# Three ospreys form rare love triangle in Scottish Borders nest



In an unusual spectacle, three ospreys have been caught exhibiting rare nesting behaviour in what has been described as a love triangle. Footage released by Forestry and Land Scotland captures the intimate dynamics of two female ospreys and one male, who have set up camp together in Glentress, located near Peebles in the Scottish Borders. Intriguingly, these birds share a nest containing four eggs, which has prompted wildlife experts to comment on the complexities of their interactions.

Diane Bennett, a co-ordinator for the Tweed Valley Osprey project, noted that the polygamous arrangement is uncommon among ospreys. "The only tension witnessed so far has been on the arrival of a fish delivery from the male, as both females scramble to get their share," she highlighted. This compelling behaviour not only offers a window into their intriguing social structure but also raises questions about the eventual hatching of the eggs and how the parental roles might evolve as the chicks arrive.

Similar instances of polygamous behaviour among ospreys have been documented across Scotland, showcasing a broader trend in avian mating dynamics. In a notable case from Stirlingshire, a male osprey named Drunkie has been seen attending to two nests—one with a female named Katrine and the other with Arklet. Experts from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) believe this may represent a pioneering instance of such behaviour being observed and recorded on film. This male is tasked with the dual responsibility of providing for two females, highlighting the often complex social structures within avian populations.

The captivating dynamics of osprey relationships extend to historical contexts as well. A celebrated osprey known as Lady of the Loch, believed to be 29 years old, has garnered attention due to new competition. A younger female has taken residence with Lady’s long-time mate, Laddie, causing concerns about whether Lady will return to reclaim her partner. This scenario has sparked interest among wildlife enthusiasts, drawing them to observe how the rivalry unfolds.

Ospreys, characterised by their impressive fishing skills, often face a myriad of challenges during breeding season, particularly from rival birds. Observations at various reserves indicate that conflicts over nests and mates are not uncommon. For instance, in Caerlaverock, a female osprey is currently at the centre of a bout between two competing males, which has been monitored through a dedicated CCTV setup. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for the well-being of individual birds but also for the conservation efforts aimed at bolstering osprey populations in the region.

Despite the trials faced by these magnificent birds, the ongoing conservation initiatives have played a vital role in their resurgence across the landscape. Efforts have included habitat restoration and protective measures, which have evidently allowed ospreys to thrive in a challenging environment. As the breeding season progresses, the excitement surrounding these love triangles and the intricate behaviours associated with them only deepens, inviting nature enthusiasts to witness the unfolding drama of avian life in Scotland.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/scotland-osprey-birds-love-triangle-watch-b2756849.html), [[4]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/osprey-love-triangle-as-rival-swoops-on-ladys-man-1508597)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-27810357), [[5]](https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/2019/04/daily-life-on-an-osprey-nest/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/osprey-love-triangle-as-rival-swoops-on-ladys-man-1508597), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-12997953)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-44466690), [[7]](https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/highland-ospreys-thriving-but-only-thanks-to-intense-efforts-1476477)

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## 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 observed tending to two nests, creating a 'love triangle' situation. The male osprey, nicknamed Drunkie, mated with two females, Katrine and Arklet. Both females laid eggs, leading to a complex nesting scenario. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) believes this behavior may be the first of its kind captured on camera. The situation presents challenges for the male, who must provide for both females and their respective nests.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-12997953> - At a wildlife center in southwest Scotland, osprey watchers are observing a 'love spat' involving a female osprey and two male suitors. Since 2006, the same pair of ospreys have been returning to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve at Caerlaverock. However, a previously unidentified male osprey has attempted to mate with the female, leading to a competition between the two males. The center monitors the nest via a CCTV camera to determine which male will ultimately return to the nest.
4. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/osprey-love-triangle-as-rival-swoops-on-ladys-man-1508597> - Concerns have arisen that Scotland's oldest osprey, known as Lady of the Loch, may have died after a younger female swooped in and set up home with her former mate, Laddie. Lady, believed to be 29 years old, has been returning to breed at a Perthshire nature reserve for 25 years. The new female's arrival has caused excitement among wildlife enthusiasts, who are waiting to see if Lady will return to reclaim her mate and nest.
5. <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/2019/04/daily-life-on-an-osprey-nest/> - The Scottish Wildlife Trust provides insights into the daily behaviors of a breeding osprey pair, LM12 and LF15. The pair share incubation duties, with LF15 incubating for 75% of the day and LM12 for 24%. The article highlights the challenges faced by the pair, including frequent intrusions by other birds, and emphasizes the importance of monitoring these behaviors to ensure the success of the breeding season.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-44466690> - EJ, a female osprey at the RSPB's Loch Garten reserve in the Cairngorms, will not be raising chicks in her 15th breeding season. Three eggs laid by EJ have failed to hatch. EJ remains Loch Garten's most successful breeding female osprey, having previously raised 25 chicks. The article discusses the challenges EJ faced this season, including defending her nest from rivals and a pine marten, and the potential for successful breeding beyond the age of 25.
7. <https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/highland-ospreys-thriving-but-only-thanks-to-intense-efforts-1476477> - Highland ospreys are thriving due to intense conservation efforts. The article details the return of a male osprey to a Scottish forest in late March, followed by the arrival of the female a week later. The pair renew their bond, and the female lays eggs in mid-April. The male provides fish for the female during incubation, and the article emphasizes the importance of these efforts in supporting the osprey population in the region.