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PRESS RELEASE

Issued on behalf of The Lake District Osprey Project – a partnership between the Forestry Commission, the Lake District National Park Authority and the RSPB

DISAPPOINTMENT AS ONE OF THE LAKES OSPREY CHICKS DIES

One of the Lake District osprey chicks has not been seen in the nest since the weekend and is now assumed to have died, the Lake District Osprey Project announced today (Tuesday 17 June).

Two chicks hatched during the week of 9th June but only one chick now remains in the nest. The news comes after the project team studied recent pictures recorded by a camera overlooking the nest site. They have concluded that the adult birds are now just feeding the one chick.

It is not known why the chick perished. However, there was heavy rain in the Lake District in the week that the chicks hatched, and the bad weather may have contributed to the death of the younger of the two chicks.

Although disappointed by the news, the partners in the osprey project say that they are pleased with the progress of the remaining chick, which is receiving regular supplies of food from its parents.

Graeme Prest, Chair of The Lake District Osprey Project steering group, said: "We are sad that one of the two chicks has perished. It is very disappointing news, because we were hoping to have two chicks fledge from the nest for the second year running. However, the first few days after hatching are always the toughest time for the tiny osprey chicks, and sadly, the youngest one simply lost the battle for survival.

"However, we are still fortunate to have one chick remaining in the nest and we will be watching its progress anxiously during the coming days and weeks. If all goes well this chick should be the fourth one to successfully fly from the nest in three years, which is an excellent record."

A camera overlooking the nest is giving the Lake District Osprey Project team a remarkable insight into the private life of the ospreys, allowing them minute-by-minute updates on the action at the nest.

From tomorrow (Wednesday 18 June) all the up and downs of life in the osprey nest can be seen on giant screens in the Forestry Commission's Whinlatter Visitor Centre, near Keswick. The Centre re-opens on Wednesday after a £500,000 makeover to provide better facilities and a new "Osprey Experience" feature.

Mr Prest added: "The opening of the Forestry Commission's Whinlatter Visitor Centre marks the start of an exciting new phase for the Lake District Osprey Project and offers a host of facilities for the many visitors who come to see the ospreys. Celebrations for the opening will be somewhat subdued by the news of the death of the chick, but there will still be lots of activity by the remaining chick and its parents for visitors to enjoy over the coming months."

The rare, fish-eating ospreys are nesting in woodland near Bassenthwaite Lake in Cumbria. The Lakes pair is at the forefront of a return of ospreys to England after an absence of more than 150 years. This is the third year that the ospreys have nested near Bassenthwaite Lake and they have already successfully raised three chicks: one in 2001 and two chicks last year.

The Lake District Osprey Project is a partnership between the Forestry Commission, The Lake District National Park Authority and the RSPB.

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Where to see the ospreys:

The Lake District Osprey Viewpoint at Dodd Wood, 3 miles north of Keswick is now open for visitors and gives open-air viewing of the nest from a safe distance. Between 10 am and 5 pm, osprey project staff are on hand with telescopes for visitors to use. It is located off the a591 – follow signs to 'Mirehouse'.

Live pictures from a camera overlooking the ospreys' nest are relayed to television monitors at the Forestry Commission's Whinlatter Visitor Centre, located west of Braithwaite on the B5292 and can also be seen on the Lake District Osprey Project website – www.ospreywatch.co.uk and the BBC Cumbria website at www.bbc.co.uk/cumbria