



PRESS RELEASE

Issued on behalf of The Lake District Osprey Project – a partnership between the Forestry Commission the RSPB and the Lake District National Park Authority

For immediate use: Saturday 9 June 2007

DOUBLE DELIGHT FOR LAKES OSPREYS AS EGGS HATCH

Two chicks have hatched out overnight in the osprey nest at Bassenthwaite Lake in Cumbria, the Lake District Osprey Project confirmed today (Saturday 9 June 2007)).

At dusk last night, the female osprey was still peacefully incubating her three eggs in the nest overlooking Bassenthwaite Lake, but in a surprise overnight development, this morning two tiny osprey chicks have been spotted in the nest. The first chick hatched out during the night and was first seen at 3.40 am, the second chick was spotted a few hours later. Normally ospreys chick hatch out at least a day apart.

The news has thrilled the Project partners, who have been anxious that the arrival of a new female osprey very late in this year's breeding season, might result in no chicks hatched out this year. In previous years, the chicks have hatched out before the end of May.

Graeme Prest of The Lake District Osprey Project said: "We have been waiting with baited breath for the first egg to hatch for the last few days so to wake up this morning and hear that there are two chicks in the nest is fantastic news! The male will now be kept very busy providing fish for the two chicks and his mate, and of course we are hoping that there will be a third chick!"

The Lake District Osprey Project is a partnership between the Forestry Commission, and the RSPB and the Lake District National Park Authority

Everyone can follow the osprey story either by visiting the Whinlatter Forest Visitor Centre or Dodd Wood near Keswick, or going online. At the Forestry Commission's Whinlatter Visitor Centre pictures beamed from the nest are screened on a giant videowall. The pictures from a camera overlooking the nest can also be seen at www.ospreywatch.co.uk and www.bbc.co.uk/cumbria

A public viewpoint is open at the Forestry Commission's Dodd Wood near Keswick, where osprey project staff set up telescopes between 10am and 5pm daily for visitors to watch the action as part of the RSPB's Aren't Birds Brilliant! initiative.

In 2001, a pair of ospreys re-colonised the Lake District naturally as part of a population expansion from Scotland, where numbers have been increasing since the first pair returned to the Highlands in the 1950s. It was the first time that ospreys had nested in the Lake District for at least 150 years. Up until this year, the same pair of ospreys had subsequently returned to Bassenthwaite Lake every year. However, this spring the original female bird did not return, but to the delight of the Project team (and the male osprey!) a new female has taken over the nest.

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For further information contact:

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Images:

No images of the chicks are currently available, although we hope to have 'screen grabs' within the next few days. Library photographs of ospreys are available in digital format – please contact David Hirst

Additional notes:

1. The Lake District Osprey Project Viewpoint at the Forestry Commission's Dodd Wood gives open-air viewing of the birds. It is located 3 miles north of Keswick, off the A591 – follow signs to Mirehouse. The Viewpoint is open all daylight hours. Between 10 am and 5 pm, the osprey project information team are on hand with telescopes for visitors to use.
2. The Forestry Commission's Whinlatter Visitor Centre near Braithwaite is open all year round and after the ospreys have departed a compilation of highlights from the nest cam footage is shown along with live images from a red squirrel feeder.
3. Aren't birds brilliant! (ABB) is a series of events run by the RSPB all over the UK. It gives everyone the chance to get really close to some of the most exciting birds in Britain. ABB schemes operate away from RSPB reserves, in partnership with other organisations including the Forestry Commission and Lake District National Park Authority. Some schemes are small while others, such as the Lake District Osprey project, may have contact with thousands of people over a season. For information about other Aren't birds brilliant! sites, visit www.rspb.org.uk or phone 01767 680551.
4. Bassenthwaite Lake is a National Nature Reserve and a Special Area of Conservation owned and managed by the Lake District National Park Authority.