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The Fish Hawk

by P.J.Avenoso

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starting the Environmental Defense Fund, which then led to the EPA.

That's right, and over the years he's donated property to conservation organizations to further protect the south shore from development and, therefore, protect the wildlife.

And did you know that his heirs still live in Brookhaven Hamlet and are still true to Dennis's love for nature?

Back to the glorious bird of prey, the osprey. The bird is a raptor, meaning it's a meat-eating bird, but they have no teeth. Do you know why?

No, tell me Mr. Bird Lover.

OK! I will. They have no teeth because teeth would make them too heavy, hindering their ability to soar and curtailing their speed. They chew their food in an area of the stomach called the gizzard, a pouch of strong muscles that grinds the food. And do you know why they soar?

I give up; tell me.

They soar to save energy and also to avoid being spotted by their prey.

It seems like Mother Nature took care of everything for them.

I would have to agree. It amazes me also. I marvel every time I see them with a catch. These 22-inch birds weigh in at around four pounds and have a wing span of about 54 inches. They hunt from as high as 200 feet, too.

That's a pretty big bird, and they have to have good eyesight also to see a fish from those heights.

You're right, there. Their eyes are so big that they can't move them. They have to turn their whole head.

This is more obvious in the owl, which is also a raptor. Another interesting fact about their eyes is they have three eyelids. The third lid is partially transparent so the eye is protected when attacking their prey.

Wow, that's pretty cool. What else can you enlighten me with?

That's about all I know about the fish hawk, but I can tell you that thanks to people like Dennis Puleston, we're able to marvel at one of nature's finest specimens. And think, their salvation happened right here on Long Island. Now let's get dressed and head over to The Red Door for the finest crispy duck on Long Island! ■

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