



WORLD OSPREY WEEK



INFORMATION PACK

Join Birds of Poole Harbour in learning about and celebrating Ospreys during World Osprey Week (23rd - 28th March) and beyond! There's a topic each day, ranging from nesting to history. There are activities associated with every topic and they each have badges to give a guide to who the activity is suitable for (see below). The banners for each section are coloured as follows: yellow for topics, purple for activities, blue for activity answers. If you have any questions regarding the topics, activities or indeed anything else Osprey related, you can easily get in touch with us at bophhq@birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk. We will respond as quickly as possible!



Increasingly Advanced

Why Ospreys? It's a very exciting time for Poole Harbour and the South Coast as this year we have the potential to have the first nesting Ospreys in southern Britain for 180 years. Birds of Poole Harbour have led an Osprey Translocation Project in the harbour since 2017, partnered with the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation and Wildlife Windows. We hope that everyone can get on board with the project and match our enthusiasm for these amazing birds. Enjoy learning about their interesting lives and history...



2) Nesting Ospreys

We hope you enjoyed the first topic! Next, we are learning about nesting Ospreys. This is a fun topic which can be really interactive, so once you have worked through the information, head to the next activity page, where you will find new things to do.

As we previously learned, Ospreys that breed in the UK return in mid-March to mid-April from their wintering grounds, for example, the Gambia or Senegal.

They normally return to the same nest that they have used before, knowing it is reliable. There is competition for nests, which means that if an Osprey gets back to the UK later than others then they may lose their nest and partner.

Early Days

When Ospreys return to their nest, they start bringing in sticks and moss to repair any damage caused over winter, as well as to impress their partner. They stay with the same partner each year, unless they do not return from their wintering grounds, or another Osprey drives them away. They start mating soon on and 2-3 weeks later, the first egg may arrive.



Eggs

Ospreys stagger the laying of their eggs, which means they are each laid between 1-3 days apart. The female does most of the incubation (sitting on the eggs to keep them warm), while the male does all of the fishing. He will sometimes incubate the eggs too. The female protects the nest from predators and other Ospreys. The eggs are incubated for around 37 days.

Did you know?

Some Ospreys have returned to the UK to breed for more than 20 years!



2) Nesting Ospreys



Hugh Miles

Hatching & Growing

Just as the laying is staggered, the hatching is too. It can take hours for a chick to break out of an egg after it first cracks. The chicks are very small, with the eggs being similar in size to a chicken's. While the chicks are young, the parents still cover them to keep them warm and to protect them from predators. They grow rapidly, fed on large amounts

of fish, which the male has caught. The parents tear off small pieces to feed the young birds, gradually increasing in size until the chicks can hold fish themselves. Only around 12 weeks after they hatch will they go on their first migration.

Fledging

After around 6 weeks in the nest, the chicks will be strengthening their wings and starting to look like the adult Ospreys. Over the next two weeks, they improve their strength through rapid flapping of the wings, sometimes hovering above the nest, which is called "helicoptering". At around 8 weeks old they are ready to fledge, which means leaving the nest for the first time. They still come back to the nest for fish often, but they spend a lot of time exploring the area and improving their flight.



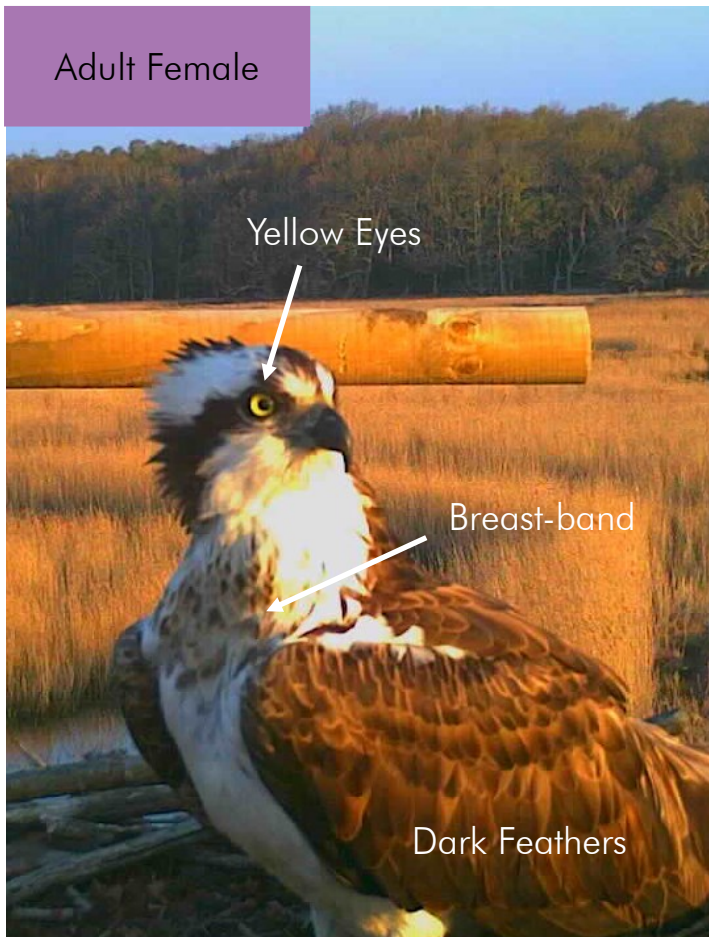
Migration

They explore for around 4 weeks, before leaving on their first migration, which we will learn about in the next topic. Usually, the adult female will leave first in late August, and the young birds (juveniles) are still brought fish by the adult male. The juveniles and male leave over the next few weeks.



2) Nesting Ospreys

Old and Young, Male and Female



There are a few simple ways to tell the difference between juvenile (young) and adult Ospreys. The **pale tips** to each of the feathers is the biggest clue, which you can see in the picture on the right. This fringing helps to keep the young Ospreys camouflaged in the nest from above, blending in with the sticks and foliage. Also noticeable is the difference in **eye colour**. Adult Ospreys have more **yellow**, lighter coloured eyes, whereas juveniles have more **orange eyes**.

There are also differences between male and female Ospreys. Females are **bigger** than males, with **longer and deeper wings**. The males have more narrow, slender wings. Under the wings, females are more patterned with **brown spots**. Females typically have a **darker and more developed breast-band** than males.



2) Nesting Activities

A) Build a nest: if you have a garden, head outside and try building a nest using sticks and pieces of material from the garden. How big can you make it?



B) Trait Match - Write under the categories which of the listed traits apply to each one.



C) Go back on the Rutland Water nest camera. Try and write down the behaviours that happen on the nest while you watch it in our record log. For example, if you see a stick being brought onto the nest, or if an Osprey is eating fish. If the Ospreys aren't there, go back in 20 minutes! The camera can be found here - www.lrwt.org.uk/wildlife/rutland-ospreys





OSPREY INFORMATION PACK



2c) Activity – Trait Match

Young Osprey
(Juvenile)

Adult Female

Adult Male

Yellow Eyes

Brown Wing
Feathers

Larger Size

Dark Eye Mask

Orange Eyes

Dark Spots on
Underwing

Pale Tips to
Feathers

Dark Breast-band

Narrow & Slender
Wings



2c) Trait Match – Answers

Young Osprey
(Juvenile)

Adult Female

Adult Male

Orange Eyes

Brown Wing
Feathers

Brown Wing
Feathers

Pale Tips to
Feathers

Larger Size

Yellow Eyes

Dark Eye Mask

Dark Spots on
Underwing

Narrow & Slender
Wings

Yellow Eyes

Dark Eye Mask

Dark Breast-band

Dark Eye Mask

