

Sea eagles are an iconic Scottish species that are being re-introduced to the east coast of Scotland by RSPB Scotland in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland. The sixth year of the re-introduction has been made possible by Heritage Lottery Fund and LEADER as part of SEEVIEWS (Sea Eagle Education Viewing Interpretation and Engagement within Scotland).

Following two earlier phases of re-introduction in 1970s and 1990s a population of 57 breeding pairs is now established on the west coast principally on Mull, Skye and Wester Ross. Sea eagles breed slowly, and the future of the Scottish population depends on creating new centres of population in favourable areas.

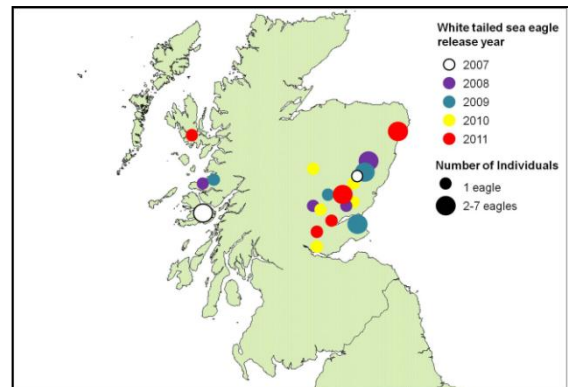
The east coast re-introduction began in 2007 in north Fife. This part of the east coast was chosen for its rich coastal, estuary and wetland habitats. Since 2007 we have released 85 birds (all from Norwegian nests containing two or more chicks). 85 birds will be enough to establish a sustainable population and ensure that the east coast is once again home to these magnificent birds.

Sea Eagle Sightings

All of the sea eagles released by RSPB Scotland on the east coast of Scotland are fitted with wing tags and radio (VHF) tags with a battery life of 5 years, allowing us to monitor their movements and survival. Both of the sea eagle Project Staff, Rhian and Heather have been busy radio tracking sea eagles, the distribution map summarises where the birds have been recorded over the summer of 2012.

The colour of the wing tag represents the year that the bird was released and the letter or number represents the individual bird.

Distribution of sea eagles (Summer 2012)



A-Z or 0-9	2007 – white wing tag	A-Z & 0-9	2008 – silver over red colour ring*
A-Z or 0-9	2009 – turquoise wing tag	0-9	2010 – yellow wing tag
A-Z or 0-9	2011 – red wing tag	A-Z or 0-	2012 – grey wing tag with yellow letters

* Due to a temporary change in legislation

Quite a few of the older sea eagles are spending time up the Aberdeenshire coast and inland Angus. A few of the birds are also spending time on the west coast with older wild fledged birds on Mull and Skye.

Two sea eagles released in 2009; Turquoise 1 and Z, are being regularly spotted at Tentsmuir Point in Fife. One of the birds released in 2011; Red E has been spotted in various locations south and west of Perth. Earlier in the year, another 2011 bird; Red Z was spotted at RSPB Nature Reserve Loch of Strathbeg, more recently, RSPB wardens spotted Red A at the same reserve (Loch of Strathbeg is a wonderful wetland in Aberdeenshire). Visit the [blog](#) for a full up-date on the adventures of Red A.

If you are lucky enough to spot one of these magnificent birds please let us know:

Online: [Sightings Form](#) Email: eastscotlandseaeagles@rspb.org.uk Call us: 01738 630783

2012 Release Update

The final cohort of sea eagle chicks arrived in east Scotland on the 22nd June. The chicks were flown from Norway to Edinburgh and were greeted by RSPB staff and representatives from SNH, Forestry commission, Scottish Government, and the Norwegian Honorary Consul General; David Windmill.

Unfortunately, due to lower than average reproductive success in the Norwegian sea eagle population this year, only six chicks were collected and brought back to Scotland. Chicks are only taken from nests containing twins or triplets, and this year nests contained mainly single chicks which must be left in the nest. Despite this, we are extremely grateful for the mammoth effort put in by our Birdlife partners in Norway to collect these birds.



The sea eagles were kept in captivity for seven weeks since their arrival and fed on a varied diet of fish (donated by M and M Spink and Fish In Creiff), venison (donated by Highland Game) and grey squirrels (donated by Aberdeenshire grey squirrel cull).

Due to bad weather the sea eagle release was delayed by a week, we wanted to give them the best possible conditions for taking their first flight. On Monday 20th and Thursday 23rd August we had excellent conditions for a release, bright and breezy.



Two birds were released on Monday; Grey A and T viewed by the East Scotland Sea Eagle (ESSE) volunteers as a thank you for their dedication throughout the six years of the project. The final four birds (Grey H, O, X and R) were released on Thursday in two sessions; the first session was viewed by our funders who without their support the re-introduction of sea eagles would not have been possible. The second session was covered by [BBC](#) and [STV](#); click on the links to see videos of the release on line.

The fledglings were not alone in the woods; Red E from the 2011 cohort returned to the release wood and was seen perched with Grey A.

This is the final time that sea eagles will be released in east Scotland, it is hoped these 85 young eagles will now go on to establish a viable breeding population on the east coast of Scotland.

Tourism

Experience on Mull, has demonstrated that sea eagles act as a flagship for the natural heritage and wildlife tourism of these areas. Research has shown that of a total annual tourist spend of £100m on Mull, £5m was attracted by the presence of sea eagles.

Sea eagles on the east coast should provide an opportunity to create significant economic benefits through nature tourism and may deliver economic advantages for rural communities and businesses.

We have liaised with a number of local tourism providers and communities in Fife, Perthshire and Angus and national bodies to make them aware of the benefits of the re-introduction of sea eagles in east Scotland.

If we have not already spoken to you and would like to find out more about how sea eagles could benefit your business or community contact meriem.kayoueche-reeve@rspb.org.uk for more information.

Events



This summer has been a busy one for Meriem and her volunteers, we have so far attended; four highland games, six farmers markets, three agricultural shows, one festival and a family fun day. We have had over 1000 sea eagle conversations with visitors and residents across Perthshire, Fife and Angus who we hope are enthusing their friends, families and neighbours about the project.

On Sunday 19th August we held a very successful Eagle Extravaganza! at Jamesfield Organic Centre. We used this event to say thank you to the residents of Newburgh and Abernethy for the support of the project and answer any questions and alleviate any concerns about the release of sea eagles in east Scotland. We also had a lot of fun making model sea eagles out of toilet rolls, weaving a life size nest out of willow and learning how to radio track the birds.

Education

Summer 2012 has been a busy term for schools in east Scotland! Many chose to take part in our exciting education project to discover why the sea eagle reintroduction is happening on their doorstep.

Each school took a really creative and individual approach to the project. One class decided to combine it with visits to their Forest School in local woods. As a result they built bird-watching hides, and created life-sized models of eagles and their nests, all using sticks! *[photo]*

Some schools booked visits from RSPB staff to learn more about the project in a 'hands'-on' way. And every school involved was invited to join a video conference with our experts – sea eagle Staff Rhian and Heather.



The resources are available to all schools in East Scotland through Glow (the Scottish schools' Intranet) and are entitled, 'Sea Eagles, A New Beginning', and any P5-S2 class is welcome to join. Contact kate.walters@rspb.org.uk for more information.

Sea Eagles: Historic Creatures

Sea eagles have been revered throughout the centuries. In Gaelic their name is *Iolair suile na grein*, which means 'the eagle with the sunlit eye'. In Shetland and in some parts of mainland Scotland it is still known as *the Erne*, derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for 'the soarer'.

Some evidence found supports the theory that for a few prehistoric communities sea eagles held some religious significance. Their bones have been found with human remains in 6000 year old burial mounds in Orkney, known as Tomb of the Eagles.

Images of sea eagles have even been found throughout Britain including a Pictish stone carving found in Orkney [photo] and illuminated depictions in medieval Celtic church manuscripts. It would seem that sea eagles have been revered for hundreds of years.



Thank you

20 plus volunteers that have been involved with ESSE from the very beginning, they have; given talks in schools, assisted with monitoring of released birds, entered data, attended events to spread awareness, taken photographs, made films and assisted with feeds while the birds were in captivity.

ESSE could not have been possible without their hard work and dedication, to thank them for their efforts; we invited them to watch two juvenile sea eagles being released.

Funders



If you would like to:

- Report a sighting of a sea eagle
- Volunteer with the ESSE
- Receive further information about the project

Please:

- Go online: [Sea Eagle Sightings form](#)
- Email us : eastscootlandseaeagles@rspb.org.uk
- Call us: 01738 696609
- Write to us: RSPB Scotland, Tayside and Fife Office, 1 Atholl Crescent, Perth, PH15NG



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voices for
nature