Poised for another wave of growth, Scott McFadden

SLOW FOOD

Another effort to support locally grown food is the Slow Food Movement. In 1986 a MacDonald's restaurant opened in Piazza Spagna in Rome much to the dismay of some local residents. Carlo Petrini, a writer and organizer of a not-for-profit food and wine organization decided to form Slow Food in an effort to help rediscover authentic local food traditions and to help preserve the European custom of enjoying a long meal rather than turning to "fast food" chains.

At the Terra Madre Slow Food symposium held on October 23, 2004 in Turin Italy, the Prince of Wales said, "Slow food is traditional food. It is also local - and local cuisine is one of the most important ways we identify with the place and region where we live. It is the same with the buildings in our towns, cities and villages. Well-designed places and buildings that relate to locality and landscape and that put people before cars enhance a sense of community and rootedness. All these things are connected. We no more want to live in anonymous concrete blocks that are just like anywhere else in the world than we want to eat anonymous junk food which can be bought anywhere. At the end of the day, values such as sustainability, community, health and taste are more important than pure convenience. We need to have distinctive and varied places and distinctive and varied food in order to retain our sanity, if nothing else."



There is a local chapter of Slow Food (called a "convivium") here on the East End of Long Island. You can contact them at the American Hotel. Their website is www.slowfoodusa.org. One project of the slow food movement is a list of endangered food items the movement wishes to preserve called The Ark of Taste. Recently the Peconic Bay Scallop has been nominated for inclusion on this list.

Suffolk County has made a great effort to preserve the agriculture industry and the tradition of family farming. Much of the effort is in preservation through purchase of land and the transfer of development rights. Last year Suffolk County passed a \$60 million bond act for this purpose and the Town of Brookhaven passed one for \$100 million. Suffolk County leads the state of

New York in agricultural produce sold at over \$200 million each year. This includes fruits and vegetables, wine, horticulture and sod farming.

There is an emphasis in educating Suffolk residents on the advantages of buying local food, grown and produced here in our community. The Post-Morrow Foundation is particularly interested in preserving farming here in Brookhaven by supporting the Hamlet Organic Garden and Deer Run Farm. (See *Post-Morrow Foundation Newsletter*, Fall 2000) Farming has been a long and productive enterprise in the Hamlet and we encourage everyone to support it by buying locally.





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IN MEMORIAM

We are particularly grateful for those donors who have given to the Foundation in the name of Ernie Wruck. Ernie Wruck practiced law in the area for over 40 years, lived in Brookhaven and raised his family here. His two sons continue to work in the area.

We have been the recipient of such gifts in recognition of loved ones over the past years and are pleased to be able to offer that opportunity to anyone who wishes to remember a family member or friend by making a gift in their memory.

Such a gift may be earmarked for a particular project such as the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund or simply given to assist in the general mission of the Foundation to preserve the environment of Brookhaven Hamlet and surrounding areas.



Beaver Dam Creek in winter