



BIRDS^{OF}

POOLE HARBOUR

Osprey Translocation Project



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**Restoring a breeding population of Osprey
on the South Coast for the first time in 180 years**

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Background to the Project

History of Ospreys in the UK

Ospreys once bred widely across Western Europe, but they were persecuted to extinction across most of their range, including Britain, by the early 1900s. Fortunately, Scotland became naturally recolonised in 1954 and now holds nearly 300 breeding pairs, alongside small populations in both central England and west Wales, which more recently became established largeley thanks to the Rutland Osprey Project.

This fantastic recovery means that Osprey are now bi-annual visitors to Poole Harbour, passing through on migration to and from West Africa where they over-winter. Since 2009, artificial nests have been installed throughout the harbour by local organisations and landowners to encourage Ospreys to stop here and breed... After eight years of no success, it was decided a more active approach was needed, leading to the Translocation Project.



Poole Harbour Osprey Translocation Project

Start Date: Summer 2017

Purpose: To restore a breeding population of Ospreys in southern England, where they have not bred for 180 years, connecting existing populations in France, the Midlands and Wales.

Partners: Led by charity *Birds of Poole Harbour*, alongside the *Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation* and local tech business *Wildlife Windows*.



Translocation Process

Chicks are collected under license at around 7 weeks old, from healthy, sustainable populations in Scotland. Only the largest chicks are selected, leaving smaller siblings with the parents, thereby improving their own chances of survival.

Following careful transportation, the chicks are placed in large holding pens at a confidential site in Poole Harbour. After around 2 weeks of development, the juveniles are ready to fledge, and the pens are opened for their release. After release, we continue to provide them with fish on artificial nests close to the pens, replicating adult Osprey behaviour. They remain around the harbour for about a month, exploring further each day as they improve their flight and confidence. They begin to learn the landscape, and crucially, imprint on the area where they will hopefully return two years later. At the end of the season, between late August and late September, they head off alone on their long first migration.



Ospreys being fed in the pens



Artificial nest platform

Wider Success

The first Osprey project in Europe to pioneer translocation was at Rutland Water during the late 1990s. Through releasing birds from Scotland in the East Midlands, a new population was artificially established. This has since grown to 10 breeding pairs, and is a magnet for birdwatchers and the general public alike. Similar projects have since taken place in Spain, Portugal and Switzerland. The aim of the Poole Harbour project is to help the species recover its breeding status across southern England and to create a link between the British and continental populations.

Livestream Osprey Webcam

In 2020, we installed a livestream nest camera on one of the nest platforms in Poole Harbour, with the hope of documenting their return to the area and being able to share it with the public. Tune in to the webcam between March and October for the chance of watching Ospreys staging a comeback on the South Coast.

You can stream the Osprey webcam 24/7 through our website at www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk/osprey/osprey-webcams/



Birds of Poole Harbour Osprey Events

The best times of year to see Osprey in Poole Harbour are during the spring and autumn migrations. We run Osprey Project Cruises during late August (Adults £25, Under 18s £12.50), giving the opportunity to hear about the project while looking for Ospreys in the Wareham Channel. We also host Pop-Up Osprey Watch events, which are free to attend with no booking required.

Bookings for cruises can be made on our website and gift vouchers are available. To purchase tickets and find out more, head to www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk

Want to support the Osprey Project? You can make a donation to fund project activities and developments through Just Giving: www.justgiving.com/campaign/pooleharbourospreys