

THE “OSPREY” – WOW! - BOTH BIRD AND PLANE!©

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Since my retirement, I have resided in a golf course community in Kissimmee, Florida that has numerous ponds and marshes. Today in the morning while sitting outside, I observed an Osprey, a very prominent bird throughout Florida, effortlessly hovering over a nearby pond; suddenly, he tucked in his wings and plunged into the water and immediately emerged with a 10-12-inch fish in his grasp; was this to be just a breakfast “appetizer” or his fare for the entire day? Such are the wonders and questions about nature as I observe almost every day and, in this case, it has stimulated and motivated me to learn more and write this article.



THE BIRD Because of its color and some other similarities, the Osprey is quite-often mistaken for an eagle. Like the eagle, the Osprey is a bird of prey (a “raptor”) and is a particularly-excellent fisherman. Some facts about Ospreys are as follows: Size: body, 21 to 23 in (54 to 58 cm); Wingspan: 5 to 6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m); Weight: 3.1 to 4.4 pounds (1.4 to 2 kg). Ospreys may be known as fish eagles, sea hawks, or fish hawks because fish comprises 99% of their diet. Of course they may also prey on rodents, rabbits, amphibians, and other birds. They are commonly seen world-wide in temperate and tropical environments. They may live up to 30 years.

THE PLANE During the early 1980’s long before the perceived “Osprey” came to full-scale development fruition, as a Douglas Aircraft Company Commercial Field Service Representative assigned to the San Francisco area, I witnessed the NASA experimental prototype of this airplane in action at an air show at the Moffitt Field Naval Air Station near Palo Alto, California. Just like the bird, this airplane could hover forever but as soon as its enormously-sized propellers started to tilt forward, its straight-line acceleration was truly awesome to see! Today, this extremely-unique airplane is known as the “V-22”. Like any similar truly-innovative “aeromachine”, the V-22 endured some significant “growing pains”, including a few accidents. However, it eventually proved itself to be a reliable and logical replacement for helicopters that had no chance of equalling its performance – including its altitude, speed, and other factors. Ultimately, this American-developed-and-produced half-helicopter/half-airplane, multi-rolled vehicle, has found an effective place for itself in the Marines, Navy, and Air Force. Through the year 2017, the Marines plan to acquire a total of 360, the Air Force 50, and the Navy 48. Certainly, just like the God-created magnificent bird in nature, this man-made exceptional bird, the “V-22 Osprey”, has a name to be held in high esteem!

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