

Bird Symbols of Canada

Part 3

Nova Scotia

Provincial Bird: Western Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

The Nova Scotia House of Assembly adopted the Western Osprey in local Statute, via the “Provincial Bird Act 1994”, which is described as “An Act to Declare the Osprey to be the Bird Emblem of Nova Scotia”. The Act simply has one clause, to declare the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) as the bird emblem of the Province¹.

The Canadian Government website which describes the Provincial Emblems, has this to say about the Osprey:

“This bird of prey is larger than a hawk and smaller than an eagle. Its main source of food is fish, and it can often be seen flying over oceans, rivers and lakes. Ospreys migrate south in the winter. Older birds return north to mate, while younger birds stay south until they mature.”²

The Osprey is also plentiful on bird stamps. Unfortunately, there are not many Canadian issues that feature the Nova Scotia bird emblem, but here are the two where the Osprey is the main object:

2000 Birds of Canada



Image source: www.birdtheme.org

This stamp comes from a set of four gummed stamps (arranged se-tenant). Canada Post also printed the strip of four in self-adhesive form.

2017 [Provincial] Birds of Canada

The second stamp in which the Osprey was centre stage was in the 2017 mini-sheet, which Canada Post issued to commemorate the Provincial Birds of Canada (the second of such sheets).

¹ <https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/provbird.htm>

² <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/provincial-territorial-symbols-canada/nova-scotia.html#a72>

The mini-sheet is shown below:



Image source: <https://www.canadapost.ca/>

Canada Post also made the set of five stamps available in a self-adhesive booklet of 10 stamps, priced at \$8.50, each stamp priced at the prevailing Domestic Canada postal rate. These stamps have the Canadian Post “Permanent” symbol in the maple leaf.

Reading up on the Osprey, I found that eBird Canada had the following to say:

The Osprey is a large, mostly white raptor that cruises over lakes, rivers, and coastal waterways in search of fish. Impressively widespread: found on every continent except Antarctica. Mostly white head and underparts; dark brown back. In flight, holds wings with a kink in the wrist (shaped like an “M”). Stick nests are conspicuous on top of channel markers, utility poles and high platforms near water. Often seen plunging feet-first into water from high in the air to grab fish.”³

Nature Canada also states:

“The Osprey is one of the largest birds of prey in North America. It is a fish-eating specialist, with live fish making up 99% of its diet. It will often hover over the water before diving feet-first to grab fish from near the surface.”⁴

The Osprey is between 52-60cm in length and weighs around 1.2-2.0 kg; and has a wingspan of 145-170cm.⁵ Its average lifespan is nine years.⁶

³ <https://ebird.org/canada/species/osprey>

⁴ <https://naturecanada.ca/news/archived/photo-of-the-month-osprey/>

⁵ <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/osprey/>

⁶ <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/birds/birds-prey/osprey>

Perhaps because of its widespread range, the Osprey has featured on a broad array of stamps from around the world. Here is a small selection of Ospreys from single stamps, rather than stamps that are part of miniature and other stamp sheets:

1996 and 2005 Morocco - Birds



Image source: www.stampworld.com

Morocco Post first issued this stamp in 1996 as part of a two-stamp set. Morocco Post then reissued it in 2005 in a smaller format as part of a set of 10 self-adhesive bird stamps.

1962 Hungary 65th Anniversary of the Agricultural Museum – Birds of Prey



Image source: www.stampworld.com

This stamp is from a set of eight birds of prey.

2014 Curacao - Birds of Prey



Image source: www.stampworld.com

This stamp is from a set of six birds of prey.

1996 Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation

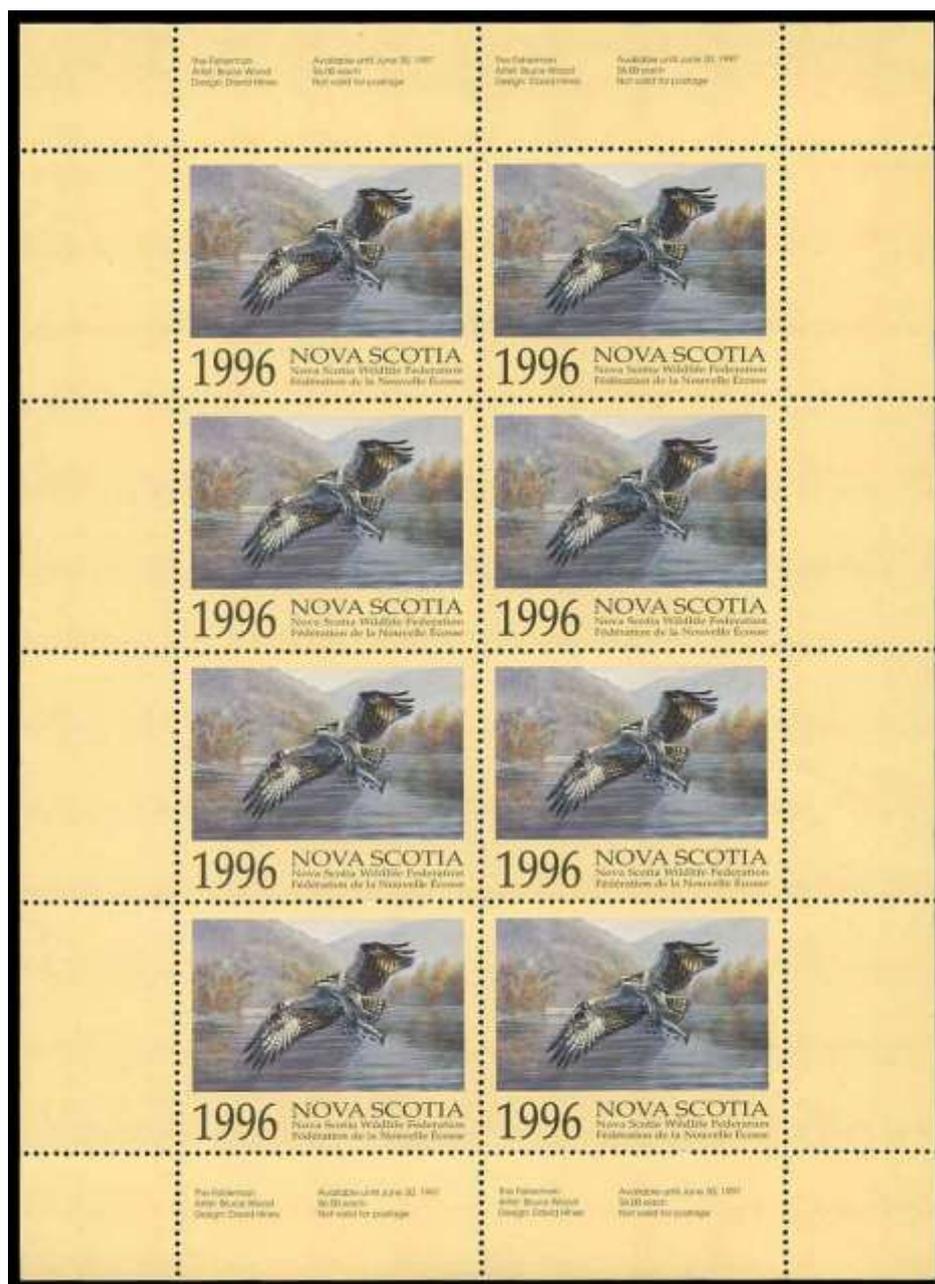


Image source: <https://www.arpinphilately.com/cat/nova-scotia-wildlife-federation-stamps>

This Cinderella stamp is from the Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation, which I understand is an abbreviated name for the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters (NSFAH)⁷. The website of the NSFAH does not provide much help in identifying the purpose of the stamps, but presumably they were used as a revenue raising initiative to fund wildlife conservation. The artist is Bruce John Wood and each stamp was originally priced at \$6.00. I have included this here otherwise the gallery of Osprey stamps might well have been outnumbered by those from non-Canadian sources.

⁷ <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/nova-scotia-wildlife-federation/impact/view/>

BIRD STAMP SOCIETY

I have found that the Canadian Government does issue an annual “Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp” - unofficially called the “Canadian Duck Stamp”, the design and artwork for which is the subject of an open competition. The purpose of the stamp is described as being for three reasons:

- it is required to be affixed to the migratory game bird hunting permit;
- it raises funds for wildlife and habitat protection and restoration projects managed by Wildlife Habitat Canada; and
- it brings attention to the importance of wildlife and their habitats.

The 2020 stamp (issued on a mini-sheet) features the Northern Pintail and was priced at \$8.50. The image can be found by following the link referenced below⁸.

⁸ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-bird-conservation/canadian-wildlife-habitat-stamp.html>