

Welcome to the 2005 season.

Welcome to the 2005 season of the Dennis Puleston Osprey Fund web site. We invite you to experience our Web Site as well as the live video and audio feed from our Osprey Nest Web Cam, which went operational on March 13. Please, join in with others and submit your observations to our database and check the conversations on our message board. Sign our guest book and let us know where you are; we like to know how far we are reaching!

I will give a brief outline of what to expect and when it may happen at the nest, based on the previous years' observations and the input from our expert sources. This will be an approximation of when to expect major events at the nest, so keep checking frequently or you might miss an event! Also, please remember that the purpose of the web cam is to offer to the world an unedited, uncensored look at what the birds go through during the season. We cannot and will not intervene in a cycle that has been repeated for thousands of years. As in the past seasons, you will need to restart your web-cam connection every 30 minutes.

The adults should return to the nest in mid March. They will spend the next couple of weeks courting and making repairs to the nest. During this time the birds will often leave the nest vacant, however the male will frequently bring a gift of fish to the female at the nest. Once the first egg is laid, in the first or second week of April, the nest will rarely be without an adult, usually the female who relies on the male to bring her fish.

The first of the chicks usually will have hatched by mid May, and once the chicks start to hatch the female will assume almost exclusive duty at the nest, incubating, feeding and protecting the chick(s). The male will provide the fish and only occasionally sit on the eggs/chicks.

As the chicks start moving about they begin to compete for the food provided by the adults. By June they display aggressive behavior towards each other, with the strongest and most aggressive getting to eat first while the other(s) must wait. By mid June the chicks have become very competitive and noisy, often pecking and shoving each other in the nest. During this period life for the young chicks is a struggle, and typically some do not survive.

By the end of June the chicks will be stretching their stubby wings and practicing "takeoffs" by facing into the wind, flapping their wings and then hopping into the air a few inches. By early July the adults both leave the nest and chicks for periods of time, although one can often be heard not far away. During these times one of the adults will leave a fish in the nest for the chicks to squabble over. By mid July the chicks will be close to fledging. They have most of their feathers and spend longer periods flapping and lifting off from the nest. By the end of July the nest is often empty. The chicks and the female return to feed,

however the chicks are big and bold enough to challenge the female and she occasionally loses her fish. The male brings fish less and less often, perhaps to encourage the chicks to get their own.

As the adult birds spend August teaching the chicks how to find and catch their own meals the nest is empty for longer periods of time. By the end of August the chicks are about ready to fend for themselves and return to the nest only to rest for a while. The migration south is only a few weeks off. By late September the nest is unused, the migration has started. Most Ospreys are on their way, although there have been birds sighted as late as early December.

We welcome all of our returning observers as well as all newcomers. We hope you enjoy this show of nature!

Dave Shore
Member, DPOF