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A consummate fisher, the osprey (Pandion haliaetus) occurs around the world, particularly where coastal estuaries supply safety, a healthy environment and an abundance of fish.

Osprey

I was on a small fishing charter in far north Queensland as it wove its way through the local estuaries. An osprey circled overhead, scouring the waterways for fish to feed its chicks. I followed its every move with my camera for what seemed like an eternity and my arms were getting very tired. Eventually, the osprey stopped circling, pulled its wings back and started to dive. I followed the bird like a clay shooter following a target. The bird splashed into the water at an amazing speed. I waited until it flew out of the water, a fish in its talons, before I took this photo. Fortunately, the bird skimmed across the top of the water near the boat, so I was able to photograph at eye level. I used a fairly fast shutter speed to freeze the movement of the osprey's head, but I still wanted the wings to blur slightly to accentuate movement.

Birds like the osprey rely heavily on fish as a food source. It is therefore important that we keep our waterways free from pollution and restrict the numbers of fish being taken by fisherman. If we don't look after these natural resources, birds like the majestic osprey could start disappearing. A small amount of effort on our part means we can be assured that future generations can co-exist with ospreys and other wildlife species, just as we have been able to. Happy photography!

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