# Three ospreys share rare nest in Scottish Borders, revealing unusual polygamous behaviour



In a rare and captivating natural phenomenon, three ospreys—two females and one male—have been spotted nesting together near Peebles, in the scenic Scottish Borders. This unusual arrangement, documented by Forestry and Land Scotland, sees the trio sharing a nest that contains four eggs, highlighting a polygamous behaviour that is uncommon among these majestic birds. Experts report that the two females are even taking turns incubating the eggs, which adds a unique dynamic to their shared parenting duties.

Diane Bennett, a project co-ordinator for the Tweed Valley Osprey Project, noted that the primary source of tension within the nest seems to stem from the male’s fish deliveries. Both females compete to seize the meal when he arrives, suggesting that even in cooperation, elements of rivalry persist. The upcoming hatching of the eggs is likely to further intrigue researchers and bird watchers alike, as it could offer fresh insights into how these complex relationships unfold in the avian world.

Such polyandrous arrangements are exceptionally rare among ospreys, who typically engage in monogamous pair bonds, often mating for life. A study by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) indicates that this particular case may be the first of its kind captured on film, showcasing the adaptability of osprey social structures in the face of changing circumstances. In another remarkable incident in Stirlingshire, an osprey named Drunkie caused a stir by simultaneously tending to two nests with females Katrine and Arklet, each of whom laid eggs, further complicating the male's role as both protector and provider.

However, the dynamics of osprey relationships are not always so harmonious. In a distressing occurrence in the Cairngorms National Park, a new male osprey’s aggressive takeover resulted in the destruction of eggs laid by the established female, EJ. This incident highlights the darker side of osprey territoriality and competition, leaving RSPB Scotland hopeful that EJ might pair with the new male and attempt to nest again.

The complexity of osprey relationships is underscored by cases of older birds losing mates to younger rivals, as seen with a legendary osprey known as Lady, who is thought to be one of the oldest of her kind. Faced with competition for her long-time partner, Laddie, the situation raises significant questions about survival and territorial behaviour within these magnificent birds.

As the nesting period unfolds, observers remain keenly interested in how these unique interactions will play out, not just at Glentress but throughout the Scottish landscape, where ospreys have made a remarkable recovery since their near extinction in the UK several decades ago. Their return is a testament to conservation efforts and serves as a reminder of the complex, often surprising nature of wildlife behaviour.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/scotland-osprey-birds-love-triangle-watch-b2756849.html), [[4]](https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/scotlands-wildlife/osprey-fact-file/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/scotland-osprey-birds-love-triangle-watch-b2756849.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-27810357), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-12997953)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands-islands/574747/osprey-love-triangle-ends-in-tragedy/), [[6]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/osprey-love-triangle-as-rival-swoops-on-ladys-man-1508597)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-27810357), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-12997953), [[6]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/osprey-love-triangle-as-rival-swoops-on-ladys-man-1508597)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/scotland-osprey-birds-love-triangle-watch-b2756849.html), [[3]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands-islands/574747/osprey-love-triangle-ends-in-tragedy/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/scotland-osprey-birds-love-triangle-watch-b2756849.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-27810357> - An osprey at a Stirlingshire reserve has been tending to two nests, creating a 'love triangle'. The male, nicknamed Drunkie, mated with two females, Katrine and Arklet, leading to both females laying eggs. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) believes this behavior may be the first time such a scenario has been captured on camera. The male now faces the challenge of providing for both females and their eggs.
3. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands-islands/574747/osprey-love-triangle-ends-in-tragedy/> - In the Cairngorms National Park, a male osprey's intrusion led to the destruction of eggs laid by the resident female, EJ. The new male attacked the nest, resulting in the loss of all three eggs. RSPB Scotland staff hope EJ will re-lay eggs with the new male, but the situation remains uncertain.
4. <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/scotlands-wildlife/osprey-fact-file/> - The Scottish Wildlife Trust provides detailed information on ospreys, including their nesting habits. Ospreys are generally monogamous and pair for life, with both partners having a strong attachment to the nesting site. If a mate fails to return from migration, ospreys will choose another partner, leading to multiple partners over a lifetime.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-12997953> - At a wildlife centre in southwest Scotland, a female osprey appears to have a new suitor after an unidentified male attempted to mate with her. Both male birds flew away together, and staff are waiting to see who will return to the nest. The original pair had successfully reared chicks in previous years.
6. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/osprey-love-triangle-as-rival-swoops-on-ladys-man-1508597> - Lady, believed to be the world's oldest osprey, faces competition as a younger female swoops in to mate with her long-time partner, Laddie. Experts are concerned that Lady may not have survived the migration back to Scotland. The situation raises questions about the dynamics of osprey relationships and territory.
7. <https://news.stv.tv/north/osprey-pair-reunite-as-female-returns-to-nest-for-third-season-at-wildlife-reserve-in-perthshire> - A female osprey, NC0, has returned to her nest at the Loch of the Lowes Wildlife Reserve in Perthshire for a third season. She reunited with her mate, LM12, and they have previously successfully raised three chicks together. The pair quickly resumed nest building and breeding activities.