

RIASSUNTO DELLA PRESENTAZIONE AL CONVEGNO "OSPREY 2007" di ALBERESE
HISTORICAL DATA ABOUT OSPREY IN ITALY (1825 - 1950)

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In 19th and early 20th century Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) became extinct in many parts of European range; in Italy there was a decline after the beginning of the 20th century and the last nesting attempt was in the 1960s; after this date Osprey was extinct in our country too. In the last five decades of the 20th century there was some recovery due to protection in Britain, Norway and Sweden, while in Italy only in recent years there were some conservation efforts in favour of this species. Therefore it is interesting to outline the presence of this raptor in Italy during a recent historical period spanning from 1825 to 1950. The sources of our work are old monographs and books of Italian ornithologists (6% of data), ornithological journals (45%), specimens from museums and private collections (49%). We have collected more than 150 data referred to the Italian mainland, small islands, Sicily and Sardinia, while Corsica was not included in the present study. About 90% of data come from Northern Italy, Central Italy, Sicily and Sardinia, while only less than 10% are from Southern continental Italy; this difference might be due, at least in part, to a bias introduced by a scarce presence in the two past centuries of active ornithologists in these Southern regions.

Osprey was relatively common on migration in Northern and Central Italy; the bird (in small number) was found everywhere from the west to the east sea coasts, as in the sub-alpine lakes or along the Po river. A small breeding and sedentary population (few pairs) was settled in Sardinia, Sicily and Montecristo island (Tuscan archipelago). In South East Calabria there was a site occupied by a pair during summer, but the breeding was not proven. The number of summer visitors and wintering birds was relatively higher in Central Italy, in Sicily and Sardinia than in Northern Italy. All wintering and summer visitors found in Central Italy were settled in Tuscany.

The historical data, referred in the present work, were for about 50% relative to Ospreys found in coastal lake and/or sea coast, about 40% in inland water body and/or river, the remaining in inland flat field and/or hill (all these last data, but one, were collected during migratory season). However, all known breeding sites chosen by Osprey in Italy were marine places. We have drawn three historical distribution maps : on breeding areas, on migration and on wintering/summer visitor areas.

In conclusion we can say that Osprey was a quite rare breeding bird in Italy during the past two centuries, with a resident population localized perhaps only on marine coasts of the two main islands and of some small islands in Tuscan archipelago. The wintering and summer visitor area was extended to Central and Southern continental Italy, particularly in Tuscany. During migration this raptor was relatively common in Northern/Central Italy along marine coasts, inland rivers and on inland water bodies.