# Tweed Valley ospreys form rare three-way nesting partnership captured on live stream



Cameras installed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) as part of the Tweed Valley Osprey Project have captured an extraordinary display of avian behaviour that has left birdwatchers both intrigued and entertained. This season, an unusual three-way partnership has emerged among the ospreys, with one female, Mrs O, a newcomer dubbed 'F2', and a young male referred to as Newboy all participating in a polygamous arrangement known as polygyny.

Typically a solitary nesting species, the ospreys of the Tweed Valley are now showing an uncharacteristic level of social interaction. The two females have been seen sharing food and space with each other as well as with their male counterpart. According to Diane Bennett, the project co-ordinator, “So far things are looking good. The females seem amicable and tolerant with both having mated with the male bird and laying four eggs between them.” The dynamic is marked by the females collaborating, with hints of competition become evident primarily during meal times when both rush for fish deliveries.

The sight of two fierce females cooperating so openly is rare. While episode-like rivalries have been noted among ospreys in previous observations, this is the first instance of such a three-way nesting arrangement being documented via live-streaming technology, offering researchers unprecedented insights into these complex social structures. The project has documented similar behaviours in ospreys from other locations, such as reports from the Dyfi Osprey Project in Wales, which highlight polygyny as an unusual yet fascinating survival strategy.

The implications of this nesting arrangement on the soon-to-hatch four eggs remain to be seen, as the stress of rearing multiple chicks presents challenges even for well-established pairs. Historically, the Tweed Valley Osprey Project has monitored the arrival of breeding pairs, like Mrs O and her long-term mate, which has attracted attention since the 1990s. This nest, along with others, forms part of a broader conservation effort aimed at protecting these majestic birds, who migrate thousands of miles from Africa to breed in Scotland each year.

Visitors to the Tweed Valley viewing centre at Glentress are encouraged to witness this unfolding drama live, with streams projected on large screens. Volunteers are stationed to provide insights and context. As Bennett notes, the chance to observe such a unique scenario offers not only entertainment but crucial data to aid ospreys’ understanding and conservation.

In an area where wildlife thrives under careful stewardship, the Tweed Valley Osprey Project stands out as a beacon for both birdwatchers and conservationists alike. The co-operative dynamics of the three ospreys could serve as a pivotal point for future research, reiterating the complexity of animal behaviour and the need for continued monitoring and support in their habitats.

The development of this trio has sparked discussions on the evolutionary advantages of such relationships in ospreys, prompting comparisons to human social structures. However, researchers caution against viewing these behaviours through an anthropocentric lens, urging audiences to appreciate the instincts that drive these bird interactions.

As the season progresses, the drama at the Tweed Valley Osprey Project promises to provide both excitement and critical insights into avian social bonds, proving that nature often operates outside the bounds of conventional relationship norms.

### Reference Map:

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25183754.birdwatchers-baffled-tweed-valley-ospreys-caught-menage-trois/?ref=rss)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25183754.birdwatchers-baffled-tweed-valley-ospreys-caught-menage-trois/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://ospreywatch.blogspot.com/2016/04/polygyny.html)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-40028488), [[4]](https://www.discovertheborders.co.uk/nature-2.html)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25183754.birdwatchers-baffled-tweed-valley-ospreys-caught-menage-trois/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://forestryandland.gov.scot/blog/protective-parents)
5. Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.bordertelegraph.com/news/24265641.latest-tweed-valley-osprey-project-nests-2024/)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25183754.birdwatchers-baffled-tweed-valley-ospreys-caught-menage-trois/?ref=rss), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-18094149)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25183754.birdwatchers-baffled-tweed-valley-ospreys-caught-menage-trois/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-40028488> - An article from BBC News discusses the unusual behavior of two female ospreys vying for the attention of a single male in the Tweed Valley. The Tweed Valley Osprey Project describes this situation as reminiscent of a 'Jeremy Kyle' episode for ospreys. The male osprey, SS, appears overwhelmed by the attention from both females, Mrs O and FS2, leading to a competitive dynamic at the nest. The article highlights the complexities of osprey mating behaviors and the challenges faced by the male in managing multiple female suitors.
3. <https://ospreywatch.blogspot.com/2016/04/polygyny.html> - A blog post from the Twin Cities Metro Osprey Watch discusses instances of polygyny in ospreys, where one male mates with multiple females. The author shares observations from the Dyfi Osprey Project in Wales, noting that such behavior has been documented multiple times. The post emphasizes that while polygyny is uncommon, it occurs when a male has access to multiple nests, sometimes leading to successful chick rearing at both sites. The author also reflects on the natural instincts driving these behaviors, cautioning against anthropomorphizing animal actions.
4. <https://www.discovertheborders.co.uk/nature-2.html> - An article from Discover the Borders highlights the Tweed Valley Osprey Project's success in attracting a regular breeding pair of ospreys that migrate from Africa. The piece details the arrival of the female osprey, Mrs O, and her mate of five years, as they engage in nest renovation and mating activities. The article underscores the project's efforts in monitoring and supporting osprey populations in the Scottish Borders, providing insights into the birds' behaviors and the challenges they face during the breeding season.
5. <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/blog/protective-parents> - A blog post from Forestry and Land Scotland provides an update on the Tweed Valley Osprey Project, focusing on the protective behaviors of the osprey pair, Mrs O and PW3. The article describes how the pair has been observed defending their nest from potential intruders, adopting defensive postures, and alarm calling. It also details the male's efforts in bringing fish to the nest, sharing meals with the female, and ensuring the safety of their eggs. The post highlights the dedication and vigilance of osprey parents in safeguarding their offspring.
6. <https://www.bordertelegraph.com/news/24265641.latest-tweed-valley-osprey-project-nests-2024/> - An article from the Border Telegraph reports on the developments of the Tweed Valley Osprey Project in 2024. It details the return of the resident osprey pair, Camilla and FKO, to nest two, and the unexpected arrival of Mrs O, who attempts to mate with FKO and take over the nest. The piece discusses the dynamics between the two females and the resident male, highlighting the challenges and complexities of osprey mating behaviors. The article also mentions the project's efforts to protect the nest from potential predators like pine martens.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-18094149> - A BBC News article reports on the hatching of an osprey chick in the Tweed Valley, believed to be the first in Scotland for that year. Volunteers observed the chick being fed by the adult ospreys, marking a significant milestone for the Tweed Valley Osprey Project. The article includes insights from project officer Diane Bennett, who describes the successful rearing of chicks as a positive development for the area and Scottish ospreys. The piece also mentions the availability of live camera feeds for the public to view the osprey family.