

# The Strathmere Fishing & Environmental Club (SFEC) Osprey Platform Project

## Contributing to a Successful Wildlife Initiative in New Jersey

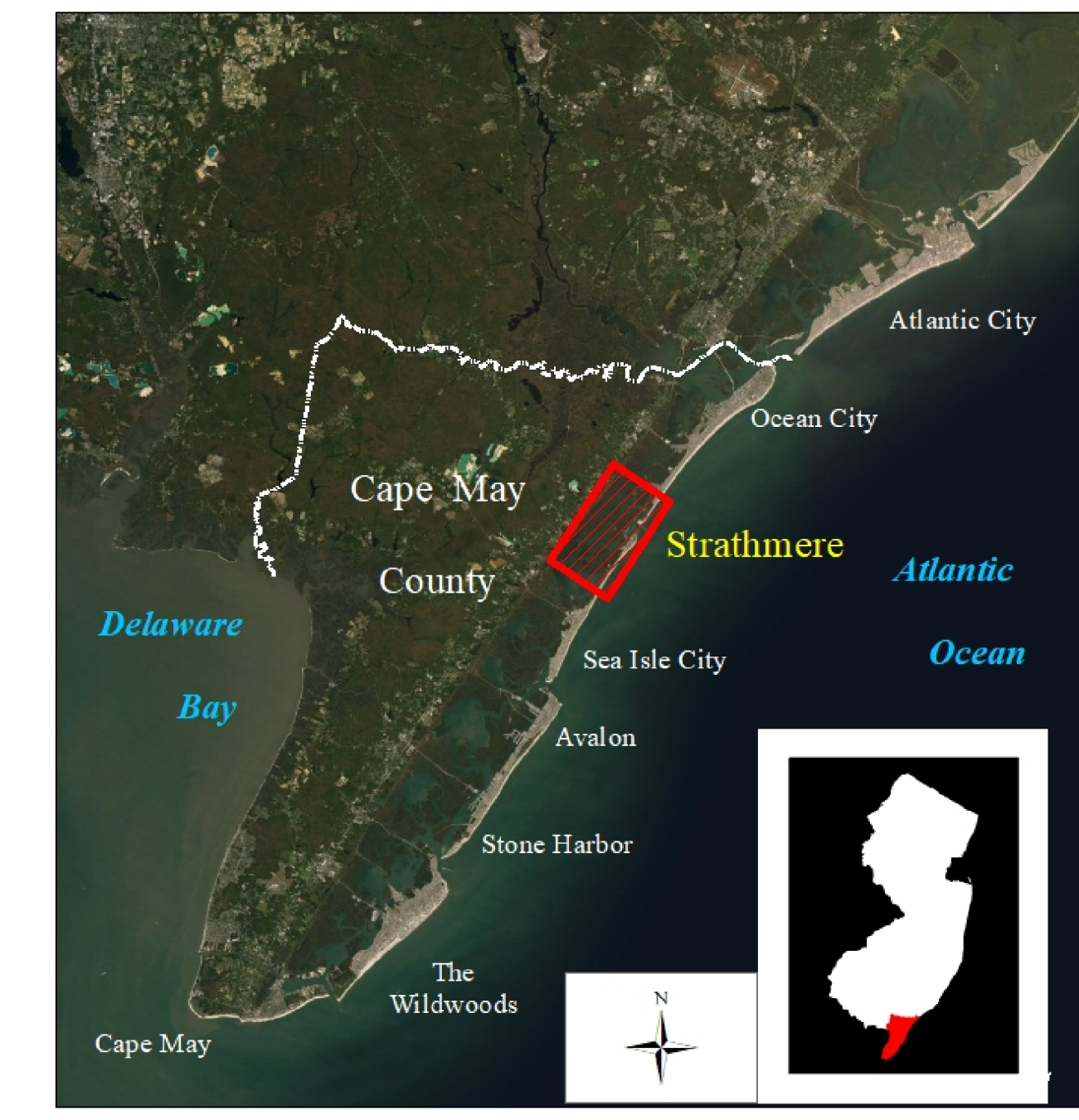
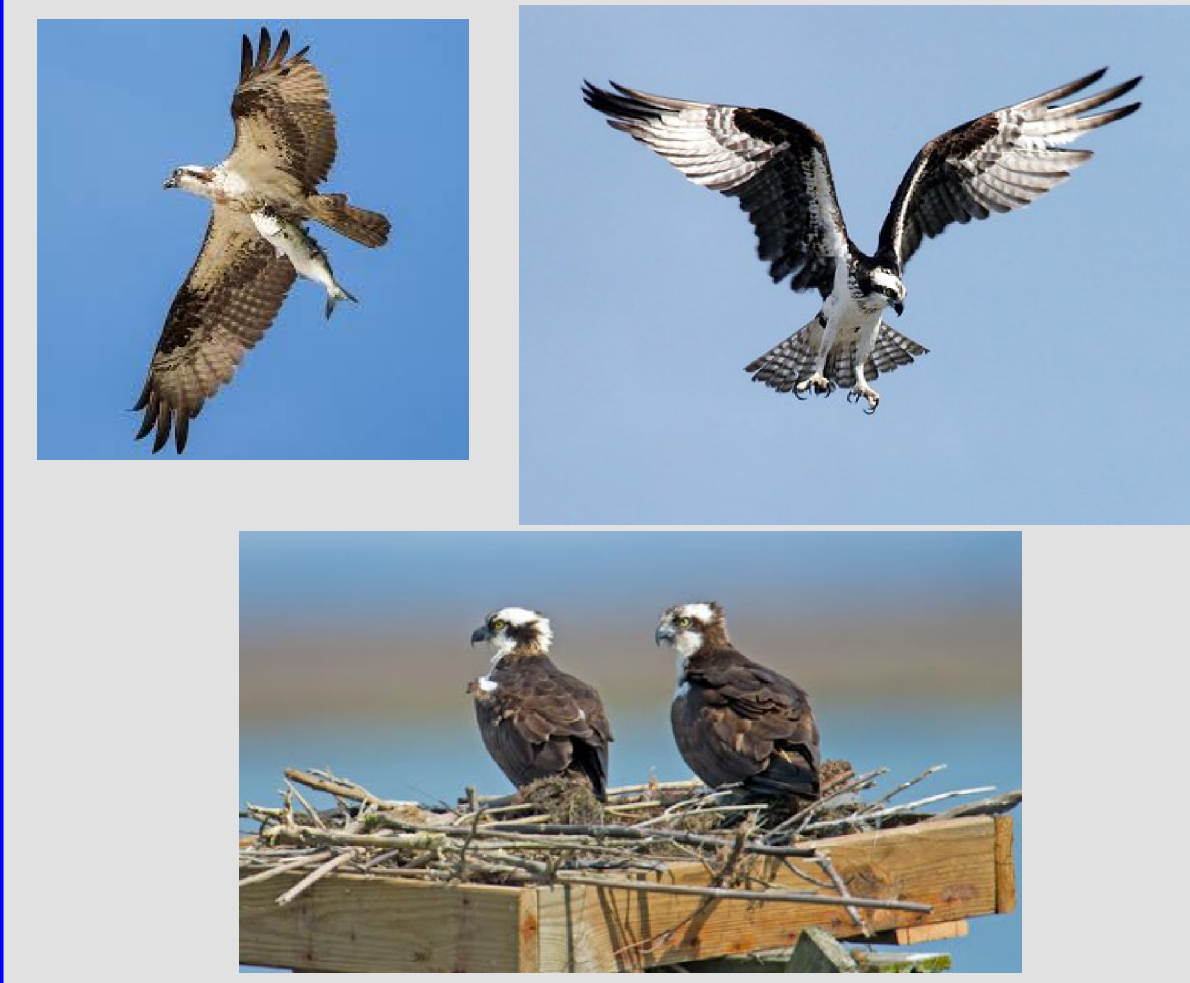
### The Osprey Project



Long-time SFEC member Dick Omrod, has led the Osprey Initiative since 2002 when he built the first platform that still stands along Whale Creek. That first platform was "commissioned" by then owner of Whale Creek Marina, Karen Mitchell. Over the years, the Osprey Platform Project has grown, as Dick has built and directed the installation of about thirty platforms and has repaired countless others damaged by storms. The southern most SFEC platform sits on Ludlam Bay, while the northernmost platform is next to the Rush Chattin Bridge going into Ocean City. The Strathmere Fishing and Environmental Club (SFEC) is based in the small town of Strathmere in Cape May County, NJ. The SFEC, founded in 1985, is a community organization whose members have a common interest in fishing, boating, artificial reef building, and coastal conservation. The Club encourages "catch and release" and is involved in many other environmental and conservation activities such as Terrapin rescue and awareness, mammal rescue, dune plantings, and beach clean-ups.

### The Osprey in New Jersey

The Osprey, also known as the "fish hawk", makes its home in along the New Jersey coastline in the coastal marsh. This large raptor has dark brown colors with a white crown, neck and undersides; both sexes have similar plumage. The average wingspan of the Osprey is about five feet and weighs only three pounds. Its preference for a fish diet requires that the Osprey live close to the water; in New Jersey they nest from Sandy Hook to Cape May and along the Delaware Bay. Osprey prefer to build their stick nests close to the water on tall, dead trees, channel markers, old duck blinds, and telephone poles. In recent years, man-made platforms erected in the marsh for nesting have replaced trees and are largely responsible for the recovery of these large birds in the state. In New Jersey, Osprey arrive in March from their winter homes along the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America. In most cases, they return to the same platform, as bird pairs rebuild a nest in April. Eggs are laid and usually hatch in late May. The adults teach the chicks flying and hunting skills and by early September they leave New Jersey and head south to their winter habitat. The growth of Osprey numbers in New Jersey represents a successful conservation initiative. In 1974 there were only about 50 nests in the state as this large raptor was on the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife "endangered" list. Successful efforts to restore the Osprey began by installing nest structures in and along the coastal marshes. Today there could be upwards of 500 nesting pairs in the Garden State. Additionally, the Osprey is an important indicator species of environmental health. Feeding on fish, their health reflects the health of the food source shared by humans.



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The Strathmere Fishing and Environmental Club (SFEC) is an organization of approximately 180 people with a common interest in fishing, boating, artificial reef deployment, and educational pursuits concerning environmental issues such as clean water, beach clean-ups and fish conservation. Essentially, our club tries to focus on activities to foster the preservation and conservation of the delicate and complicated coastal-island-back bay ecosystem of Southern New Jersey.

We are based in small town of Strathmere (Upper Township), on Ludlam Island in Cape May County. The SFEC sponsors many social events and we are quite involved in various community service activities and efforts.

