

PRESS RELEASE

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

Wednesday 19 April 2006

WHAM! BAM! THANK YOU, MA'AM

EASTER EGG FOR LAKELAND OSPREYS

Just two weeks after arriving back in the Lake District, the female osprey has laid an egg in the nest at Bassenthwaite Lake, the Lake District Osprey Project team confirmed today (Wednesday 19 April).

Following their arrival back in the Lake District earlier this month, the pair of ospreys has wasted no time in settling back into the nest that they have used since 2001. The first egg is thought to have been laid late on Monday night and the female bird was clearly seen incubating her precious 'Easter' egg yesterday morning.

It is hoped that further eggs will be laid in the coming days – ospreys normally lay a clutch of three eggs. Incubation is carried out mainly by the female and takes between 34-40 days.

The Lake District Osprey Project team – a partnership of The Forestry Commission and the RSPB supported by the Lake District National Park Authority – is providing opportunities for everyone to follow the osprey story throughout the summer.

The Easter weekend was a record-breaker for visitors to the osprey viewpoints near Keswick and was the busiest that any of the project team can remember. More than 3,500 visitors headed to the Bassenthwaite area to get a glimpse of Cumbria's famous ospreys over the Easter weekend.

A public viewpoint is now 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. Everyone is welcome at the viewpoint.

At the Whinlatter Visitor Centre, near Braithwaite, pictures beamed from the nest are screened on a giant videowall.

Pictures from a camera overlooking the nest can be seen online at www.ospreywatch.co.uk and www.bbc.co.uk/cumbria

David Hirst of the Lake District Osprey Project said: "There is a huge amount of interest in these fantastic birds and they have many fans not just in Cumbria, but also throughout the world. The response from visitors has already been exceptional, with thousands of people visiting the public viewpoints at Dodd Wood and Whinlatter over the Easter weekend."

The Bassenthwaite ospreys re-colonised England naturally in 2001 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.

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For further information contact:

**David Hirst, RSPB North of England Region on 07885 834889 or 0191 2334321
Paul Gardener, Osprey Communications on 015394 42436**

Images:

Images of ospreys in digital format are available – contact David Hirst on 0191 2334321/Mobile: 07885 834889

Additional notes:

1. The Lake District Osprey 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. Pictures from the nestcam are shown on a videowall at the FC's Whinlatter Visitor Centre, near Braithwaite.
2. For the latest news about the Lake District Osprey Project click on www.ospreywatch.co.uk or 'phone 017687 78469.
3. Bassenthwaite Lake has been owned and managed by the Lake District National Park Authority since 1979 and is now a National Nature Reserve.

4. 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. 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

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds • North of England Office

1 Sirius House • Amethyst Road • Newcastle Business Park • Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YL

Tel: 0191 233 4300 • Fax: 0191 233 4322 • e mail: david.hirst@rspb.org.uk

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