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Border Ospreys

FIRST EGG

By **Rosieshields** on May 1, 2025

First sight of the first egg of 2025

I was waiting until an egg appeared before writing this blog but was getting concerned that time was passing and I was still waiting for the event. So yesterday I announced that I wasn't going to wait any longer and would have to write and cover the egg arrival on a later blog. I jest not but, 2 and a half hours after I made that announcement to the people I was with at the time, Augusta (Blue 500) laid her first egg of the season! Why do they constantly make me eat my words? It's hardly a challenge these days for them but they still seem to get enjoyment out of it. When will I learn not to make pronouncements that give them these opportunities?

Anyway, the first egg was laid on 30 Apr at 1544, with Samson in attendance, and we had our first view a few minutes later. As ever, Samson has shown a great deal of interest in its arrival and has been eager to take on incubation duties right away. 500 is more than happy to oblige and spent much of the rest of the day sitting up on the nest perch or standing beside Samson on the nest. She took over incubating overnight and they took turns with the egg, either incubating it, guarding it, or shielding it from the heat (that doesn't happen very often in Scotland!).

Samson taking his turn at guarding the egg

It's been quite an eventful time since the last blog, with Samson and 500 re-establishing their bond after the traumas of last season. Thankfully, fish seem to have been in greater supply than they were last year and Samson has been able to bring decent sized trout and grayling back to the nest on a regular basis, and has kept 500 well fed.

A sizeable trout lunch inbound

However, he has been doing a lot of "teasing", which is seen more frequently with brand new rather than established pairs. He flies in with a fish, sometimes overflying the nest or landing briefly, but any attempt by her to grab it results in him flying off and sitting in a nearby tree, sometimes but not always eating bits of the fish. This is repeated several times until she manages to grab and hang onto the fish or he gets bored and finally offers it to her. It has led to a number of wrestling matches on the nest and a couple of instances of one of them being dragged across the nest by the other with both still hanging on to the prize. She is certainly not as vocal as she was last year, so perhaps he is confused by her lack of food begging but I hope that that behaviour will stop now because we certainly don't want any risk to eggs.

We have had three osprey intruders since Samson returned. On 15 Apr, we had a left leg ringed male osprey do a couple of low level attacks on the nest but without stopping. He came in so fast that it was impossible to read the ring number but he did not land as both resident birds successfully guarded the nest (even though Augusta fell off after the second pass).

On 22 Apr, we had a visit from male blue 680 who landed on the nest and then attempted to mate with Augusta. She shrugged him off and he

disappeared. He visited us last year and was hatched in the local area in 2021 but clearly has yet to find a territory of his own.

Blue 680 attempt  attract Augusta

The third ringed intruder was far more persistent. Blue 565, a female hatched at Threave in Dumfries and Galloway in 2021, attacked Augusta at about 0430 on 28 Apr while it was still dark, knocking her off the nesting perch, and the attacks continued on and off until about 0930 that morning. On several occasions, she landed on the nest when Augusta was also there, and they spent minutes staring each other out or waiting for one of them to make a move. In the end, Augusta completely lost patience and took flight, using the breeze to hover into position and she launched a fierce attack on 565 from directly above. 565 finally got the hint and disappeared, intruding at Kielder some 2 hours later.

Augusta just about to evict Blue 565

The only downside over this period was that human intruders twice disturbed the birds from the nest. Both were dog walkers and I was able to stop one before they got very far because I was there. The second person walked right under the nest, causing Augusta to fly, and got to one of my notices (the walker had ignored my first notice). It was clear the notice was being read because he then turned and walked back but further out into the field (!), although the damage had already been done by then. I was too far away to call him or inform him of what he had done. I have large notices both ends of the tree line and in the fields both above and below; it couldn't be clearer that people should not walk there but, I suppose there will always be those that don't look or just ignore information. It is very frustrating.

The next egg is due to be laid on Sat, all things being equal but, with immaculate timing as ever, the computer is being a bit temperamental and

refusing to download the videos. I'm hoping it's my lack of techy know-how that's to blame and that Jain, my IT whizz, will sort out the problem for me without any loss of service. Whatever happens I'll be in touch with news next week.

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