



# Record number of wild White-tailed Eagle chicks hatched in England this year with first chick to fledge in Dorset for over 240 years.

Our friends at the Roy Dennis Wildlife foundation and Forestry England have an exciting update for you all:

## PRESS RELEASE

A record **THREE** White-tailed Eagle chicks have successfully fledged from **TWO** wild nests in England. The chicks were reared by White-tailed Eagles that were released as part of the ground breaking conservation project by Forestry England and the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation to return this lost species to England.

Two different pairs of White-tailed Eagles successfully bred this year. This included the first chick in **Dorset** for over 240 years, and two chicks raised in a nest in **Sussex**.

A single male chick (G834) fledged from a nest in Dorset. The parent birds – **G463** (male) and **G466** (female) released in 2020 – settled in the county and paired up in 2023. This is their first successful breeding attempt and made more remarkable by the fact that the male adult bird has only one leg after it lost this four years ago.

Two chicks, both females (G841 and G842), fledged this year from a nest in Sussex. Both are the offspring of two white-tailed eagles released by the project in 2020. The parent birds – G405 and G471 – were the same pairing that bred in 2023 and 2024.

This year’s successful breeding brings the number of these iconic birds born in the wild through the project to six. In 2023 a single chick was born, the first in England since the eighteenth century when the species was lost due to persecution. A further two chicks were born in the summer of 2024.

All of the chicks are fitted with satellite tags so that the project team can track their progress. Over the last year they have used satellite data to follow the fledglings as they have explored widely across the UK.

White-tailed Eagles typically reach breeding maturity at around four or five years old. From the birds released by the project, three pairs have formed and established territories in southern England. Several of the younger birds are also present in potential future breeding areas typically close to freshwater wetlands or the coast, where the birds can catch fish, which is their preferred food. In time, it is hoped that a population of 6-10 breeding pairs will become established within 60 kilometres of the release site on the Isle of Wight.

**Roy Dennis OBE, Founder of the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation**, said:

“We are delighted to see another year of successful breeding and that two pairs have now reached this key stage. This is a long-term project, and it will take some years before the population is fully restored but the progress made over the last year has been incredibly encouraging. We have some well-established pairs and two that are actively breeding. We hope to build on this progress, and I’m really pleased that we have been able to release an additional 8 birds this year to further boost the population.”

“I always find it particularly rewarding to see so much support for these magnificent birds and the positive impact they are having on so many people’s relationship with the natural world.”

**Steve Egerton-Read, White-Tailed Eagle Project Officer for Forestry England**, said:

“We have been patiently monitoring these nests for many months and hoping they would be successful. It is always such an exciting time but also incredibly nerve wracking! This was especially the case for the pair of eagles in Dorset who were first time parents. It was an incredible moment when we caught our first glimpse of that tiny fluffy chick in the nest, but equally, it is anxious time as the parents get to grips with what they need to do. Ultimately, it has been so rewarding to see this pair of eagles, often spotted in and around Dorset, care for the chick all the way through to it fledging the nest. Now it won’t be long until he is starting his own journey and hopefully one day, he will breed somewhere in southern England.

“Returning lost species like the White-tailed Eagle is a key part of Forestry England’s approach to restoring biodiversity and helping nature to recover. We hope that in years to come these iconic birds will become a much more common sight, inspiring future generations and deepening their connection with nature.”

White-tailed Eagles are Britain’s largest birds of prey with a wingspan of up to 2.5 metres and were once widespread across England. Human persecution caused their extinction, with the last pair breeding in southern England in 1780. In 2019, Forestry England and the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation began reintroducing these iconic birds to the English landscape.

To date, 45 young White-tailed Eagles have been released. This includes eight birds released this summer from the team’s base on the Isle of Wight.

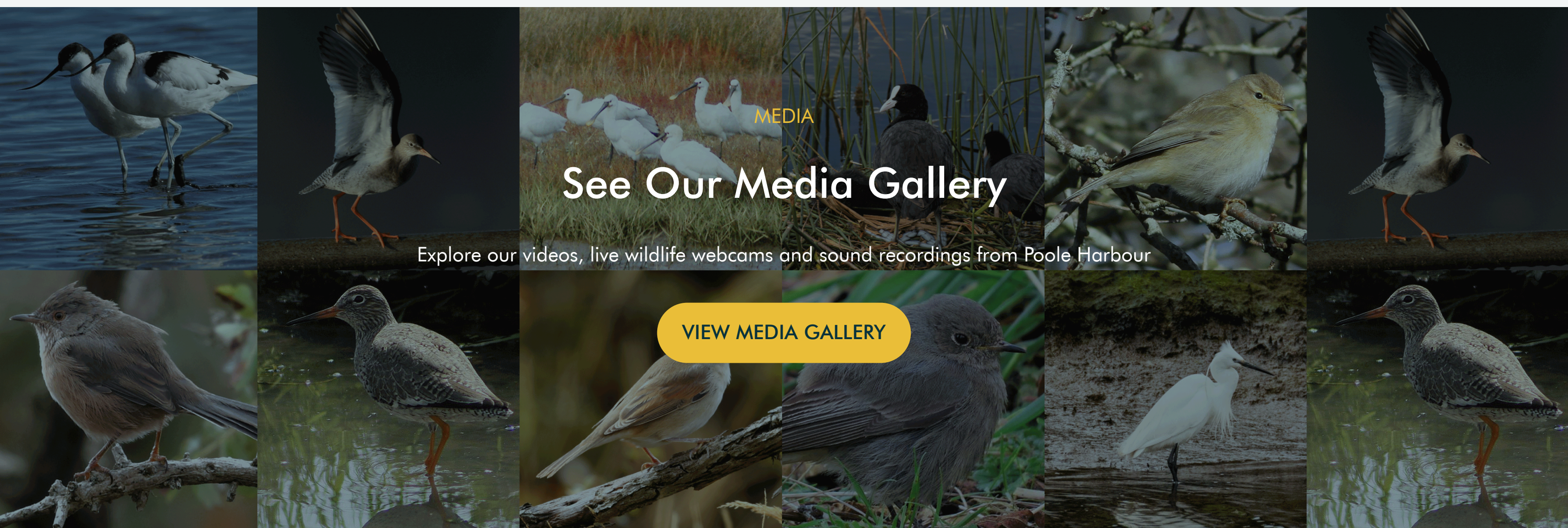
The reintroduction of White-tailed Eagles is conducted under licence from Natural England, the Government’s wildlife licensing authority. Birds for release are collected from wild nests in Scotland under licence from NatureScot before being transported to England with valuable support from Civil Air Support. The birds are subsequently reared and released on the Isle of Wight, all birds released by the project are fitted with satellite tags.

White-tailed Eagles are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Disturbing, destroying or interfering with them and their nests are criminal offences. The specific locations of this year’s nests are not being disclosed for the welfare of the birds and to prevent any disturbance to them or the landowner this year or if the birds return to breed at the same location.

## ENDS

This is of course brilliant news and such a huge milestone for the project. Over the last 5-years the White-tailed Eagles from the reintroduction program have given many thousands of people a fantastic set of nature experiences across the Dorset landscape and from our series of boat trips during the year. Therefore it’s incredibly important not to discuss, suggest, speculate or rumour where nest sites may be online or on social media as it’s irrelevant to the success. Whats important is the fact they’ve found somewhere safe and secure to breed and all being well will do so for years to come.

### Adult White-tailed Eagle G466 feeding chick at Dorset nest – Forestry England



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