



Ours to Protect on Sunshine 106.8 – June 12th 2023

On this week's show we looked at the reintroduction of the Osprey to Ireland, we talked with Dr Philip Buckley on the reintroduction of Ospreys to Ireland.

Osprey are a magnificent fish-eating bird of prey that became extinct in Ireland many years ago. The NPWS has been researching and preparing for the potential reintroduction of these birds for a number of years and now expects to reach a significant milestone with the arrival of the first 12 Osprey chicks in July. The reintroduction programme aims to establish a viable, free-ranging Osprey population that eventually breeds in Ireland.



The project has been led by a highly experienced NPWS team, headed up by Divisional Managers Dr Phillip Buckley and Eamonn Meskell, who also led and delivered the ongoing and highly successful White-tailed Eagle Reintroduction Programme in Ireland. The experience gained and knowledge acquired during the Eagle programme will be of great benefit to the Osprey Reintroduction Programme.

As part of a programme of events celebrating National Biodiversity Week, Minister of State Malcolm Noonan visited some of the nesting platforms currently in place for migratory Osprey who sometimes visit Ireland. New nesting platforms are being erected in Ireland's Southeast, on a key migratory route for Osprey between Northern Europe and Africa. They will be in place and ready for the arrival of the chicks this summer.

Ospreys became extinct in Ireland 150 years ago. They have a long heritage in Ireland, with several place names around Ireland, particularly in Munster, referencing the bird. For example, Killarney National Park is home to a site known as Osprey Rock at Loch Léinn pointing to the bird's history in Ireland, particularly close to rivers and lakes as it hunts for fish. While the programme may take some time for the species to begin breeding again, the reintroduction of this fish-eating apex predator will provide significant insights into the health of the Irish ecosystem, and its waters over time.

Key information about Osprey (source: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds RSPB)

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/osprey>

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