



EXTRA Ospreys have forward facing eyes like most predators. This gives “stereoscopic” vision. Find out how two forward facing eyes helps them to catch their prey.

Feet & Legs

Their legs are very long and have few feathers so they do not get wet when plunging feet first into water.

The bottoms of their feet are covered in short spines, which helps them to grip slippery fish and they can snap their razor sharp talons together around a fish in 0.2 of a second. On each foot the outer front toe can be reversed so that they can grip with two toes forward and two back. This adaptation gives the Osprey a very good grip on the fish it catches. This particular adaptation is very unusual, and is known as zygodactyly. A long difficult word which is great for those who play scrabble or if you want to impress someone! Each toe also has a long sharp curved “claw” called a talon.

ACTIVITY Label the drawing of an Osprey’s foot to explain how it is adapted to catch fish.



Beak

Osprey beaks are very strong. They are hooked at the end and have cutting edges.

ACTIVITY; Label the drawing of an Osprey’s beak to explain how it is adapted to eat fish.



Feathers

Ospreys are covered in feathers, known as plumage. Ospreys have very dense plumage which makes it difficult for water to soak in. Each feather is also quite oily which helps it to keep dry.

The Osprey is dark on top but pale underneath. Here is a fish eye view of an osprey against the sky.

How does this colouration help the Osprey to catch fish?

Many animals have colouration which helps them to blend in with their surroundings. What is this called?

Name three other animals that have colouration which makes them blend in with their surroundings

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Going Fishing

Watch a video of Ospreys catching a fish.

Pause the action if you can to see exactly how it does the following

- Hovering to see the fish
- The plunge to catch the fish (note the wing and leg positions)
- Catching the fish
- Leaving the water with the fish
- Flying with the fish. The fish is carried with its head pointing forwards. Why do you think this is?

