

Media Release

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Britain's extinct ospreys breed on Cors Dyfi thanks to HLF

Keen bird watcher Heather Corfield has spent a number of years volunteering her time at local wildlife reserves to develop her hobby. In the summer of 2011 she reaped her rewards when she captured on film three osprey chicks hatching on the Dyfi estuary, the first to fledge there since the 17th century, thanks to a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

As one of five people sharing their experience in HLF's new *Heritage Matters in Wales* magazine, Heather is encouraging others to put their free time to good use and learn new skills to help develop their hobbies while playing a part in the heritage on their doorstep.

49 year-old Heather from the West Midlands began volunteering in 2004 to enhance her knowledge and understanding of local wildlife. She became involved in the Dyfi Osprey Project three years ago to help with the protection and conservation of a nesting pair of ospreys, one of only two pairs in Wales. The birds, which were once commonplace in Wales were last known to breed in 1604.

The Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust received a grant of £50,000 from HLF to fund the project which provided volunteers with training in wildlife monitoring and recording, digital technology skills and front of house, educational and outreach training.

Heather said: "Working at Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve has provided me with a whole host of new experiences and specialist skills. My day job involves sitting at a computer in an office so getting the opportunity to work outside and interact with visitors is a welcome change.

"A key part of the project was to keep the ospreys' nest under constant watch so the training we had in operating live cameras was absolutely essential. Someone had to be there all the time to operate the camera, it felt like a big responsibility but a challenge we were all keen to take on and it certainly paid off. It's an experience I will never forget."

Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve is home to more than 100 bird species and 48 plant species as well as significant populations of otter, bank vole, wood mouse and dormouse. The reserve is within the UNESCO Biosphere designation covering the Dyfi estuary, one of only two Biospheres in the UK.

Along with 70 other volunteers, Heather continues to help out at the reserve at least once a week and finds herself learning something new every time she visits. She said, "I still get a thrill from spotting new species of wildlife, one of my favourite being the common lizard. I had never even seen a lizard before coming here!"

"My favourite part of the job is taking visitors around the reserve to spot wildlife. We regularly get visits from locals who come to check up on their birds! There's a real sense of pride that the ospreys have returned to breed on the Dyfi estuary and it's fantastic to see that the reserve attracts so many visitors, including a number of holiday makers to the area."

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: "Projects like these give people the opportunity to develop new skills and grow in confidence while exploring their natural history."

"People are at the heart of HLF projects and by giving training to volunteers like Heather we can ensure the ecological and wildlife heritage of Wales is preserved for future generations to explore and learn from. The *Heritage Matters* magazine was created to celebrate the fantastic people behind the projects and will hopefully encourage others to volunteer and make a real difference in their communities."

Dyfi volunteers frequently host a variety of public events about ospreys and other wildlife including moth evenings, nightjar walks and botany days, in addition to coordinating educational visits from local community groups and schools. For more information visit www.dyfiospreyproject.com

To find out more about heritage projects funded by the HLF or to request copies of *Heritage Matters*, visit www.hlf.org.uk/wales

You can also keep up to date with Heritage Lottery Fund Wales on Facebook.

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For further information please contact Elinor Evans, Helen Newton or Kate Sullivan at Equinox Communications on 02920 764100 or hlf@equinoxcommunications.co.uk

Note to editors

Captions: Volunteer Heather Corfield guiding a young visitor at Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve / Britain's extinct ospreys breed on Cors Dyfi thanks to HLF

Volunteering/skills/training facts –

- More than £86.3m has been awarded to over 1,484 projects in Wales that involve volunteers. More than 98% of grants awarded in the last year have created volunteering opportunities
- Volunteering is a cornerstone of HLF projects. Our research indicates that, on average, 13 volunteers are involved in every project, providing nearly 450 hours of volunteering time per project ¹ – that's a total of 667,800 volunteering hours across Wales!
- HLF has awarded £49.3m to 179 projects in Wales that have included sessions for learners of all ages.
- Over 60 projects in Wales have offered participants the chance to learn new skills such as blacksmithing, textile and paper conservation, traditional building skills and dry stone walling
- 64 new work-based training opportunities have been created in Wales through our Training Bursary programme which aims to address specific skills shortages in the heritage sector

¹ Ipsos MORI, 2009, *ibid.*