

# A Fine Specimen



Ospreys in British newspapers  
1810-1965

Compiled by  
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$\frac{1}{6}$   
OSPREY.

*Pandion haliaëtus* (Linn.).

A few days ago, an immensely large Eagle was shot by a Looker belonging to Mr. Murton, in Greenboro'-Marshes, in the parish of Upchurch, in Kent. It was, in the first instance, only wounded, and for a time resisted both the man and his dog; it soon, however, became sick and threw up a kitten, soon after which it was killed. It measured, from the bill to the tip of the tail, three feet and a half, and with the wings expanded eight feet. The colour of the body, from the head to the tip of the tail, was of a dark ash colour, bordering on black; the feathers of the wings also nearly black; the bill about the nostrils thick – towards the tip very sharp; the talons and legs yellow and very strong – the latter feathered only just below the knees, and this circumstance seems to indicate its species – that of the Sea Eagle or Osprey.

Northampton Mercury 17 November 1810

A fine *Osprey* was shot by Mr Pelham last week at Brocklesby. It had previously been seen to dive into the fish-pond and bring up a large carp, with which it rose leisurely into the air; but again approaching the pond was killed. It measured five feet from the tips of the wings, when extended.

Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette 7 May 1818

**Ornithology.**—Saturday the *Platalea Leucorodia*, or white Spoonbill, a fine specimen of this rare visitant of our shores, was shot on the river Yare, near Yarmouth. It measures two feet five inches high, weighs 3½ lbs, and the bill is 7 inches long. The principal food of these birds must be shrimps, the above having the remains of several hundred in its craw.

A beautiful male bird, the *Falco Hallaetus* of Linnaeus, or Osprey, was shot a few days since on Braydon, near Yarmouth; the bird was seen to plunge into the water, and immediately after ascend to a great height with a fish in its claws; when at the greatest altitude the osprey dropped the fish, and whilst it was descending, followed it with the rapidity of lightning, and long before it reached the earth, dexterously caught it with its claws; and repeated the feat several times.

Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette 28 May 1818

Last week an eagle of the Osprey kind was shot between Bassenthwaite and Keswick Lakes. It was observed by the Gentleman who shot it, soaring at a great height above the river Derwent, and plunging with incredible velocity into the water after its prey. Upon emerging from the river, it boldly approached him, was fired at, and so stunned that it soon after perched upon the chimney of an uninhabited house not far distant, where it was soon killed by a second shot. Its length was two feet, and the spread of its wings about five. Its cere and legs were blue, its head whitish, its body above brown, and beneath white. — This bird is the *Falco Haliaetus* of Linnaeus, and it frequents the sea coasts and the lakes and rivers of Europe. Its principal food is fish, upon which it darts with great rapidity, and with certain aim. The Italians call it the Leaden Eagle, comparing its descent upon the water to a piece of lead falling upon that element. It is not in the Catalogue of Birds communicated by Doctor Heysham to the Editor of the History of Cumberland, and appears to be a rare inhabitant of this County.

Carlisle Patriot, 10 October 1818

***To the Editor of the Leeds Intelligencer.***

Sir.—On Monday last as myself and two friends were out in the neighbourhood of Halifax, say in Stainland, shooting woodcocks a large bird was observed flying over us at a supposed elevation of 80 yards, at which the party, consisting as I said before of three, discharged their guns, and surprising to relate, at this great distance the bird fell; when he was first seen we fancied he was a Curlew or Whimbrel; upon a nearer approach we fancied him of the Heron tribe; but he turns out to be an “Osprey”. When he first fell, a dog seized him, but not being dead, he gave him a suitable reception with his large black claws, after which a man (one of our beaters) attempted to take him up, when the bird laid hold of his finger and drew blood instantly; he was at last seized, and conveyed to my house, where I have him and am getting him stuffed.

I have clearly made out this bird to be the Osprey or sea Eagle; his length is 2 feet, breadth from tip to tip of the wing 5 feet 8 inches; its bill is black, shaped like that of the Hawk, with a blue cere, and its eye yellow; the crown of its head is white, marked with oblong dusky spots; its cheeks and all the under parts of its body are white, slightly spotted with brown on its breast; from the corner of each eye a streak of brown extends down the sides of the neck towards the wing;

the upper part of the body is brown, with each feather tipped with a white line at the edge, the tail, is very curious, the two middle feathers of it are the same, the others are marked on the inner webs with alternate bars of brown and white.

The legs are very short and thick, being only 2½ inches long and 2 inches in circumference, they are of a most beautiful pale blue colour; the claws very large and black.

This bird, though supposed to be a native of the mountainous parts of the north of Scotland, is scattered over the extent of Europe from Sweden to Greece, and has been found even in Egypt and Nigritia according to Buffon; its general haunts are on the sea shore, the borders of large rivers and lakes, and its principal food fish.

The Italians give the Osprey the name of the *Aquila Plumbino* or *Leaden Eagle*, from the circumstance of its descent upon the water on its prey being with great rapidity, and like, as they compare it, to a piece of lead falling upon that element.

If any other description than what I have given the bird is required by any of your readers, I shall have great pleasure in affording it.

J.E.

Leeds Intelligencer, 2 November 1818



**Curious Facts in Ornithology.**—Within the last three years Mr. Joseph Bowman, of Melborne, gamekeeper to Sir Wm. Rumbold, Bart. has shot a white Snipe, a white Sparrow, a white Swallow, and an Osprey Eagle; the latter bird measured 5 feet 4 inches from tip to tip of the wings; —On the 30<sup>th</sup> June last a white Jackdaw with straw-coloured legs; and on the second instant was shot on the River Trent, opposite Weston Cliff, a black Swan, a native of New South Wales, and called “*Mulgo*” by the inhabitants. It is a remarkably fine bird, measuring 4 feet 2 inches from bill to tail, and 5 feet 6 inches from tip to tip of the wings; the pinions of which are white; the bill a fine red with the exception of a black spot at its extremity, and a narrow stripe of white just above it.—This latter bird is at present in the possession of Mr. Joseph Bowman.

Derby Mercury, 18 July 1821

A bird of the eagle kind, called the Osprey, was killed on Monday, in Stoke's Bay, by Mr. Jeans, son of the Rev. Dr. Jeans, of Egham, now residing at that place, measuring, from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail, two feet, and the expanse of the wings, five feet nine inches; the talons one inch, very crooked, sharp, and black, and the claws an inch and a half long. The head is dark brown, approaching to black, mixed with white; back, wings and tail dark brown, with the ends of the feathers white; the covert wing feathers white, some barred; inside of the wing dirty white, barred; belly quite white; throat like the head, rather whiter; bill black; the roots of the under mandible are greenish sky blue; thighs white; legs naked, and of a greenish sky blue; the eye is rather large, with a large circle of yellow. In shape it is somewhat like a goshawk: the bill, thick, strong and very crooked; the five outward wing feathers are of a good shape, but with a remarkable increase of size in the middle. The bird is remarkably fat for one of the rapacious kind; the legs are of immense size and strength, and though both its wings were broken, and hit in different parts of the body and head, yet no dog would venture in after it when it fell in the water.

Hampshire Chronicle, 10 September 1821

A few weeks ago, two fine specimens of the *Strix Buba* (Lin.) or Horned Eagle Owl, were presented by the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Albemarle, to the Rev. Robt. Hamond, of West Acre High House; and this week, the *Falco Haliaetus* (Lin.) or Osprey, was shot and sent to him, by Stafford O'Brien, Esq., of Blatherwycke Park, Northamptonshire, to add to his beautiful collection of stuffed birds.

Norfolk Chronicle, 27 April 1822

Saturday last a very fine Eagle, of the osprey kind, was shot in a wood of Sir Thomas Gooch's. at Benacre. Within a few years one eagle has been taken alive, and five eagles, and the same number of wild swans, shot on the same estate by the same gamekeeper.

*The Ipswich Journal, 15 February 1823*

On Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. as one of the gamekeepers of his Grace the Duke of Newcastle was on his usual perambulations, he observed a large body soaring in the air, which afterwards descended with great velocity to the surface of the water, as if intent upon its prey, and immediately it rose again, on which he shot at and killed it. When taken out of the lake, it proved to be an eagle, in natural history termed the Sea Eagle or Osprey: it measures from the tip of each wing, when extended, upwards of five feet, and from the beak to the tip of the tail two feet.

*Stamford Mercury, 30 September 1825*

A few days ago a beautiful bird of the osprey species was shot from the garden at Gateshead Park House, the mansion of Isaac Cookson, Esq. jun. From wing to wing it measured five feet eight inches.

*Windsor and Eton Express, 22 July 1826*

An osprey was lately shot at Shirley Manor, Hants

*Leicester Chronicle, 18 January 1827*

**At GARRAWAY'S COFFEE-HOUSE, CORNHILL,**  
**On FRIDAY, the 18th Inst. at Two precisely,**  
**THE FOLLOWING GOODS, Viz.**

<b>4 Cases West India Tortoiseshell</b>	
<b>3 Tons Cam Wood</b>	<b>243 Bags Saltpetre</b>
<b>50 Elephants Teeth</b>	<b>283 Cases Sago</b>
<b>3 Cases Ostrich Feathers</b>	<b>64 Bales Cinnamon</b>
<b>5 Ditto Comercolly Ditto</b>	<b>49 Bags Pepper Dust</b>
<b>3 Tons M. o-Pearl Shells</b>	<b>11 Mats Cloves</b>
<b>20 Ditto Sapan Wood</b>	<b>12 Casks Mace</b>
<b>36 Serons Guatemala Indigo</b>	<b>1 Cask Nutmegs</b>
<b>23 Barrels fine Tapioca</b>	<b>40 Casks Essence Spruce,</b>
<b>1 Box undressed Ospreys</b>	<b>Bankrupt's Effects</b>
<b>Feathers</b>	<b>39 Casks Gum Arabic</b>
<b>50 Chests Cassia Ligna</b>	<b>28 Bags Rice</b>

**Catalogues of which will be timely delivered by**  
**TUCKER, HUNTER and Co. Brokers, 39, Lime-street.**

A beautiful specimen of that rare bird, the grey Phalarope, was shot on Monday last, near the Exeter Lime Kilns, and is now in the possession of Mr. W.B. Tucker, naturalist, High-street. It is said that not more than five of these birds have ever been killed in this country.—Exeter Gazette.

A fine large specimen of the Osprey, or Sea Eagle, measuring more than five feet extent of wing, was shot a few days since on Kenton Warren, by Mr. Brutton, and is now in the collection of Mr. Comyns, at Mountpleasant.—*Ibid.*

London Courier and Evening Gazette, 7 October 1828

A large Osprey, or Sea Eagle, was shot on the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, a few miles from Cockermouth, by Mr. Wilson, of Birkbank. It measured 5 feet 4 inches between the tips of the wings, and is considered a very rare bird in this part of the country.

Cumberland Packet, and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser, 21 April 1829

A fine Osprey, or Sea Eagle, lately alighted on the mast of a casting vessel passing Flambrough head, and being nearly in a dying state, apparently from exhaustion, was easily captured. It was taken to Scarbro', where it was purchased by J. Tindall, Esq. and presented to the museum.

Hull Packet, 27 April 1830

A fine specimen of the Osprey, or Sea Eagle, (*Falco Haliaetus*, Lin.) was shot last week, near Shotley Bridge, by one of the gamekeepers of T. Walker, Esq. It measures in length two feet, and from tip to tip of the wings, five feet five inches; yet, notwithstanding its great size, the bird weighed only 3¼ lbs. When first observed, it was sitting on an old wall, looking down, as if in the act of watching mice.

Durham County Advertiser, 1 October 1830

### **The Fisherman's Hymn**

The Osprey sails above the Sound,  
The geese are gone, the gulls are flying;  
The herring shoals swarm thick around,  
The nets are launch'd, the boats are plying;  
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,  
Raise high the song, and cheerly wish her,  
Still as the bending net, we sweep,  
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

She brings us fish, she brings us spring,  
Good times, fair weather, warmth, and plenty,  
Fine store of shad, trout, herring, ling,  
Sheepshead and dram, and old-wives dainty.  
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,  
Ply every oar, and cheerly wish her,  
Still as the bending net we sweep,  
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

She rears her young on yonder tree,  
She leaves her faithful man to mind 'em;  
Like us, for fish she sails to sea,  
And plunging, shows us where to find 'em.  
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,  
Ply every oar, and cheerly wish her,  
Still as the bending net we sweep,  
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

Caledonian Mercury, 30 May 1831

A fine specimen of the Fish Hawk, or Osprey, (*Falco Haliaetus*, Lin.) was shot a few days ago by Mr. B. Greenshields, near Crow Trees, in this county, and is now in the possession of Mr Wm Proctor, of this city, for preservation. This bird has rarely been met with in Durham, and has seldom been seen so far inland.—The bird in question is a female, and of extraordinary size, being 5 feet 4½ inches in extent, greater by 1½ inch than that allotted to the Fish Hawk, by Wilson, the American Ornithologist.

Durham County Advertiser, *11 May 1832*

**OSPREY, OR SEA EAGLE.**—A few days ago, Mr. Bridge, churchwarden and farmer, of Pilsworth, shot an Osprey, or Sea Eagle, in one of his fields, which is now being stuffed. Its expanded wing measures five feet seven inches; from head to tail twenty-two inches. It had in its crop, when killed, a fish, weighing six ounces and a half.

Manchester Courier, *26 May 1838*

**On the 30<sup>th</sup> ult., a fine specimen of the Osprey or Sea Eagle was shot in Littlecot Woods in this county, measuring from tip to tip of the wings, 5 feet 4 inches.**

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, *6 October 1842*

**SHOOTING AN OSPREY OR SEA EAGLE, NEAR HAMPTON.**—As a party of gentlemen were fishing during the week in the river Thames, near Hampton, they observed a bird of extraordinary size flying about, and frequently seizing a quantity of fish, which it appeared to devour with great voracity. One of the gentlemen landed, and having procured from a friend of his a fowling piece, charged it with swan shot, and re-entered the boat with his friends, the monster bird still flying, sometimes over them, and at others close to the shore. At last an opportunity offered, and the gentlemen fired at the bird, shooting it in the breast. On being got into the boat it proved to be an osprey, or sea eagle, of immense dimensions. This species of bird is most destructive to fish; it is equal to a turkey in size. The osprey is seldom seen near fresh water in this country, and it is upwards of twenty years since one was killed on the river Thames.



**WILD FOWL.**—It is remarkable that a greater number of strange wild fowl, some aquatic and some land birds, have visited this neighbourhood than has been known for a great number of years past. The osprey or fishing-eagle is one of these rarities. We likewise saw the other day a specimen of the goose genus of an unusual description; a pair of these birds were noticed in the waters about Beeston and Clifton, and were very much sought after for several days by the sportsmen in the vicinity; the one we saw, the last of the unfortunate pair, was shot at the back of Clifton-hall. Almost all the birds of which we have made allusion are understood to be natives of high northern latitudes. Their presence here, therefore, would imply that the winter has set in those regions with unusual severity.—*Notts Mercury*

Evening Mail, 14 January 1850

**EAGLES AND HAWKS.**—There are four varieties of our largest and most-prized hawks now almost extirpated from their ancient haunts in the north of Scotland, viz., the salmon-tailed kite, the osprey, the gyr-falcon, and the goshawk. Of the latter only one has been seen here during more than ten years; it was trapped about a fortnight ago, by the gamekeeper at Doune of Rothiemurchus, and will, no doubt, be a rare addition to the collected varieties of the Museum. In the palmy times of falconry the peregrine-falcon and goshawk were the favourite birds trained for the sport. In the reign of Edward the Third, it was felony to steal a hawk, and to take its eggs was punishable with imprisonment for a year and a day. But the days of falconry have passed away, and high prices are now given for the dead birds, or for their eggs, to stock museums, and add to the stock of scientific knowledge. The eagles, it is to be feared, are likewise fast wearing out; it is only a wonder they are not extinct. Some time ago, we ventured to plead for the remnant of these noble creatures, and we are glad to learn, that more than one party who rents deer forests, have given orders that the vermin traps shall no longer bind them like felons. If they are to be killed, let the rifle bullet deal with them as with red deer, giving the sportsman a shot worthy of his aim, and the bird either an honourable death, or entire escape. Three full-grown eagles—one the golden the others sea-eagles—were trapped, in course of a fortnight, on one shooting; two of them bore certain marks of having, before their final capture, escaped from the iron jaws of vermin traps. One of these splendid birds measured 7½ ft., and weighed 12 lbs.

Inverness Courier, 25 April 1850

A fine specimen of the Osprey, or Sea Eagle, was shot on Tuesday last, near Hartley, measuring 5½ feet from tip to tip of the wings. It is now in the possession of Mr James Pape, Collingwood-street.

Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury, 4 May 1850

#### KELSO

On Monday last a very fine specimen of the Osprey, or Fishing Hawk, was shot by James Wood, gamekeeper to his Grace the Duke of Roxburghe, in front of Floors Castle. The bird was observed hovering over the Tweed, apparently in search of its prey, by the gamekeeper, who, the better to watch its motions, concealed himself under a tree, when the hawk suddenly made a circuit, and, coming directly over the place, received the contents of his fowling piece, and was carried in triumph to the Castle.

The Marquis of Bowmont gave orders that the bird be taken to Mr. Heckford, Kelso, for preservation, with the view of being added to the extensive collection of British birds at Floors Castle. The bird measured 5 feet 7 inches across the wings, and is allowed to be one of the finest specimens ever seen in this country.

Since the above was in types we understand that the male bird was killed on the following day by William Kyle, gamekeeper to Lord John Scott at Stitchill, on the banks of the Tweed, near to Makerstoun House. A trout of considerable size was found in its stomach almost entire. The bill was covered with the blood and scales of its victim, indicating that the work of destruction had only recently been performed. Like all birds of prey the male is considerably smaller than the female and its wings, when extended, was found to measure 5 feet 2 inches, being 5 inches less than those of the female; its weight was 3 lbs 4 oz., while that of the female was 3 lbs 12 oz. The same bird had been noticed by Lord Polwarth's gamekeeper on the same day but although he kept in view of it for a considerable time, it never came in range of his fowling piece.

Both birds are remarkably fine specimens, and are now in the possession of Mr. Heckford for preservation.

Kelso Chronicle, 31 May 1850

**ORNITHOLOGY**—A few days since a cream-coloured swallow was shot by Mr. James Thirtle, of this town. An excellent specimen of the Osprey, or Sea-Eagle, was shot on the grounds of C. Steward, Esq., of Blundeston. Both birds are being preserved by Mr. Thirtle.

Norfolk News, 26 October 1850

## THE OSPREY.

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MR EDITOR: During a residence of some years at Bonar Bridge, in this county, I was in the habit of making an annual tour round the western coast of Sutherlandshire, both for the purpose of enjoying the beauties of its wold scenery, of collecting rare birds and their eggs, and of angling in the different streams and lochs. Equipped with my rod and gun, and a large fishing creel for holding the various specimens of birds and their eggs which good luck might throw in my way: depending on neither horse, railway, or steamer, but on my "trotters" alone, walking along the roads, rough or smooth as they might be, climbing hills, where I thought there was a chance of finding any rarity, trying the streams or the loch sides, if I saw them in order, I travelled for several days, lodging one night in a shepherd's hut, another in a cattle booth, a third by some lone loch side, or perchance on the top of some high mountain.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1844, I set out on one of my accustomed tours, proceeding from Bonar Bridge to Lairg, and thence six miles along the banks of Loch Shin to Sheiness, where I passed the day searching for the eggs of the bean goose and also of the green shanks, but with little success, having found but one nest of the former. Lodging that night at Sheiness, I took an early start next morning up Loch Shin, which is 18 miles in length.

A bean goose and a black throated diver were all my sport that day. I visited Loch Tuigh, being informed that a white tailed eagle had built its nest in an island in that loch, but found nothing of the kind; but trying my hand at angling on the river which runs out of it, I secured a very fine dish of trout in a very short space of time, and might have taken a vast number more had I continued the sport for a longer period. Then crossing the hill, I arrived at a shepherd's cot, where I remained that night as comfortable as if I had been housed in the best inn in this country. Having taken an early breakfast, I started next morning for Ben Hie, a very lofty mountain, as its name in the Gaelic tongue implies, and searched its summit for a pair of ptarmigans, wishing to secure a specimen of these birds for my museum, in their summer "dress", and spent several hours in quest of their eggs, which are most difficult to find, owing to their nests being placed in a small hollow among certain stones, to which they bear a great resemblance in size and colour; my search however proved unsuccessful. The day being now far spent, I was compelled to descend from the mountain as speedily as possible, and travelling for some miles a large bleak moor, I saw several herds of fine red deer on each side of me, but which seemed, comparatively speaking, to be very tame. Soon after commencing my lonely track across the moor, a dense fog came on, surrounding me so entirely, that I could not see any object around me, and was thus compelled to wander for miles through the mist. Night coming on, I saw that I must pass it in the open air; fortunately I had plenty of provisions and whiskey in my basket, so looking out for a dry, sheltered place, I sat myself down and ate heartily. It now being quite dark, I rolled myself up in my water-proof, and slept well for three hours. Awaking very cold at break of day, I found the mist still very thick, and knew not which way to turn; however the sun soon showed his face, and the fog clearing off, I soon discovered my whereabouts, and commenced my second day's journey, by running down the hill side, in order to circulate my blood, and warm my frozen limbs. I soon arrived at a shepherd's house, where I found every hospitality. After a hearty breakfast of bread and milk, I pursued my journey, and found myself in the evening seated in the very comfortable inn of Scourie. Here I first heard that a bird, locally called "The Fisher" had built his nest for several seasons on an island in a fresh water loch about four miles off. I at once supposed it might be the osprey, and determined on going thither next morning. Taking a lad, of the name of Hugh, To pilot me to the place, we started about noon to ascertain the fact. On coming in sight of the loch, I was much gratified to find my suspicions well founded. One of the birds was soaring high in the air, the other sitting on the nest, which was placed on a conical rock, about 100 yards from the shore. I at once determined to obtain both the birds, and their eggs, if practicable, as I had neither in my collection.

I could then have easily swam to the nest and taken the eggs, but how to get the old birds I knew not, as they kept out of gun shot. I watched the old birds for several hours, in the hopes of securing one of them at least, but did not succeed. Returning to Scourie Inn for the night, and hoping to get a small boat next morning, so as to reach the nest, and trap the hen bird, but found I could not procure one small enough for that purpose; I thought of trying a washing tub, and asked the landlady the loan of one. She refused however, assigning as a reason that she was unwilling to have a hand in my death, as I should assuredly be drowned if I ventured; indeed I must confess she showed more discretion in refusing than I in asking the favour. Next I thought of a raft, but then where was the wood to be obtained? At length, finding that some was to be obtained at Badcall, belonging to the free church contractor, and having got permission to use some portion for my raft, I sent my man Hugh for a horse and cart, ordering him to take a few stout planks to within half a mile of the loch side, the cart not being able to get nearer, owing to the rocky approaches to the water side. We had then to shoulder as many planks as we could carry, and at length, after many a rest, and weary "go again", we got the wood to the water, and having quickly erected a raft in the shallow water, we towed it into deeper, and I at once jumped on it. But, oh! judge my horror when down it sank with me, immersing me over head and ears. Scrambling out the best way I could, and drenched all over, I discovered at once that it would require at least double the quantity of planks and deal to support my weight, placed as they were, so far apart. Being now wet, I was determined to reach the nest by swimming, and stripping "to the buff", plunged in, and reaching the nest, found it to contain three beautiful eggs. I saw that if I had a gun, I could get a shot at one of the old birds, who became very much alarmed when they found me on their hitherto unmolested property. I was, however, obliged to remain contented with a couple of their eggs, with which I soon reached the shore, having secured them safely in my cap.

I reached my lodging much pleased with the capture of the eggs, but not altogether satisfied without possessing the ospreys. After dining, and sitting with a glass of smoking "toddy", my henchman, Hugh, came into the room, saying that he had hit upon a plan to get over to the island, and suggested that we should get four buoys, such as are used for herring nets, which would amply sustain our raft. "A good plan, Hugh," said I; and giving him a glass of punch for his invention, I desired him to bring them to me by seven o'clock the next morning. Accordingly, at that hour we sallied forth. Hugh making his appearance with four dog skins, blown out with air. On visiting the island, we found the ospreys as before, one sitting on the nest, while the other soared high in the air, keeping a sharp look-out. I had the good luck to shoot one of the ospreys as he sailed over my head; the other however got much alarmed, and kept far out of danger; on searching the nest we found the egg we had left there the night before; so obtaining from the hostess at the little inn, an old rat-trap, we removed the egg, and covering the trap neatly over with the dry grass, and moss, of which the nest was formed, placed the egg on top of the gin, and returning to the shore, retired behind a hillock to await patiently the result of our stratagem; in a short time the other bird was secured in the trap, but some how or other, when we had approached to within a few yards of the nest, the captive once more managed to get himself free, destroying the egg in his endeavours to escape. I was of course somewhat disappointed at this, though glad enough to have secured one of the birds.

The two eggs and the osprey cost me three days of hard work, besides a fair allowance of wages to Hugh for his own and his horse's service. I had the specimen preserved, which proved to be a very fine female bird, and when on a tour with Mr St John, the author of the "Highland Sports", I procured a very fine male bird. This he omits in his tour book through Sutherlandshire, but which capture I will now relate. When on our way from Scourie to Innch na damph, Mr St John and myself observed on the old castle a white bird, which we thought was a seagull, but which, on a nearer view, proved to be an osprey; we drove to the inn, and having taken the horses out of our vehicle, I took my gun, leaving Mr St John at the inn, to await the arrival of the Duke of Sutherland, as his grace was hourly expected. On reaching the ruins, which were about a mile and a half distant, I could discover nothing of the osprey, and thought of waiting a little time, in the hope that the bird might again return to his resting place, and sat down beside a large stone. The sun shone very bright, and not a cloud was to be seen.

I had almost fallen asleep with fatigue, when I observed on the ground before me the shadow of some large bird, and looking forth from my hiding place, I saw “my friend the osprey”, soaring about twenty yards above my head. I instantly discharged both barrels, right and left, but he flew away, seemingly unhurt. I watched him with much disappointment, until he had flown to the centre of the loch, when he gave a twirl or two, and came down like a stone. I now hurried to the inn, and harnessing a horse to the oat, which Mr St John describes in his tour, drove to the loch, launched the boat, and soon secured my floating prize.

Year after year, I have been fortunate enough in procuring eggs of this rare bird. All the nests were placed in similar situations on islands, or conically shaped rocks on fresh water lochs, varying in distance from the shore from 100 to 500 yards.

The osprey feeds entirely on fish, which it finds in great plenty in the fresh water streams and lochs, with which this country abounds. When in search of food it soars very high in the air, similarly to the golden eagle and the kestrel hawk, or kite, and skimming along the stream or loch, until its attention is arrested by the appearance of its prey, when it hovers over the water, balancing itself for a moment, descends gradually to the surface of the water, when it again becomes motionless; and suspended, as if to make more sure of its aim, it rapidly darts with closed wings, and plunging into the stream, raising a great spray, carries off its prey, flying with it either to devour it on some lone rock, or to its young. All the eyries which I have examined were similarly located, with the exception of one which I found on a tree in an island in Lochmadie, near Altnaharrow. The nest is an immense fabric of sticks, varying in size from a stout walking stick to a stump of rotten heather, and is occupied year after year, and should one bird be shot, the survivor soon finds a mate; and I am inclined to think that the remaining bird crosses the Atlantic in search of a companion.

The osprey is migratory, arriving here the first week in April, and leaving us in September. I have shot an osprey on the nest, and gone in search of the other bird some days after, and in ten days have found the remaining bird had gotten himself a companion.

America seems to be the strong hold of this fine bird; and on one island called Long Island, in the state of New York, upwards of two hundred nests were counted. There they rear their young in perfect security, living as peaceably as any community of rooks. The osprey is also found in Norway, Russia, Siberia, and in the north of Asia. The eggs of the osprey are about the size of the common hen, rather more round, colour white, beautifully variegated with large blotches of rusty brown. Many people confound the osprey with the great sea eagle, *falco albicilla*, but the former is not more than one-third of the latter in size, living exclusively on fish, while the sea eagle devours indiscriminately both fish and carrion. The old birds are much lighter than their young in plumage; an adult ♂ now before me measures 25 inches in length, and 49 inches from tip to tip of the wings; the bill is black, and hooked; the feathers on the back of the head are white, forming a crest; those on the neck are brown, under the wings they are darker, and when closed, reach nearly an inch longer than the tail; the back is the same colour as the wings; the under wing feathers are white, barred with a darker brown; the legs are short, and of a blue colour; the claws are also blue, and very rough underneath, seemingly adapted for seizing slippery fish. I may here mention that I have taken many specimen's of the osprey's eggs, which varied very much in their colouring, some resembling those of the razor bill, but rounder and shorter.

I travelled with Mr St John in his tour through Sutherlandshire, and got up the boat conveyance, exclusively at my own expense, rendering him every assistance in my power, paying an equal share of all the expenses, yet—strange to say—though I had reason to expect more, he did not so much as send me a copy of his book. I would fain hope that such an unaccountable omission on his part was attributable to inadvertence, and not to any wilful or ungrateful neglect.

I am, &c, &c.

Loch Inver

WILLIAM DUNBAR



**Red Grouse** – The geographical distribution of the red grouse being strictly limited to these islands, it is more exclusively a British bird than any kind of feathered game of which we can boast, all the others being dispersed over different parts of the continent of Europe. But as this exists in Ireland, Wales, and in the North of England, as well as in Scotland, its specific appellation *Scoticus* is hardly correct; and it has been suggested, with reason, that *Britannicus* would be a more appropriate epithet. Being essentially a denizen of the wild heathery mountain and moor, it recedes invariably before the face of civilization, and may be said, at the present day, to be extinct in the South of England, very scarce in the central portion, Staffordshire and Derbyshire being probably its southern limit, and although still found in tolerable numbers on the moors of Yorkshire, yet it is of less frequent occurrence there than it was a few years ago, when Lord Strathmore's keeper shot forty-three brace before two o'clock in the afternoon, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August. The great stronghold of the species is of course the Highlands of Scotland, where its preservation is carried to such an extent, and the rights of shooting let at such high rents, that in spite of the annual slaughter during the first three weeks of the season, far surpassing in this respect even the battue of the southron, there appears to be no immediate prospect of its extermination or even material reduction, although, speaking as a naturalist, rather than a sportsman, it cannot be but a matter of regret that the excessive protection of the grouse involves the indiscriminate slaughter of so many interesting birds and quadrupeds now becoming exceedingly rare amongst us. Subjoined is a list of 'vermin' (?) destroyed on the celebrated Highland property of Glengarry, between Whitsuntide 1837 and Whitsuntide 1840, previous to the purchase of the estate by Lord Ward. The slaughter was carried into effect by numerous keepers, who received not only liberal wages but extra rewards, varying from £3 to £5, according to their success in the work of extermination. The ornithologist will be a little puzzled by the titles given to some of the *Raptores*, but the names and epithets applied to the greater number of them are nevertheless unusually clear and appropriate, and will leave no doubt on his mind as to the identity of many of the rarer victims. I will only add that I have received this 'black list' from the hands of the gentleman himself, who was the lessee of the shooting at the time, and by whose orders the execution took place. Although a good sportsman and an excellent shot, it must be admitted that his zeal as a preserver of game far outstripped his sympathies with other animals: -

11 foxes	198 wild cats
246 martin cats	106 polecats
301 stoats and weasels	67 badgers
48 otters	78 house cats going wild
27 white-tailed sea eagles	15 golden eagles
18 osprey or fishing eagles	98 blue hawks or peregrine falcons
275 kites, commonly called salmon-tail gledes	
5 marsh harriers or yellow-legged hawks	63 goshawks
7 orange-legged falcons	11 hobby hawks
285 common buzzards	371 rough-legged buzzards
3 honey buzzards	462 kestrels or red hawks
78 merlin hawks	83 hen harriers or ring-tailed hawks
9 ash-coloured hawks or long blue-tailed ditto	8 magpie
6 jer-falcon toe-feathered hawks,	1431 hooded or carrion crows
475 ravens	35 horned owls
71 common fern owls	3 golden owls

- *Game birds and Wild Fowl*

Newcastle Courant, 18 July 1851  
(also in Glasgow Herald, 15 August 1853)

A very fine osprey eagle was captured by Mr. Gent, game-keeper to the Earl of Harborough, at Stapleford, on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. It measured 7½ feet from tip to tip of the wings, 3 feet from head to tail, weighs 10½ lbs, its bill is 3 inches long and 1 inch deep, and stands 2 feet high; it is of a dark brown colour, spotted with black.

Stamford Mercury, 17 November 1854

**RARA AVIS.**—A very specimen of the Osprey, Leaden Eagle or Fishing Hawk, was killed last week by William Haycock, head gamekeeper to William Sparling, Esq., Petton Hall, in this county; it is a most beautiful specimen of this rare bird. It was taken in a trap stuck upon a pole in the middle of a large pool. It is now in the possession of Mr. H. Shaw, of Shrewsbury, the well-known animal and bird preserver, where the specimen can be seen by the curious. It made a most desperate resistance in being taken from the trap, and measured five feet from wing to wing.

Eddowe's Journal and General Advertiser for Shropshire  
& the Principality of Wales  
6 May 1857

An osprey, or fish eagle, was shot at Torquay last Friday, and may be seen at Mr. Shapland's, Higher Union-street in that town.

Western Times, 7 November 1857

**WILD FOWL,** —We have before alluded to the various description of wild fowl which have recently been shot at Misson—wild ducks, widgeon, the solitary snipe, the spotted crake, &c. A fine specimen of the osprey, or sea-eagle, was brought down during the spring floods, and has been preserved by Mr. John Brown, of the above place. It was shot by John Capil from his punt boat and gun; but not before he had made many attempts at stalking. At length, however, he managed to get within range, under cover of a fence. It was perched on a gate post, feeding on the river fish. On being secured, it fixed its talons on Capil's shooting dress, and was not removed without difficulty. From tip to tip of the wings it measured five feet, and is considered a fine specimen. Mr. Brown has now a choice collection, to which more interest is attached from its circumstance than its rarer sorts have been shot in the vicinity. We understand he is preparing a catalogue of rare birds shot in Misson alone during the last ten years. He has acquired much reputation from the natural way in which he fixes his specimens, which are remarkably life-like in attitude and expression.

Nottinghamshire Guardian, 31 December 1857

A fine specimen of the honey buzzard has been shot on the wing, and captured near the Ballast Hills, South Shields. A large osprey, or sea eagle, has also been caught in the Tyne.

Exeter Flying Post, 30 September 1858

THE OSPREY OR SEA EAGLE.—On Tuesday last, a very beautiful full-grown specimen of the osprey was captured at Sunderlandwick, near Driffield, by G.H. Reynard, Esq., who brought the bird to Scarborough, where it has been stuffed by Mr. Roberts, curator at the museum. Mr. Reynard, while angling in the stream, observed the bird hovering about, and immediately endeavoured to capture it. He set a snare which was soon taken by the bird. When caught it had a portion of a trout in its talons. It is a female specimen; and Mr. Reynard thinks it probable that it might have had a nest in the vicinity.

Hull Advertiser and Exchange Gazette, 25 June 1859

#### **SWAFFHAM.**

THE OSPREY.—A fine bird of the osprey, or sea eagle, species has lately been shot on the estate of Mr. E. Oldfield, of Foulden, in this county. It measured upwards of five feet from the tip of its wings, and is a very fine bird. It may be seen, as we learn, at Mr. F. Goodbody's, bird-stuffer, London-street, Swaffham.

Norfolk News, 22 October 1859

A few days ago, there was shot at Tynemouth, by Mr. Joseph Bell, a large osprey-eagle, measuring 5 feet 6 inches from tip to tip. The eagle has since been stuffed by Mr. Smith, Collingwood-street, Newcastle, and it is now on view at Mr. Cowey's, Tynemouth Priory, Tynemouth.

Shields Daily Gazette, 7 November 1859

A beautiful specimen of the osprey, or sea eagle, was shot at Chargot Lodge, Dunster, Somerset, last week, by George Hole, keeper to the Rev. Gerard Carew.

Dorset County Chronicle, 17 November 1859

AN OSPREY OR FISH EAGLE SHOT.—One of these rare birds, in beautiful condition, was shot a few days ago, near Brook station, on the Lancaster and Carlisle railway. It measured 5 feet 5 inches between the tips of the wings. It has been sent to Mr. Harrop, Manchester, to be preserved.

Whitehaven News, 6 June 1861

HAYLE—*An Osprey Eagle Shot.*—On Saturday an eagle was shot by Mr. J. Burgoss on the Trowans, Hayle. It measures 5 ft. 4 in. from tip to tip of the wings, and stands 2 feet high. It had in its claws a bass when it was shot.

Launceston Weekly News, 24 October 1863

A very fine specimen of the osprey or fishing-eagle (*Falco Haliaetus*, Linnaeus), a female in full plumage, was shot one day last week by the captain of a coasting vessel, near the Kingerloch shore. The noble bird—for every falcon is noble by right of birth, like the pure Spanish Hidalgo *de sangre*, as distinguished from the Hildalgo *de privilegio*,—this noble bird, then, was slowly hunting, as is its wont, from shore to shore of the Linnhe Loch, and having, unfortunately for itself, attracted the attention of those on board the sloop, it was shot while, probably pressed by hunger to unusual boldness, it was rising from the sea, at less than fifty yards distance, after an unsuccessful swoop at a fish which had observed the downward rush of the fierce sea empress in time to escape her otherwise inevitable talons. The killing of the poor bird, be it observed, was a piece of deliberate mischief, for living, it was doing no one any harm, and, dead, could be of no possible use to its destroyers. When we hear of a bird thus wantonly killed, we are tempted to wish the heartless culprit the fate of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner", who dreed that dreadful weird for having with his cross-bow so thoughtlessly shot the albatross. This bird was too much mutilated by the shot and otherwise injured for preservation, otherwise it would have been a very fine and valuable specimen. To show that the osprey was heretofore reckoned to belong not to the *estado comun*, as the Spaniards have it, of the more ignoble hawks, kites and vultures; but to the true and nobler order of falcons proper, we find that by a statute of William and Mary, people were prohibited from taking salmon at certain seasons of the year "by *hawks*, racks or gins." There is no hawk or falcon of any other kind that *could* be trained to such sport but the osprey, which therefore must be ranked in dignity along with its congeners the peregrines and the other hawks, "noble" and "gentle" used in falconry, once the favourite sport and pastime of the princes and the nobles of the land.

Inverness Courier, 10 December 1863.

A RARE BIRD.—A few days ago an Osprey or Sea-Eagle, measuring four feet from tip to tip of its wings, was shot at Tent's Muir, Scotland.

Hereford Times, 14 February 1863

An osprey of the eagle species, of an enormous size, was killed on Friday, the 11<sup>th</sup> instant, by Mr. Griffith Thomas, gamekeeper to Mr. Henry Robertson, M.P., Crogen, in a cover belonging to the Earl of Dudley, adjoining the Berwyr mountain. He measured across the wings seven feet four inches, and weighed between twelve and thirteen pounds.

Staffordshire Advertiser, 26 March 1864

HOW RARE BIRDS ARE MADE RARER.—A fine specimen of the osprey eagle was brought to Admiral Mitford, which had been caught on board a fishing yawl off Flamborough Head. It appears to have been exhausted, and alighted upon the mast of the boat. A boy on board climbed up and took it by the leg, and brought it on the deck. It seized the boy by the hand, which its talons pierced very severely, when, in defence, he took the bird by the throat, which caused it to relinquish its hold, but not until it was dead, otherwise this fine specimen might have been preserved alive. This bird is now being stuffed for Admiral Mitford.

Hereford Times, 29 October 1864

ORNITHOLOGY.—A fine specimen of the osprey, or fishing eagle, was shot in the estuary of the Exe by Mr. John Seward, poulterer, Exeter, on Wednesday. It measures from tip to tip of the wings 5ft 6in. It is in the possession of Mr. James Truscott, naturalist, 2, Bartholomew-street, to be preserved, where it can be seen.

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 6 October 1865

An osprey or sea eagle was shot at the lake at Swinfen Hall on Saturday last, by Mr Swinfen Broun's keeper, John Rock. The bird had been observed for some days at the lake, fishing all day and roosting upon one of the islands. On Friday Mr Swinfen Broun was unsuccessful in getting a shot at him, but on Saturday his keeper got him in a storm of wind and rain. He measures 5 feet 5 inches from tip to tip of wing, and two feet from beak to end of tail. A short time before he was shot he was observed with a fish, and on being fired at he dropped it; it was a perch, 1lb 4oz. in weight. He afterwards seized a small pike and was shot when eating it. His plumage is in splendid condition, and he is a fine specimen of the fishing eagle.

Staffordshire Advertiser, 31 March 1866



A fine specimen of the Osprey, or Sea Eagle, was shot last Wednesday at Havant.

Brighton Guardian, 31 October 1866

FILEY—AN EAGLE SHOT.—On Tuesday, whilst with Mr. Richard Lorriman, feather preserver, was, with his gun, walking along the sands towards “Filey Brigg”, he saw a large bird approaching him. He at once crept into a crevice of the cliff, and, on its coming within shot, he fired and brought it down. The bird proved to be a splendid specimen of the Osprey or Fish Eagle, which, from tip to tip of wing, measured 5ft. 6in., and from beak to tail 2ft. 2in. Mt Lorriman has placed it in the hands of Mr. Winson, bird stuffer, for the purposes of being stuffed.

Shields Daily News, 16 May 1867

#### NEWPORT

AN EAGLE OR SEA EAGLE.—During the week an unusually large and uncommon bird has been seen flying in the evening about the river at New Bridge, Forton, and on Thursday last week a bird answering the same description was shot at Messrs. Paddock’s, Caynton Mills. One of the millers had previously seen the bird hovering over the stream in the meadows. He at first supposed it to be a heron, but on its coming nearer he discovered that it was a much larger species. It was flying rapidly at a height of about 80 or 100 feet, and when within about 100 yards of the mill it suddenly stopped, and for a moment hovered over the river, when like an arrow it darted into the stream and seized in its talon a large white fish of about 1lb. in weight. It rose again quickly and seemed to shake itself like a dog after immersion. It then flew away in the direction of Caynton Cottage. The gamekeeper of the state (John Minshall), being informed of the unwanted visit, went in search of the bird with his gun, and after some time saw it perching on some rail fencing, devouring the fish it had taken. When within about 80 yards from it, it saw him and flew off. He fired one barrel apparently without success. The wind was blowing almost a hurricane from the direction it was taking, causing it to change its course, and brought it back almost over the keeper’s head. He again fired, and although the bird was (he considered) 100 yards high, a shot took effect, striking the head of the bird, and bringing it down almost at his feet. Mr Shaw, of Shrewsbury, has instructions to stuff the bird, and has plans to display the bird with its wings extended, and in the act of preying on a fish. It is an osprey or sea eagle, or, as it sometimes called, a fishing hawk.

Staffordshire Advertiser, 21 September 1867

Last week a splendid osprey, a bird of the eagle tribe, was shot at Littlehampton, on the coast of Sussex. It had just been fishing, and had a bass 1lb weight in his mouth, scarcely dead.

Durham County Advertiser, 27 September 1867

A RARE BIRD.—On Saturday evening a very fine specimen of the Osprey or Sea Eagle (*Padion haliaetus*, of Savigny), was shot at Bishop's Cleeve, by a man named Charles Holmes. The bird measured full 5ft. 7in. across the wings. There is no record of a specimen of the same bird having been shot before in Gloucestershire, though there are records of specimens being secured in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Somersetshire. The Osprey is entirely a fish-eating bird, and its presence at Bishop's Cleeve is the more remarkable. The bird has been taken to Mr. White's, St. Luke's, Cheltenham, to be stuffed.

Gloucester Journal, 26 September 1868

#### NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY'S EVENING MEETING

The third winter evening meeting of the season was held last night in the Museum, Westgate Street, and was numerously attended. Dr Charlton occupied the chair; and introduced the Rev. H.B. Tristram, LL.D., F.R.S., who had been announced to deliver an address "on some birds in the Society's Museum."

...

There were birds of three kinds, the vagrants, the migrants and the emigrants; and all were well represented in that museum. He himself had found the peregrine falcon, the true kite, the common bustard, and the raven in the Cheviots, where they were now extinct. These birds had become extirpated, not through the extension of civilisation, but through the ignorance of civilisation. He spoke of the mistaken notions as to the habits of birds which led to their destruction by gamekeepers and others; and said that he hoped the bill for the preservation of sea-birds which passed the Houses of Parliament last year would be followed by a bill to preserve other birds which require protection just as much. The falcon, the osprey, the golden eagle, might be again as common as they used to be without interfering with the food of man. We were destroying the balance of nature. What they wanted was not to prevent people shooting, but to give the birds three months' rest in the spring of every year, at the time when the maternal instinct completely annihilated the sense of fear. They wished to respect that God implanted maternal instinct. They wanted to bring back the oldest game law in the world—that given to Moses on Mount Sinai—"Thou shalt not take the dam with its young." He next spoke of some of the facts of migration, and said it was not so much temperature that was the cause of birds migrating as food.

Newcastle Journal, 18 February 1870

RARA AVIS.—A few days since a very fine osprey eagle was shot at Heveningham Hall Lakes by Mr. Tracy, gamekeeper to Lord Huntingfield. The bird was evidently in search of fish, as it was hovering over the lakes, and measured from tip to tip 5ft. 2in. These birds are very rare in this part, and it is the second one that Tracy has killed within the last 20 years. The bird was sent to town to his lordship for preservation.

The Ipswich Journal, 19 June 1877

#### RARE BIRDS

The Rev. R.O. Morris, writing to the *Times* on his favourite subject, the protection of birds, says:—Our native British birds are now more or less sufficiently protected. In time, and before long, I hope that all may be done that those who have a natural love for them can reasonably wish, or, at all events, expect. If they had not the aegis of the protection of the recent Acts of Parliament extended over them, there need be no doubt but that some kinds would very speedily have been exterminated before now, and been seen among us no more. But something should be done on behalf of several yearly or occasional visitors to our shores, who come indeed to us, but never return again whence they came. That would not matter if they were allowed to live here, to build their nests, and to rear their young, and so become naturalised among us, as beyond all doubt some of them would, if not thus destroyed. They are, too, at least a few of them, birds of singularly elegant or beautiful plumage, such as the hoopoe, the bluebreast, the golden oriole, the roller, and the bee-eater, and would, therefore, be a great ornament to our woods and fields, the last-named being of resplendent tropical hues.

What I should like to see, and this is what I write for, would be an Act of Parliament to prohibit absolutely the shooting or destroying of certain rare birds, whether indigenous or residents, under a heavy penalty, their names, of course, being set forth in the Act, with whatever synonyms they may be known by. I am continually receiving or reading accounts of the ruthless manner in which all rare birds are shot, the pleasure that many would take in seeing them alive being sacrificed to that of the few persons who shoot them for the gratification of their own.

Western Daily Press, 1 December 1877

A RARE BIRD.—A beautiful specimen of the Osprey or River Eagle was shot on Staines Moor last week. The bird's wings from tip to tip measured 5ft. 6in., and its weight 4lb. 6oz.

Reading Mercury, 1 June 1878

## EAGLES IN SCOTLAND

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The osprey, or fishing eagle, is, it is satisfactory to learn, still protected and cherished in more than one part of Scotland, after having been driven from most of its ancient haunts by the inquisitiveness or the cruelty of men. This most harmless of birds of prey used to frequent a small lake in Ross-shire called after the bird Loch-an-Jasgair—that is, the Loch of the Fisher. The lake is a short way north of the well-known and beautiful Loch Maree; and the osprey's nest rested on the top of a steep rock rising from the middle of the lake till 1851, when the eggs were taken and the birds scared by the servants of a noble but acquisitive scientist. Loch Maree itself was till recently a home of the osprey. On one of the largest islands in Loch Maree there is a lakelet, and in the lakelet there is an islet, and on the islet there is a fir-tree, whereon for years a pair of ospreys sojourned every alternate summer, occupying in the intervening seasons another nest on a promontory on the north shore of the lake. In 1853, a shooting tenant at Poolewe shot one of the birds in very wantonness, and its mate was soon afterwards caught, having had one of its wings broken. No osprey has been seen on Loch Maree for a quarter of a century. The osprey used also to be found on the island of Rune, south of Skye, and on the shores of Loch Shiel, in the south of Inverness, one of its chosen sites being the top of the monument which marks the spot in Glenfinnan, where Prince Charlie raised his standard in 1745. In these places also the osprey is now unknown—as extinct as the Jacobitism to which it did so much honour. It has hitherto been supposed that Loch-an-Eilan, in the east of Inverness-shire, was the only place in Scotland which the bird now regularly frequented. But a naturalist writing in the Scotsman this week mentions the important fact that there is a very old haunt of the osprey on another part of the mainland of Inverness—"in a lonely spot, far from human habitation, unguarded except by an occasional gamekeeper."

Shields Daily Gazette, 22 August 1879

KIRKWALL.—*Osprey Shot*.—A fine specimen of the osprey or sea eagle (*Heliaetus albicilla*) was shot at Veira, Orkney, the other day, and brought to Kirkwall. The bird measured 6ft. 6in. from tip to tip of wings; tail, 1 foot long; and from bill to tip of tail, 2ft. 10in. The outer quills of the wings were 2ft. in length.

Glasgow Herald, 30 December 1880

THE OSPREY IN THE HIGHLANDS.—The heartless unscrupulousness of bird and egg collectors, with their utterly selfish greed for personal possession, which is increased by the rarity of the coveted object, is incredible. I know of one authentic case, not a year old, in which a keeper was offered £10 for the osprey, whether as egg, eagle or eaglet, living or dead, by a fellow from the south—for he is a miserable fellow, be he rich or poor, scientist or trader in scientific trinkets, that would thus seek to extinguish for ever in our land, even from our wildest Highland glens, such a rare and interesting race. It is only simple justice to add that the temptation was resisted, though it might have been yielded to with small risk of discovery. This is only another proof of the need for increased parliamentary enactment, with corresponding penalties for infringement, to protect our rarer birds, which should include a schedule of those whom to kill, steal, or destroy the eggs of, would be a punishable offence. If such temptations are held out in regard to a creature so nearly exterminated from our country as the osprey, further scruple seems useless; and it is to be hoped that all friends of birds will cordially and vigorously unite in legislative action against their enemies, whether open or disguised under the name of science falsely so called.  
*W. Jolly, in Good Words*

*Inverness Courier, 5 May 1881*

A REMARKABLE EAGLE.—It may be interesting to some of our readers to know that an Osprey eagle, measuring five feet beneath the tips of the wings, was killed on Messrs. Seth Senior and Sons' estate (Goodbent), last week. It is a very fine specimen, and we believe the first known to have been killed so far south.

*Huddersfield Chronicle, 14 May 1881*

A splendid specimen of the osprey was forwarded by Lady Heneage on Monday last to Mr. Kew, taxidermist, for the purpose of stuffing or preserving. It was shot on the preceding Saturday at Benniworth haven. The wings when extended measured 5 feet 4 inches, and the body was 2 feet long from the point of the beak to the end of the tail. The osprey, or fishing eagle, is very rarely seen in this part of the country.

*Stamford Mercury, 30 September 1881*



### THE OSPREY

Sir.—The following paragraph appeared in your contemporary, *Society*, of October 5: “The osprey, or fishing eagle, is now rarely met with on our English coasts; but a very fine specimen has been shot at Benniworth Haven, Lincolnshire, and has been preserved for Lady Heneage by Mr. Kew, taxidermist, of Louth. ... Gamekeepers cannot refrain from the destruction of anything that is rare.” In reference to the above, I beg to inform you that, about a fortnight ago, whilst sitting admiring the lovely view in front of the mill at Guy’s Cliffe, my attention was attracted by the flight of a large bird, which, taking a course round the beautifully fringed pool, eventually settled on the bough of an oak, from twenty to thirty feet above the water. Eying this for some minutes, he suddenly made a dart at something in the water, which he appeared to seize; then, resuming his perch, he again began to peer right and left for his prey; till, tired of his want of success, he quitted his quarters, flew close over my head, and settled near me. I waited for some time, hoping to see another plunge, but was doomed to disappointment. On enquiring of the miller yesterday, he informed me that two birds, doubtless male and female, visited the place, stayed three days, and then disappeared. The keeper’s attention was drawn to them on the Sunday: but, as Lady Percy dislikes to hear a gun on that day, the poor birds’ little span of existence was not then prematurely cut short. The size of the bird that I saw was that of a large duck, but its build was that of a kite or eagle. Could this have been an osprey?

—Yours truly.

John H. Hawley

Leamington Spa Courier, 15 October 1881

AN UNUSUAL VISITOR.—A fine specimen of the osprey or sea eagle has recently been observed by several people in the river Medina and on the Osborne Estate. Although several attempts have been made to get within gunshot of him none have yet been successful, and we trust that it will escape unscathed from the attention of some of those naturalists who cannot see a rare specimen without desiring to secure it.

Isle of Wight County Press and South of England Reporter, 10 January 1885

### THE LONDON COMMERCIAL SALE-ROOMS THIS DAY, December 1<sup>st</sup>, at Half-past Ten.

OSPREY, &c. FEATHERS	75 Pkgs
PEACOCK FEATHERS &c.,	41 Ditto
BEETLES	1 Tin
DO WINGS	2 Ditto
FLOWERS	1 Case Cape
GRASSES,	7 Ditto Ditto
PHEASANTS	880 Impeyan
	78 Argus
BIRDS OF PARADISE	2,273
BIRD SKINS,	130 Pkgs various
	HALE & SON, Brokers
	10, Fenchurch-avenue

Public Ledger & Daily Advertiser, 1 December 1893

But a word about hats—not that I have the slightest desire to don mine when the atmosphere is tinged with a mournful grey and the mud lies thick on the roads and on the pavements, and the voice of the bicycling-bell is heard not in the land. Hats which deserve our sincerest affection invariably show the white feather—either the osprey or the ostrich feather, the former being first favourite, in combination with a black ostrich-feather. Ospreys—in spite of the fact that we know how they are procured (and we ought really to be ashamed of such possessions), are immensely popular; in black striped round with white, or in black tipped with white, or all in white they obtain. One of the most delightful hats I have met this year...

*Illustrated London News, 4 January 1896*

The wearer of this most excellent dress had elected to decorate her hair with a black osprey and a black ostrich-feather, the effect being extremely funereal, by no means decorative in any sense of the word, and far from becoming. To my mind it requires diamonds to justify the wearing of the osprey in the hair, and these should scintillate in a group at the base and spread their influence half-way up the feathers in small graduated lines. But, after all, since we can dispense with the osprey in our hair, why should we wear it when the cry of the herons is heard in the land and the woes of the birds sacrificed to procure it are no longer any secret? But I fear I have mentioned previously the unfeminine brutality we display in continuing to recognise the charms of this ornament. At the moment most attractive ospreys are being made of flowers, small blossoms being used... Surely, with such a temptation to turn to the paths of kindness as a floral osprey of equal charm with the feather osprey, we may at last see the error of our wicked ways.

*Illustrated London News, 15 February 1896*

OSPREYS are in favour for this season's Millinery; we have Curled and Straight OSPREYS in black and white, at 9½d., 10½d., 1s., 1s. 2½d. White and Cream MOUNTS are excellent value. See Stock at the PALAIS ROYAL.

*Todmorden & District News, 14 July 1899*

A correspondent of "The Yorkshire Post" records the recent shooting of an osprey, or fishing hawk, at Scarborough.

*Yorkshire Evening Post, 29 May 1900*

### THE OSPREY'S NEST

It is considered good luck to have a fish-hawk, or osprey, as it is sometimes called, build its nest on one's farm, says an American paper. Although the nest of this bird is as wonderful and as full of odds and ends as an ancient curiosity shop, farmers never molest it. It is only when cold-blooded naturalist comes along, who wants to get the scientific facts about everything, that it is possible to learn about the home of the fish-hawk. Such a nest was recently found on Gardiner's Island by naturalists from the Bronx Zoo. They took it down and set it up again in a tree in the Bronx gardens. This was no easy task, for the cumbrous home weighed more than four hundred pounds. Instead of being made of straws and feathers, like other birds' nests, the fish-hawk's nest is constructed of sticks, pieces of broken oar and splinters of wrecked boats. Stowed away in the framework are often found pieces of fish net, fish bones, skeletons of other birds, strands of barbed wire, soles of old shoes, corset bones, remnants of clothing, and not a few pearl buttons.

Bournemouth Daily Echo, 31 October, 1902

### GAMLINGAY

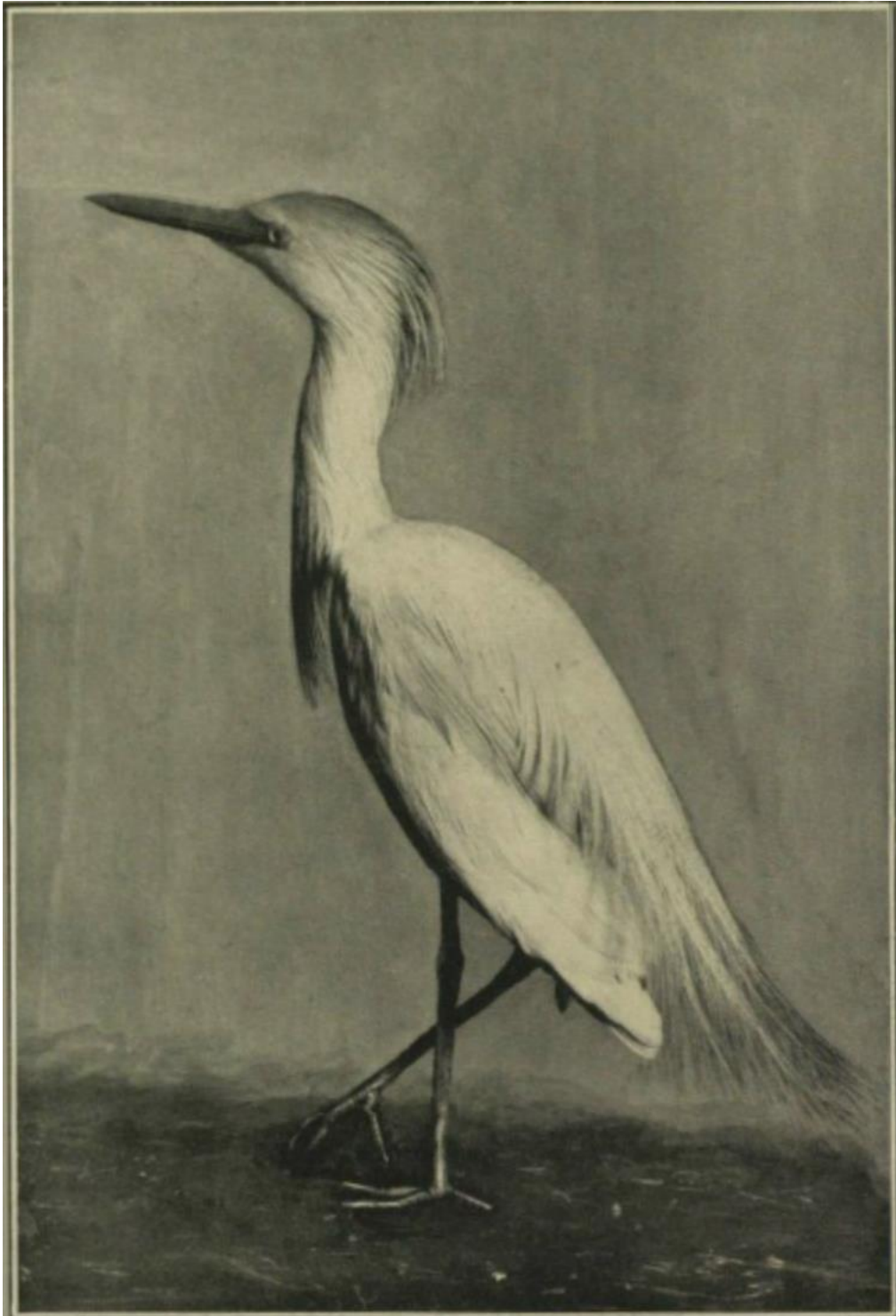
An Osprey (Fish Hawk or Bald Buzzard) was picked up in the neighbourhood of Gamlingay recently. It measures in expanse of wing 68½ in., tip of bill to tail 25 ins. and is a very scarce bird inland.

Biggleswade Chronicle, 8 May 1903

### ANOTHER OSPREY AT CRANLEIGH

Mr. John Bickerdyke writes to the "Field":--I very much regret to state that, owing to a misunderstanding, or the rare bird proving too tempting, the osprey which was seen on many occasions fishing the lake at Cranleigh for rainbow trout, as mentioned in the "Field" of September 17, was shot at the end of last week. Since then, however, another of these handsome birds has been seen, and this I have reason to believe will be respected, so far as the Vachery keepers are concerned. If this note should meet the eye of any owners of shooting in the neighbourhood of Guildford, I would venture to suggest that they give instructions to their keepers not to shoot the remaining bird. There is no difficulty in distinguishing the osprey from other hawks, for its breast, throat and under-wings are almost white, while its back is brown. My estimate of the width of its wings proved accurate, the one which was shot measuring 5ft. 4 in. from tip to tip. The second osprey shows itself but rarely. The keepers said they believed there was a mate to the one which was shot, but I did not see it until September 20, though I had been on the lake every day for the preceding fortnight.

St James's Gazette, 3 October 1904



*THE QUEEN'S PROTÉGÉ: THE EGRET, WHOSE NUPTIAL PLUMES  
FORM THE FAMOUS "OSPREY" FEATHERS*

*Illustrated London News, 31 March 1906*

A public denunciation of the practice of wearing osprey feathers and aigrettes has come from Queen Alexandra. The Duchess of Portland as President of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds presented to her Majesty a memorial from the society upon this subject. A reply received from Miss Knollys stated that "her Majesty never wears osprey feathers herself, and will certainly do all in her power to discourage the cruelty practised on these beautiful birds."

The last feather sale was held at Mincing Lane on February 13, and the catalogues issued included 8,508 birds-of-paradise skins, most of which were sold, and 327 packages of "osprey" feathers, 165 of them East Indian. During the six sales held in 1905, 36,138 birds of paradise were offered and nearly all of them were sold, and at higher rates than at previous sales, which means, of course, that they are becoming more scarce. As to osprey feathers for the "aigrette" of fashion, figures show a total of 150,000 birds killed during the breeding season to supply the London market during 1905.

Florida has almost altogether been despoiled of its snowy herons, and the Audubon Society in the United States is doing its utmost to put an end to a massacre that will certainly cause extinction to the bird if not suppressed. In Mexico the landed gentlemen prevent by "revolver law" the plume hunters destruction of the beautiful egret.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw wrote a strong letter to *The Times* last July about a woman who sat in front of him at the Opera. She had "very black hair and stuck over her right ear the pitiable corpse of a large white bird, which looked exactly as if someone had killed it by stamping on its breast and then nailed it to the lady's temple, which was presumably of sufficient solidity to bear the operation. I am not, I hope, a morbidly squeamish person, but the spectacle sickened me."

*The Sphere, 31 March 1906*

### **AN OSPREY OR FISHING HWK IN BUCKS**

An osprey has for some weeks past taken up its abode in the woods on the Shardeloes Estate at Amersham, and has been fishing in the ornamental water in the park there, which teems with pike. In its movements it very closely follows those of a kestrel when hunting for prey, quartering the water at about sixty feet high, and, when a fish is observed, hovering over it, dropping some few feet lower, hovering again, then closing its wings and plunging under for the victim, which, if small, it brings at once to the surface and carries into some tall tree to devour. Previous to this last act, however, it vigorously shakes the water from its wings and plumage. If the capture should be of large dimensions it remains below the surface for several seconds, during which time I conjecture it is busily engaged partially disabling the fish with its long talons, as the formation of its wings precludes any probability of pursuit under water.

Bucks Herald, 28 November 1908

A fine specimen of the osprey or sea hawk has been found on Hirsell Golf Course, Coldstream. From tip to tip of wing it measured 6 feet. This bird occasionally visits the sea-coast and rivers of Berwickshire. Specimens have been captured on Blackadder and Whitadder, Mr. Jno. Blackadder, East Blanterne, shooting one near Ninewells Old Bridge. One got by Mr Bertram of the Retreat measured 5 ft. 8 ins. from tip to tip of extended wings. Once when River Eye was in flood a wounded osprey was taken from the river with a trout 9 inches long in its mouth. The osprey feeds upon fish, which it takes by plunging into the water from a considerable height in the air and seizing them in its talons, or by sweeping down and bearing them off in its claws when near the surface.

Berwickshire News and General Advertiser, 19 July 1910

### **RARE BIRD IN RICHMOND PARK**

A fine specimen of the osprey, or fish hawk, formerly very common in the British Isles, but now rarely seen, was noticed in Richmond Park on Sunday morning. The bird greatly troubled the waterfowl inhabiting the larger of the Pen Ponds by hovering over the water on the watch for fish, but as the pond was still covered in most parts with ice, the osprey soon departed.

Gloucestershire Echo, 6 January 1914

### **THE OSPREY ON LOCH LOMOND**

A naturalist writer has been commenting on the disappearance of the osprey from Scotland. He recalls its last nesting on Loch Lomond. Proceeding from Balloch to Luss, he says, by the most direct route, one passes on the right hand an islet with some ruins completely overgrown with vegetation. The island is Inchgalbraith, and its castellated ruin was a nesting place of the osprey or fishing hawk, but the nest was plundered for many years, and finally, while yet a young man, that great sportsman, John Colquhoun, the author of "The Moor and the Loch", shot the female on the nest and trapped the male. Thenceforth no more nesting of the osprey there. Colquhoun lived to deplore having been the instrument of the final banishment from "the loch of my ancestors" of these time-honoured dependants of their bounty, as he grandiloquently says. It might be added that the kingfisher is like to follow the osprey in disappearing from the loch and its environs. It is almost never seen on the Leven now, while only a very occasional glimpse of its rainbow plumage is got on the Endrick.

Kirkintilloch Herald, 5 August 1914

### **THE CONTROL OF VERMIN**

by A.R. HORWOOD, F.L.S.  
(Late of Leicester Museum)

...[*snip*]

The larger and nobler game have generally become so scarce, though in places the peregrine and some buzzards and harriers are again fairly abundant, that it would be a pity to reduce their numbers too much. Naturally such rare birds of prey as the golden eagle, osprey, and other hawks and falcons that only visit us occasionally or are now uncommon, seeing that by reason of their small numbers they can do little harm, should be allowed a lease of life.

Tamworth Herald, 15 March 1924



## OSPREYS REINTRODUCED TO HIGHLANDS

An Inverness-shire Experiment  
BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A GOLDEN EAGLE, so friendly that even children may stroke him without the slightest hesitation, is being exhibited in the vestibule of a London cinema. This monarch of the skies reached Captain C.W.R. Knight, M.C., F.R.P.S., F.Z.S., the well-known naturalist, from the wilds of Ross-shire, and having been rained by him has accompanied him on 30,000 miles of his travels.

Captain Knight is showing his unique pet, which goes by the name of "Mr Ramshaw", in connection with a film called "Sea Hawks." This picture deals with bird life on a treasure island in the Atlantic, made famous by Captain Kidd, and some wonderful 'close-ups' of sea hawks, or ospreys as they are often known, have been secured by Captain Knight.

Incidentally the osprey was at one time a flourishing native of Scotland, but except for a pair which Captain Knight brought back with him from this island through the courtesy of the owner and which he released a few months ago in a remote part of Inverness-shire this interesting specimen of feathered life is now extinct beyond the Tweed.

When I sought out Captain Knight at the theatre in which he is presenting his fascinating picture it was to find "Mr Ramshaw" surrounded by a little knot of admirers and gazing interestedly about him. He seemed absolutely at his ease sitting on a perch. One lady was so impressed by his beauty and gentle demeanour that she stroked his feathers caressingly, while a young lady attendant in passing also addressed a few words of endearment to him. If looks betokened anything he appreciated her kind words.

### Last of Scottish Ospreys

"Behind my visit to Scotland a few months ago to release a couple of ospreys," Captain Knight confided to me, "lies a tragic little story, which is really told by a photograph which I have in my collection. This picture shows a tiny, tree-covered island surrounded by the waters of a loch, and on a dead branch which stands out above one of the trees is an enormous bird's nest. Beneath the photograph is written 'Inverness-shire, 1910'.

"That nest was the last inhabited by ospreys in this country. Through the misguided enthusiasm of egg collectors the nest was continually harried, and one of the best specimens of the feathered world exterminated from Britain.

"The island in question belonged to Lochiel, and he was so distressed at finding the osprey dying out that he took steps to protect their nests. The last remaining pair occupied this nest, and to safeguard them for egg collectors he went so far as to place wire entanglements round the tree.

"Even then the nest was not safe. The eggs mysteriously disappeared, and that was the last of the ospreys in Scotland. It can only be surmised that the

people who harried the nest had swum across the loch to the island, as care had been taken to padlock a boathouse which is situated near this little island.

"All sorts of amazing stories are told of the manner in which egg collectors used to harry the nests of ospreys in Scotland. Two of their last haunts were Loch an Eileann and Loch Arkaiz. One man is alleged to swum a loch during a heavy snowstorm at three o'clock in the morning to obtain specimens of an osprey's eggs. Attached to him was a lifeline, and before he got back he had to be practically hauled ashore.

"As to the ospreys which I released in Scotland," added Captain Knight, "when I last heard of them they were doing very well. They were seen for a long time afterwards, but I understand they haven't been seen recently. Of course, they wouldn't stick to one particular spot all the time, and are possibly nesting somewhere else.

### On a Treasure Island

"In order to obtain really intimate studies of this unique bird I travelled over 3000 miles to an island off the coast of America. This island is owned by a Mr Lion Gardner and leased by a Mr Clarence Mackay. Apart from farm hands, it was inhabited by five individuals—Edward, Bob, James, John and Alan, who were all Scotsmen. Their business was to see that game and other life on the island was not interfered with.

"Some three or four hundred ospreys nest there annually. So that close-up studies might be made, I built a hiding-place at a distance of only 18 feet from a selected nest—a job which required a vast amount of care and hard work—and in due course we saw three young ospreys hatched.

"Seeing that inhabitants of the island were Scots and the osprey was originally a Scottish bird, we christened the three young ones by Scottish names—Jamie, Jean, and Jock. They were all beautiful, but Jamie was less vivacious than the others. Jean and Jock were so full of liveliness that in the end they came to blows. For a time it looked as if I was to witness a repetition of a tragedy I had filmed once on an eagle's nest, when one young eagle killed another. Jean gave Jock a real hammering, and the mother osprey allowed the youngsters to fight it out.

"We watched the growth of Jamie, Jean, and Jock, and it was most interesting to follow their doing physical exercises—jumping, with wings flapping sideways. Jock was the first to leave home, and a few days later the nest was empty. The young ospreys had learned to fend for themselves.

[snip]

Captain Knight brought two pairs of ospreys back with him, but one was killed and another died. It was the remaining pair, a male and a female, which he released in Scotland.

## OSPREY SEEN IN SCOTLAND

### RARE VISITOR

Mr. Ralph Armstrong, head stalker on the Duke of Portland's Caithness estate, and ghillies who accompanied him saw an osprey yesterday morning.

The bird came within 20 yards of them, and they took it to be a cock.

It is questionable if a single pair of ospreys now breeds in Scotland. Down till about the beginning of the present century a pair regularly nested on the ruins of the old castle on Loch-an-Eilan, Rothiemurchus, but since then it has been rare for one to be seen.

*Dundee Courier, 18 September 1934*

## OSPREY SEEN IN SOMERSET

### VISIT OF WEEK, UNMOLESTED

I have received a reliable report that an osprey recently visited Somerset. It was first seen about April 14, and remained till the 21<sup>st</sup>. The bird was quite tame, and spent most of its time circling over some ponds or perched on a telegraph pole overlooking them. On April 20 at 7 a.m. (my informant tells me) the hawk appeared about 50 feet up; it circled once and then dropped straight into a pond 30 yards away from the onlooker, making a splash which sent the water up several feet, and appeared to go right under, coming up with a live two-years-old rainbow trout, about ten inches long, in its talons.

Another time the osprey was put up from the ground, leaving a fresh three-years-old trout; remains of fish eaten by it were found in three or four places. Most of its fishing was done in the early morning.

I am glad to be able to relate that this splendid bird was unmolested. In fact, its presence was wisely kept quiet for fear that some kleptomaniac collector might prick up his ass's ears.

Writing way from books, I cannot state what earlier records there are of the osprey in Somerset, but I believe they are few. I can recollect none in the last eleven years while I have lived in the county.—E.W. Hendy, Porlock, April 30

*Western Morning News, 3 May 1935*

# THE OSPREY IN SCOTLAND

A Story of Long-Continued Persecution

By R.C. Douglas

The news that an osprey was recently shot in Caithness, will be received with much interest by innumerable bird-lovers. It is a regrettable thing that so rare a visitor met with such a tragic end.

The osprey had been noticed flying about near a village for some time. One of the inhabitants, who had never seen an osprey before, shot it "just to find out what kind of a bird it was."

This bird was undoubtedly a wanderer from some of the countries of northern Europe, where ospreys are still fairly common in remote places.

They occasionally visit the wilder parts of the Scottish Highlands, where they might remain to breed if left in peace. In England the osprey is hardly known at all except as an exceedingly rare bird of passage.

One osprey was noticed in Yorkshire in 1912, and another hovered about for several days in Cheshire in 1920. A few ospreys sometimes pass over the British Isles on their way to the sunny south in Autumn.

## SHUNS MAN

The osprey shuns man. It loves lonely places, and the appearance of humans in the vicinity of a nest has been known to scare the birds away, although the eggs were never touched.

The osprey belongs to the hawk tribe. It lives solely on fish instead of on birds and mammals as other hawks do.

The ancient Highlanders called the osprey the "water eagle," and this name is truly descriptive. Its large size and general appearance make it look like an eagle in miniature.

There are many place names in the Gaelic language which refer to spots where ospreys had nested for ages.

While hunting, the osprey hovers gracefully over the water. When it sees the fish come near enough the surface it darts down and seizes the prey in its powerful talons. It is then borne off to the osprey's regular eating place—usually some high rock or tree.

A ruin, cliff, or tree situated on an island is the favourite nesting site of this interesting bird.

The nest is an enormous structure composed of branches of trees, and is lined with water weeds. Thick branches three feet in length have been seen in the nests, showing the great strength of the birds.

## THE EGGS

Two or three eggs are generally laid. They are cream coloured and beautifully marked with large reddish-brown spots.

Any landscape is sadly incomplete without its appropriate feathered inhabitants, so the presence of a pair of ospreys added the finishing touch to some of the most picturesque scenes in "the land of the mountain and the flood."

There was something indescribably wild about the birds and their abode. But, alas, the eye of the nature lover is no longer gladdened by the sight of these noble creatures.

The story of the osprey in Scotland is one of long-continued persecution, wanton destruction and final extermination as a breeding species.

At one time ospreys inhabited many Highland lochs. They nested for generations on the ruins of the old Castle of Galbraith, on Loch Lomond.

In the early part of the nineteenth century John Colquhoun of Luss, who was a youth at the time, robbed the nest and trapped the birds. After this Loch Lomond knew the osprey no more.

In 1885 an osprey that was living at Finlarig, on Loch Tay, was shot by a gamekeeper.

## NESTS ROBBED

In the spring of 1887 a pair of ospreys were nesting on Loch Ordie in Atholl. The nest was removed by a gamekeeper, and the birds deserted the locality for good.

About 60 years ago a pair of ospreys lived on the lovely lake of Menteith, in West Perthshire. The nest was built on a venerable tree that shaded the ruined priory of Inchmahome. One day some person took the eggs. After flying mournfully around the island for a few days the birds vanished.

At Rothiemurchus, in Inverness-shire, there is a sheet of water called Loch-an-Eilean. In the middle of this loch there is an islet on which stands the ruins of a stronghold once inhabited by the Wolf of Badenoch. Here ospreys nested for centuries. After having their nest robbed on several occasions the birds finally left in 1896.

The last osprey's nest seen in Scotland was on Loch Arkaig, in the same county. Owing to their being molested in the spring of 1911 the birds took flight.

In 1929 Captain C.W. Knight, the famous naturalist, made an attempt to re-introduce the osprey into the Highlands. A pair of birds was imported from North America, where they are common in certain parts of the country.

The Duke of Sutherland, who cooperated enthusiastically in the project, had the ospreys liberated on his estate. For a time they flourished in their new home. But eventually they migrated southwards and were both shot in England.

Dundee Evening Telegraph, 30 November 1934

## *OSPREY FALLS TO MAN WITH A GUN*

*By William Redfern*

When, oh when shall we be able to restrain the man with the gun?

A tragic note comes to me from Mr. J. Pattinson, of Graham Street, Stanhope. He writes: —

“On Sunday last (May 7), a farmer living near the bank of the river Wear, near Stanhope, saw a very large hawk-like bird on a fence, eating what appeared to be a fish. Being afraid the bird would be making a raid on his chickens in a near-by field, he brought the bird down with a gun-shot. It proved to be a very fine specimen of the osprey, the expanse of wings measuring 5 ft. 4 in. from tip to tip. The plumage was in fine condition.

“The powerful curved beak and claws do not suggest that this big falcon-like bird would prey on fish, but the description given in Morris’s ‘British Birds’ states that this bird lives entirely on fish. It is the first record of the osprey having been seen in this locality.

### A PROTECTED BIRD

I referred in November last to an osprey being seen in the neighbourhood of Whittle Dean and the River Tyne near Dilston. The observations were by several people, and extended over about a week. Happily, there was no record of the bird being shot. It was one of those rare visits to which all bird-lovers look forward.

In the same article, I mentioned spoonbills on the coast of Northumberland, and a whiskered tern. Northumberland has been specially favoured. It is heartbreaking to get a letter giving the cold, tragic fact of an osprey being shot without even the excuse that it was damaging any man’s property. It is a fish-eater.

The osprey is in the protected schedule and it is really time some serious attempts were made to enforce the law, so that men who carry guns will hesitate before they shoot a rare bird.

I am obliged to Mr. Pattinson for his letter; the record, despite the bird’s fate, is very interesting.

## THE OSPREY IN SCOTLAND LAST NESTING RECORD OF RARE BIRD

Upper Duntuil, Isle of Skye, June 19, 1943

Sir,—It is reported in the Press that a female osprey has been found on a Morayshire moor, and sent to Inverness for identification. Presumably this very rare bird was found dead, and was not shot; but I should like to appeal to those who may have the good fortune to see a slender-winged and graceful hawk-like bird with white head haunting a Highland river or loch to refrain from molesting it. And now in to-day's issue I see from an interesting Nature Note by "H.M.B." that another osprey, this time a living bird, has been seen recently in this country.

We have lost the osprey as a nesting species in Scotland, but there is always the possibility that a pair on their way to Lapland or some other northern country were they still nest, may remain with us, and rear, or attempt to rear, their young. On Loch an Eilein, in Rothiemurchus, a pair of ospreys nested on the ruined castle until the close of the last century. Lochiel informs me that they bred off and on upon a small isle (Being afforded the most careful protection) on Loch Arkaig until around the year 1908.

It seems that the last record of a Highland osprey's nest was on Loch Loyne in 1910. Mr Murdoch Matheson, Invergarry, who gives me this information, was for many years gamekeeper and deerstalker in the district, and throughout his long life has been a keen and observant naturalist. He tells me that the nest was built on a small tree at the end of April, and that two eggs were laid by May 20. One egg was much smaller than the other, and was addled. The larger egg hatched, and young and old disappeared at the end of July. Early in May 1911 a single osprey appeared at the nest, but some mischance had evidently befallen its mate, and the solitary bird disappeared.

That appears to be the record of the last Scottish-nesting osprey. I think that the man with the gun rather than the egg collector is responsible for the disappearance of this lovely bird. The osprey is a migrant, and about the time it ceased to breed on Loch Arkaig Lochiel saw an osprey which had been shot in the South of Ireland.

Along the South Coast of England ospreys were shot almost each year around the close of last century, and it is certain that some of these birds were returning to their nesting haunts in the Highlands. —

I am &c.

SETON GORDON

**OSPREY MOBBED  
BY CROWS  
RARE BIRDS VISIT  
THE SOUTH-WEST**

*By E.W. Hendy, of Porlock*

I am chary of mentioning the names of correspondents who frequently send me interesting records of rare or uncommon birds in the South-West, or, so long as they are present, the localities in which the birds have been seen, for fear of attracting the attentions of the prowling gunner to them.

For some six weeks in November and December an Osprey was seen haunting a river in South Devon. It was much persecuted by carrion crows. It is possible that this is the bird which was reported for some weeks at Ilfracombe in June of last year.

**FISH-HAWK'S VISIT**

There are not many recent records of this handsome fish-hawk, now unfortunately extinct as a breeding species in these islands, but in April, 1935, one frequented a trout farm in West Somerset. The then owner sportingly left the bird unmolested, although it preyed upon his fish.

*Western Morning News, 18 January 1944*

**Ospreys in Cornwall**

Recording the nesting of a pair of ospreys on Bodmin Moors, P. Rich, of Percival-road, East Sheen, S.W., writing in the "Sunday Express", says:

"I found a pair of ospreys nesting near a stream on the Bodmin Moors in June. For three weeks I managed to keep the secret from the boys in the village, and three eggs were laid. Unfortunately, the nest was discovered and robbed. I found who had taken the eggs and was able to get one back, but it had already been blown. I still have this egg to prove that the bird actually did nest in England."

*Western Morning News, 12 March 1945*

## OSPREY COMES TO DEVON

### Fish-catching in Estuary

Recording the rare visit to a Devon estuary of what he identified as an osprey, Mr S.C. Atlee Hunt, member of Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society, writes: —

August 13. —At 2.30 p.m. I was searching through glasses among waders for an albino Ringed Plover seen the previous day, when all the birds rose and flew away. I saw what I took to be a Buzzard flying over the estuary. I noted that with the exception of the black primaries the back, tail and wings were dark brown.

Surprised at the apparent discomfort of the waders and the movements and habit of the bigger birds being unfamiliar, I watched it as it flew over the water until it came to rest on the top of a “guide post” in the estuary. Consequently I saw only the shadow side of the bird and could not distinguish colour. Getting a little nearer, I noted a suspicion of a crest. I watched it for fifteen to twenty minutes, during which time it quartered the estuary with almost continued lazy flapping of the wings and an occasional swoop towards the water, on nearing which it lowered its legs to full length and on six occasions struck the water, sending up a shower of spray.

#### FISH IN CLAWS

On the sixth occasion it was lost in the spray for a second or two and emerged with something shining in its claws, a fish, presumably, of fair size, but as it was then at least a mile away I cannot say with certainty. It was eventually lost to view, taking its booty with it.

All the duck and wildfowl resting on exposed mudbanks scattered each time the bird flew over.

I have never before seen an osprey (*Pandion h. haliaetus*), but can only assume this bird to have been one of that species, and must consider myself extremely fortunate not only to have seen the bird, but to have been able to watch it fishing successfully.

August 21. —Seen again at 10.30 a.m. about a mile away, and I was able through my glasses to distinguish clearly the white head and breast. It was perched on a “guide post” apparently feeding on something in its claws, after which it flew off to another guide post, dragging its feet through the water at intervals for about 20 yards at a time—? to clear them of slime, as per Handbook.

Occasionally it would spread its wings, as though to fly, when the great expanse of wing was most noticeable. After a short time it returned to the original ‘guide post’, and there remained until eventually disappearing. I had it under observation for about three-quarters of an hour.



Another interesting winter visitor was a sea-eagle or white-tailed eagle, which was seen at Blakeney, Norfolk, during December. The north Norfolk coast is at all times a good place to see rare migrants and the Osprey, which was driven from its final nesting grounds in Scotland by the efforts of egg collectors, still visits the area of Breydon Water on occasions.

Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald, 11 February 1950

### **Protection of Birds**

82 Victoria Street, London S.W. 1

February 21, 1950

Sir.—With a view to ensuring better protection for our rarest wild birds and of encouraging certain species which may attempt to breed in Great Britain from time to time, the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds are offering substantial rewards for their successful breeding as follows:—

Certified successful breeding anywhere in the United Kingdom: — Golden Oriole, hoopoe, marsh-harrier, kite, golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, honey-buzzard, osprey, spoonbill, Avocet and black tern.

Certified successful breeding anywhere in the United Kingdom except Orkney:—Hen-harrier.

The Council of the R.S.P.B. must be satisfied as to the validity of any claim before the reward is paid.

We should like to appeal to landowners to draw the attention of gamekeepers, stalkers, tenant farmers, and others to this scheme. The scheme has been running for three years, and a great deal of success has been already achieved, much of which has been largely due to the co-operation and good-will of landowners and other agents, and we hope that this year the scheme will be given even more widespread support.

Claims for rewards and information regarding the actual or suspected nesting of any of the species embraces in the scheme should be sent to Mr. P.E. Brown at the offices of this society. All such information will be treated as confidential, and the actual nesting sites will not be published. —

I am &c., R. PRESTON DONALDSON, Secretary, RSPB

The Scotsman, 25 February 1950

Osprey spotted.—An osprey, rare in southern England, was seen diving for fish in Darvell reservoir, near Bexhill, Sussex.

Taunton Courier, 18 October 1958

## THOUSANDS SEE RARE BABIES

# Speyside to lose ospreys soon

The mating of two ospreys near Loch Garten has proved one of the year's most popular Speyside tourist attractions.

Since the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds set up a public observation near the eyrie in June, more than 11,000 people from all over the world have watched them.

Mr George Waterston, Scottish representative of the society, announcing the success of "Operation Osprey", said that three young birds were hatched on June 9 and are now taking trial flights. They will probably begin to migrate from the area soon.

The society have now called off their 24-hour watch which was set up with elaborate precautions to prevent intruders from stealing eggs when the adult pair began nesting some months ago.

### REGULAR HOME?

They hope that the birds will return in subsequent years and establish a regular breeding site in the area, a feature which has been missing from Britain for over half a century.

"The same precautions will be necessary if ospreys return next year," said Mr Waterston.

"Naturally the operation has involved the society in considerable expenditure and a special appeal for increased membership and donations will be launched in the autumn."

A film has been made of the Loch Garten operation and it will be shown on BBC television on August 23.

Aberdeen Evening Express, 8 August 1959

## THE REGAL FLAVOUR OF SCOTLAND...



*The osprey—Scotland's favourite bird of prey. Number 6 of a series, specially painted for Chivas Regal by Harry L. Dring.*

FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE OSPREY hovering heavily over still water . . . its feet-first dive for prey. The flavour of such exciting moments is the flavour of Scotland—and so is the splendid taste of Chivas Regal Scotch Whisky. More than a century-and-a-half of tradition shapes the making of Chivas Regal—an inspired blend of Scotland's finest grain and malt whiskies, matured for 12 years before bottling.

Such a superb whisky costs more, naturally. Discerning people gladly pay more. For here you taste the glory of the Prince of Whiskies—that magnificent something extra that's the regal flavour of Scotland.

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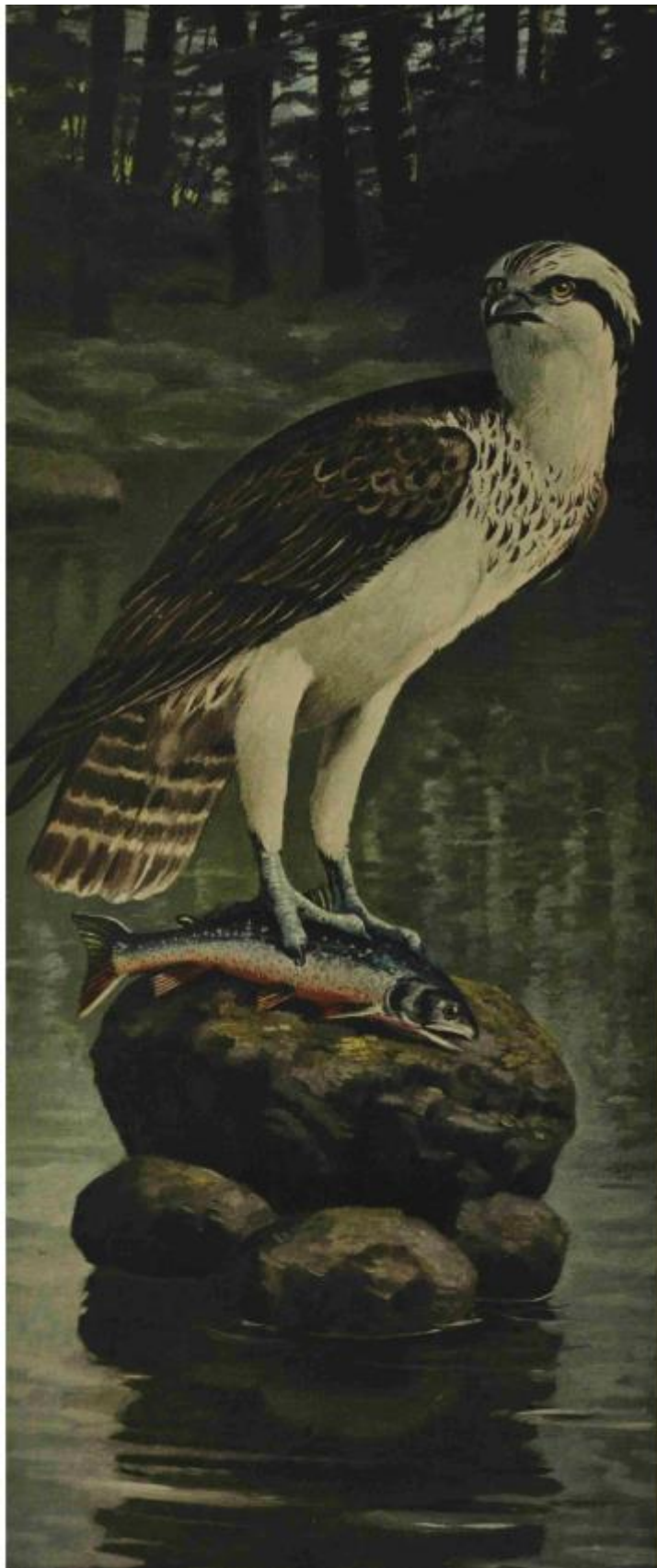
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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS  
APRIL 6, 1863

RARITIES OF WILD LIFE

*painted by John Leigh Pemberton*

April

Not so long ago, the Osprey—except as a rare visitor—was extinct in Britain, but now it has begun to re-establish itself as a breeding species in Scotland. This bird, which has a world-wide distribution, lives by fishing, plummeting feet-first into the water and carrying off its prey, not transversely, but in a fore-and-aft position.

The Osprey in our picture has caught a Char, a fish that is rarely seen, because it is only in the evening that it comes to the surface to feed; and it is not always easy to identify because of the great colour variations over the species. In the distant past, the Char (like the Salmon or Sea Trout) was anadromous, spawning in fresh water but living generally in the sea. Now, however, it has become a fish of the deep, cold lakes of Scotland, Wales and Ireland. In England it is found in Windermere and Haweswater.

PRESENTED BY

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*which, with more than 2,380 branches in England and Wales, is a good deal easier to find than a Char.*





# Shell Guide to Bird Sanctuaries

A message from  
Peter Scott and James Fisher

We are both very happy to be able to introduce Shell's latest contribution to the appreciation of wild nature in our islands. This new idea is of importance to us all, because its accent is on the conservation of nature and the appreciation of what are sometimes called 'wilderness values.'

The two of us first went bird watching together in schooldays, and since then we have frequently collaborated in national and international research and conservation bodies. It is an honour for us - James Fisher as writer, Peter Scott as artist - to be associated with the distinguished artists, S. R. Badmin, E. A. R. Ennion (some of whose pictures are on this page), Richard Eurich, Rowland Hilder, R. B. Talbot Kelly, C. F. Tunnicliffe and Donald Watson. In the next twelve months they will illustrate twelve great British sanctuaries.

A bird sanctuary is a wild area kept wild to preserve rare, beautiful and interesting birds, or a community of plants and animals of which special birds are a vital part. Yet some of the finest of them are accessible to the public. Some treasures have to be kept secret for the treasures' own sake. But the sanctuaries in this series are no secret; most of them have controlled access and the public is invited to visit and enjoy them under a set of common-sense rules. Please, on your visit, be ready to work with the wardens, keep all trail regulations and drills, and watch the birds discreetly. Permits are usually necessary, and the number of daily visitors is limited at some sanctuaries at certain seasons. To avoid disappointment, everybody should write *well ahead* to the addresses we give.

We hope that Shell's 1965 campaign will help the conservation movement by finding new supporters and making new naturalists. We feel that if families read the advertisements, visit a sanctuary, and are then prompted to join a national conservation body or one of the nationwide County Naturalists' Trusts, we will have done our job. If nature is to be preserved in these islands of burgeoning industry and population, nature lovers cannot just sit, or walk (or motor) and watch. They must also act to preserve the beauty they enjoy. For this they need a collective voice which can be heard, and they can only have it when they are organised together.

*Peter Scott James Fisher*

The birds shown in the paintings on the left are peregrine, jay, common gull, bittern, osprey, fulmar, those on the right are roseate tern, teal, puffin, redshank, smew and whitefront.

Wherever you go...  
you can be sure of



Image © Illustrated London News Group