

Ospreys and Business Studies

A Conservation Based Case Study

Ospreys are large fish eating birds of prey, which became extinct in England in the C19th. The reintroduction of ospreys to Rutland water was done with the prime intention of conservation.

As a conservation measure it has been a great success in Rutland and has directly contributed to the appearance of other breeding populations in Wales, Northumberland and the Lake District. When the first birds were introduced to Rutland, no one had any idea about the extent of the economic side effects that would take place in Britain's smallest county.

From just a few birds being introduced by a band of dedicated conservationists, the Rutland ospreys have now become an important tourist attraction, with a major economic impact on the county. The economics would make a good and stimulating case study for business studies students.



Ospreys and Business Studies - cont

Background information can be obtained on the internet including the Rutland tourist websites and www.lrwt.org.uk/rutland-ospreys but here is some background information and a few starting facts and figures;

1. Over 30.000 people a year now visit the Lyndon Nature Reserve to see the Rutland ospreys. While some of these people are local, a large majority have travelled into Rutland primarily for the purpose of seeing the ospreys. Visitors come from all over the world, the nature reserve visitors book for a typical week in August included entries from visitors from Australia, India, France and the USA. All of these visitors stay somewhere, eat, fuel their cars and buy souvenirs, making for a wide impact on the Rutland tourist industry.
2. Visitors to the nature reserve pay an entry fee.
3. On average each visitor to the nature reserve will spend (additionally to the entry fee) £2/head in the small shop on the reserve.
4. Oakham, the county town of Rutland, uses the ospreys as part of its signage and publicity.
5. A local brewery, brews an 'Osprey Ale'.
6. A local pub has osprey dedicated foods on its menu, from which a token amount of money goes to conservation.
7. Osprey watching cruises on Rutland Water are run on board 'The Rutland Belle'.
8. The huge international Bird Fair held every year on the shores of Rutland water attributes some of its success to the presence of the ospreys. The fair has now contributed over £3 million of its profits to conservation projects around the world.
9. The Rutland ospreys are the subject of 2 highly acclaimed books. Ozzie's Migration, children's book by Ken Davies, and The Rutland Ospreys by Tim Mackrill.



There has been a similar 'osprey effect' on the community around Loch Garten in Scotland which has led to a similar impact on local tourism in what had been a small remote community in the Highlands.