



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...



5) Ospreys in Poole Harbour

Thank you for learning all about Ospreys for World Osprey Week. This is the last topic to cover for the week, focusing on Poole Harbour and the new translocation project.



Ospreys in Poole Harbour

Poole Harbour was once home to nesting Ospreys. Locally, they were called “Mullet Hawks” due to their the high numbers of Grey Mullet in the harbour, which make easy prey in the shallow waters. Poole Harbour is now a key stopover location for migrating Ospreys, taking advantage of the abundance of fish before moving on. This means that we see them more frequently in the harbour during spring and late summer in autumn, during the periods of Osprey migration.

After the success of the Rutland translocation project, there is now a stable population of Ospreys in England and Wales. However, there are still no breeding

Ospreys south of the Midlands, even almost 20 years on after they first returned. The spread of Ospreys is slow due to their dedication to returning to their fledging sites, which makes restoring their former territories more difficult.

Encouraging Ospreys

As Poole Harbour sees high numbers of Ospreys passing through, attempts were made to encourage them to nest here naturally. This was through installing manmade nesting platforms around the harbour, giving the impression that it is a suitable nesting location. Another method used was putting “decoy Ospreys” on one of the nesting platforms. The decoys were polystyrene lookalikes that were used to trick passing Ospreys into thinking there was an occupied eyrie (Osprey nest) in the area and therefore a local population, as an established population can attract other Ospreys. Unfortunately, these methods were unsuccessful.



In 2017, Birds of Poole Harbour, in partnership with the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation and Wildlife Windows, were given permission to carry out another Osprey translocation project in Dorset. The aim of this project is to start a new breeding population on the South Coast, which will eventually link the Rutland, Welsh and French populations.



5) Ospreys in Poole Harbour

In the Pens

The Osprey chicks are collected from Scottish nests by the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation. The biggest chicks are taken, which means that the younger birds have a better chance of survival as the adults have fewer chicks to feed. When the chicks arrive in Dorset, they are kept in pens with 1 or 2 others for up to 3 weeks. This replicates a natural nest where there can be up to 4 chicks. They are fed on fish 3 times a day, starting with small pieces and gradually increasing in size until the juveniles are able to hold and tear large pieces themselves, using tiny hooks on their talons called spicules which help them grip. They are monitored in the pens using cameras, and their behaviours are recorded. When they are almost ready to fledge, they are fitted with a radio tag on one of their tail feathers.



After Release

The pens are opened early on the morning of their release and the juvenile Ospreys fledge in their own time. They stay close-by to the release site in the first few weeks, with fresh fish being put out on artificial nests near the pens twice a day. They are monitored using their radio tags and a device called a “yagi” which picks up radio signals. Over the next few weeks, the Ospreys strengthen their flight and learn to recognise and become attached to the local area, which is called imprinting. They will eventually range further from the release site, until they are ready to migrate. When they are strong enough and the weather conditions are right, the juvenile Ospreys will leave for migration, around a month - six weeks after their release.

Early Successes

The project has had a few early successes, including several sightings of translocated Ospreys abroad in The Gambia and Senegal. The biggest success so far, however, was the return of one of the translated males, ringed LS7, in 2019. He returned in mid-June,



and quickly found a female, CJ7, who has been summering in the harbour since 2017. CJ7 stopped in Dorset in her first summer back in the UK, despite being from Rutland, seemingly attracted by the young Ospreys released in the project. She came back the following 2 years, waiting for a male. Luckily, when LS7 returned in 2019, they quickly bonded and spent the rest of the summer nest building. In 2020, we could see a first nesting attempt.



5) Poole Harbour Activities

A) Translocation Video - Have a look on the Birds of Poole Harbour YouTube channel to find a video about the Translocation Project. It includes clips of the young birds in the pens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L78Og4Lha8o&t=137s>



B) Crossword - Read the clues to fill in the boxes (answers on the blue-headed sheet after)

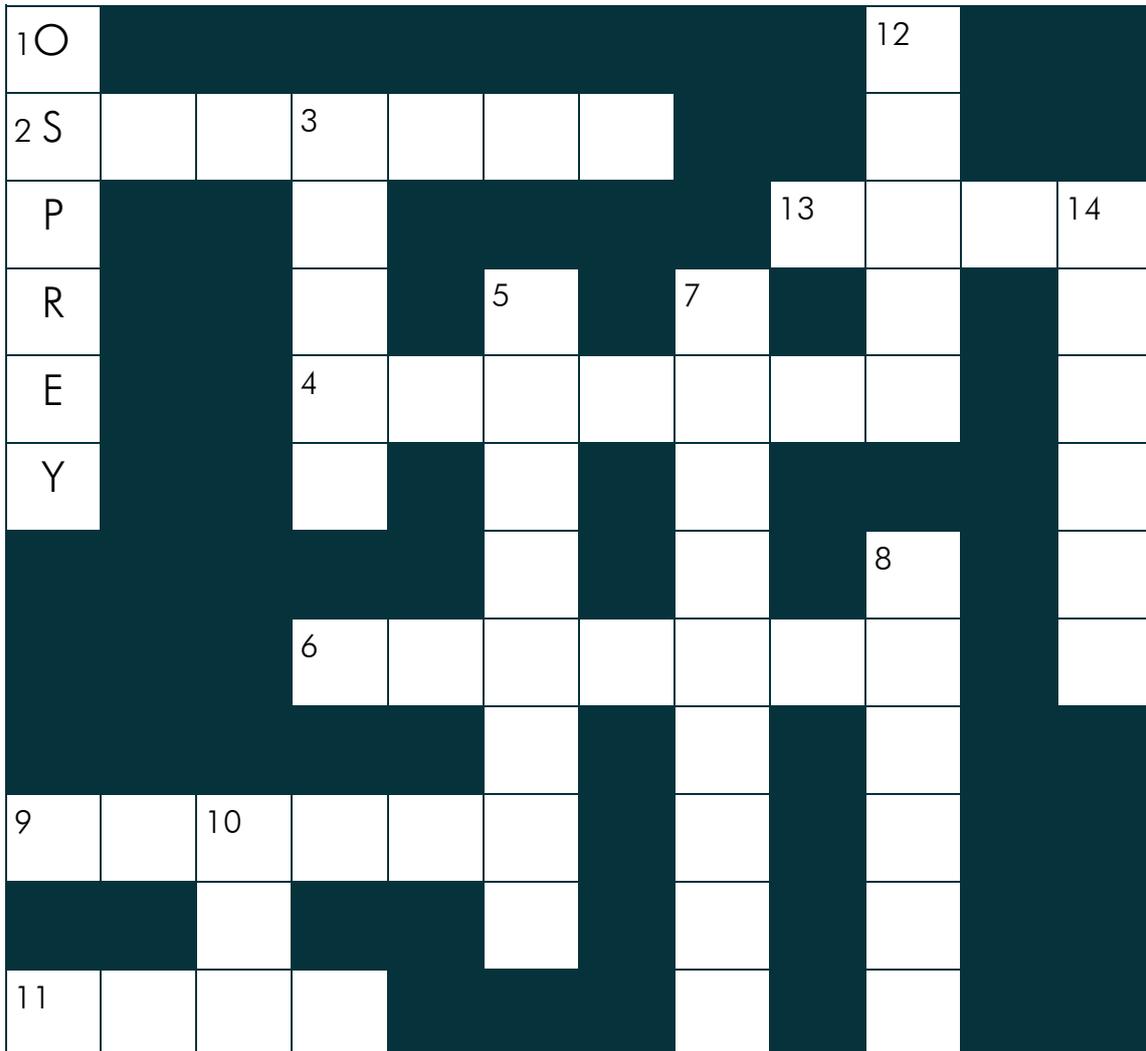


C) The BIG Osprey Quiz! Try and answer all the questions about what you have learned this week...





5) Activity – Crossword



DOWN

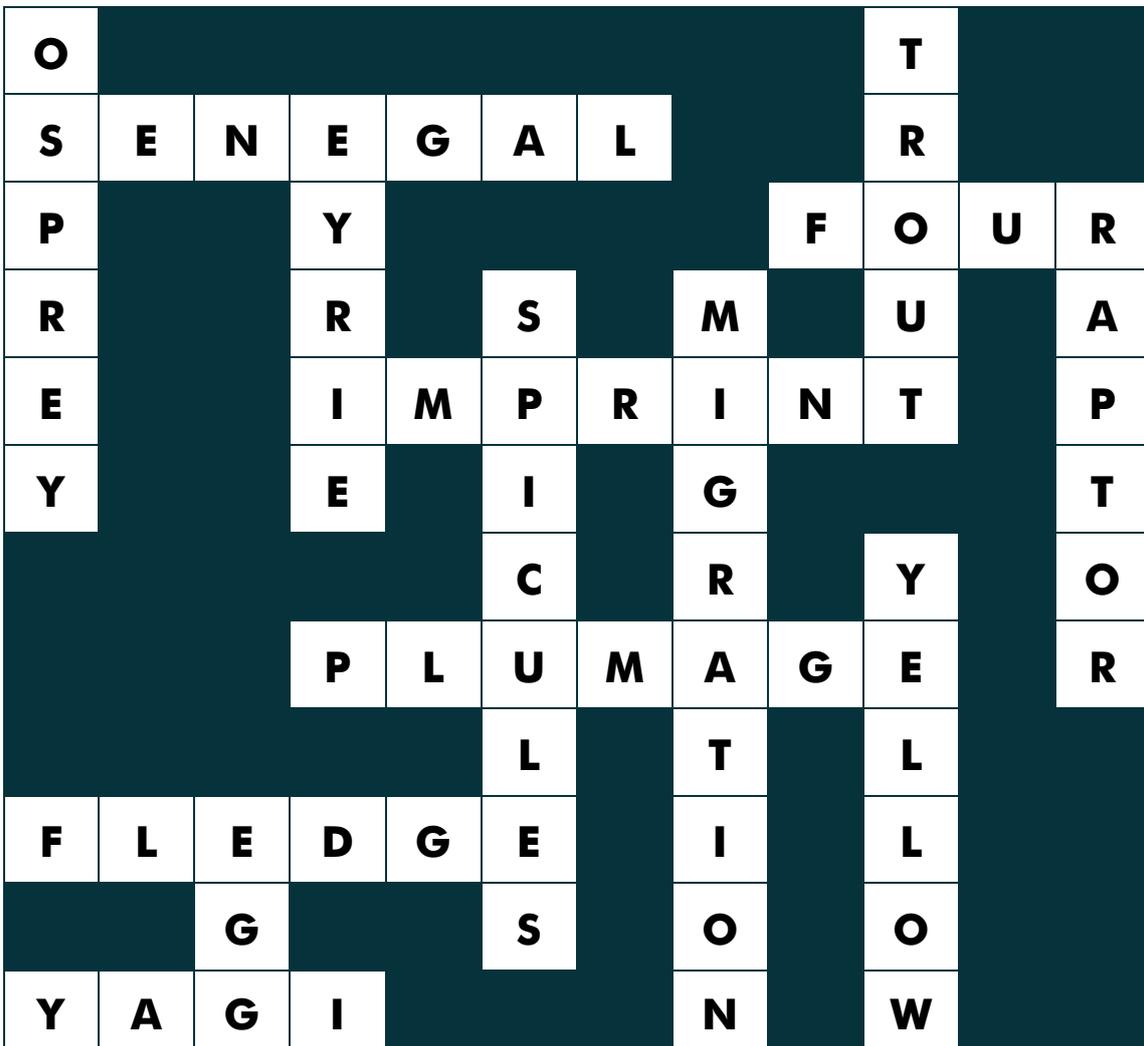
- 1 Fish-eating bird of prey
- 3 Nest of an Osprey (5)
- 5 Small hooks on talons for gripping (8)
- 7 Osprey's journey in spring and autumn (9)
- 8 Colour of adult Osprey's eyes (6)
- 10 Laid by Ospreys (3)
- 12 A fish enjoyed by Ospreys (5)
- 14 Other name for a bird of prey (6)

ACROSS

- 2 Country in West Africa (7)
- 4 To learn and attach to an area (7)
- 6 Collective term for a bird's feathers (7)
- 9 When a young bird first leaves their nest (6)
- 11 Device used to radio track birds (4)
- 13 The maximum number of Osprey chicks in a nest (4)



5) Activities – ANSWERS



DOWN

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5) Activity – BIG Osprey Quiz

- 1) Where did the first Osprey translocation in the UK take place?
A) Rutland B) Poole Harbour C) Inverness
- 2) How many years ago did Ospreys go extinct in England?
A) 50 B) 100 C) 180
- 3) How many nests are there now in Scotland?
A) Under 100 B) 200 C) Over 300
- 4) Which continent are Ospreys not found on?
A) Africa B) Europe C) Antarctica
- 5) How many young Ospreys are being released into Poole Harbour?
A) 10 B) 60 C) Over 100
- 6) What leg are “English” Ospreys ringed on?
A) Right B) Left
- 7) What is the average number of eggs in an Osprey clutch?
A) 1 B) 3 C) 4
- 8) How far do Ospreys often travel on a migration to West Africa?
A) Under 1000km B) 2000km C) Over 4000km
- 9) What do Ospreys eat?
A) Fish B) Small Mammals C) Plants
- 10) Which is larger: a male or female Osprey?
A) Male B) Female



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