

BIRDS

The shallow rim around Osprey Lake provides habitat for migrating shorebirds when the water levels recede, particularly in late summer. Very shallow areas, and exposed mudflats, provide habitat for species such as Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, while slightly deeper areas have hosted rare species such as American Avocet and Willet.

Hérons and egrets forage in the even deeper areas of the lake. Bluebirds, a variety of sparrows (particularly Song and Field Sparrows) and other seed eaters, and black birds occupy the grass and brushy areas surrounding the lake.

Over 290 species of birds have been found in the Oxbow floodplain. This is more than many National Wildlife Refuges. The Oxbow area has had the honor of several rare bird sightings (Neotropic Cormorant, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, and White-faced Ibis, to name a few) over the last few years.

Raptors such as Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, and Northern Harriers hunt this area. Osprey have been observed feeding on fish caught in the lake. Canada Geese nest on the islands in Osprey Lake, where the surrounding water provides protection from land-based predators. As the trees grow and mature on the islands, they may get large enough and strong enough to provide roosting and nesting sites for herons and egrets.

Other waterfowl use the lake in migration and during the winter, as long as the water remains unfrozen, as do other water loving species such as grebes and cormorants. In the grasslands and brush surrounding the lake, migration and winter periods might hold such uncommon species as swamp sparrow.

For more information, visit www.oxbowinc.org or call 812-290-2941.

For assistance in the event of an emergency, please call 911 (make sure you advise you are in Indiana) or the Dearborn County Sheriff's Dispatch at (812) 537-3431.