

A HISTORY OF OSPREYS



(C) Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust

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WOW Day 2: find out more about the history of ospreys in the UK and where you can see these amazing birds.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE



10 - 15 million years ago: fossil discoveries show ospreys existed!



Did you know:
ospreys didn't breed in England for over 150 years!

1200 - 165 BC: the Old Testament mentions ospreys among birds not to be eaten.

1609: Shakespeare mentions ospreys in one of his plays, Coriolanus - he must have seen ospreys himself!

“
*I think he'll be to Rome,
as is the osprey to the
fish, who takes it by
sovereignty of nature*”



(C) Pete Murray

1700 - 1900: Ospreys were **persecuted** by humans for collections. Eggs were taken and birds were shot and kept in glass cases.

1847: ospreys became **locally extinct** in England and Wales.

1916: ospreys became **locally extinct** in Scotland.

REWILDING BRITAIN'S SKIES



Although ospreys were extinct in the UK, there are many other populations around the world. Ospreys have what we know as a **cosmopolitan distribution** and can be found on every continent except from Antarctica!

Ospreys were only extinct as a **breeding bird** and there were sightings of ospreys in the UK during the spring and autumn.

1954

A pair of ospreys, believed to be of Scandinavian origin, kick-started the slow recovery of the population of ospreys in Scotland, having successfully raised chicks close to Loch Garten, Aviemore.

Since then the population of ospreys in Scotland is on the increase, with an estimated 300 breeding pairs!

With it being predicated to take over 100 years for ospreys to **naturally repopulate** central England, a new project began, which aimed to **reintroduce** ospreys to Rutland Water Nature Reserve, Rutland. The Rutland Osprey Project.

1996

2001

A pair of ospreys successfully bred and raised a single chick at Rutland Water Osprey Project. The first pair of ospreys to breed in central England in over 150 years!

Ospreys nested for the first time in Wales, in the Glaslyn Valley (Glaslyn Ospreys). In 2005, they celebrated their first 2 chicks! A pioneering year for the Welsh osprey population.

2004

2016

A new pair of ospreys bred in Cumbria at Foulshaw Moss (managed by Cumbria Wildlife Trust) which successfully raised 2 chicks!

Another exciting osprey reintroduction project began at Poole Harbour, Dorset, to help reinstate an osprey population in the south of England (Birds of Poole Harbour). So far, they have an unpaired female, CJ7, who is awaiting a suitable partner!

2017

2020

The UK now has between 300 and 400 breeding pairs of ospreys, most of which can be found in Scotland, but is ever on the increase. There are now many more sites in England and Wales, other than those mentioned, where you can see ospreys at.

(C) Lynn Glasby

WHY DID THEY BECOME EXTINCT?



(C) Aleberto Benito Ruiz

There are many reasons why a **species** may become extinct, whether just locally, like the osprey, or internationally, like the dodo. Some become extinct as a result of **natural causes**, but others are due to **unnatural or human causes**.

Natural causes include: natural changes in **climate**, spread of disease and other natural disasters.

Other, human causes include: destruction of habitat, pollution and **climate change**.

Like with many UK birds of prey, ospreys have been **persecuted** by humans, causing, in the osprey's case, **local extinction** as a breeding bird in the UK. But what were the direct causes of this?

- Egg collectors - this became popular in the Victorian era.
- Habitat destruction.
- Shooting - ospreys competed for fish with anglers and fish farms.
- Ingestion of chemicals - poisonous chemicals such as organochlorines, pesticides and mercury contaminated the waterways, which were ingested by fish and later transferred to ospreys when they ate the fish.



(C) Scottish Wildlife Trust

KEY WORDS

Locally extinct: a species which can no longer be found in the wild in a particular area/country but can be found elsewhere in the world.

Persecution: something which is badly treated for a particular reason.

Natural causes: causes which would occur anyway without input from people.

Climate: the average weather in a given area over a longer period of time.

Species: a type of animal, plant or other organism.

Cosmopolitan distribution: a species whose range extends across most of the world in an appropriate habitat.

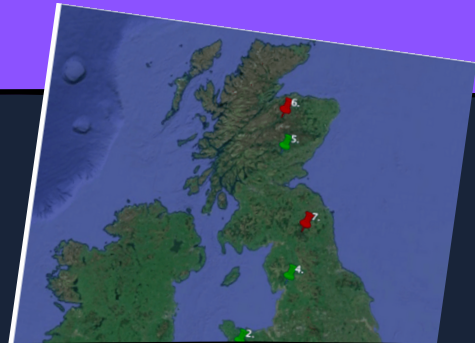
Unnatural causes: causes which wouldn't occur naturally and are usually as a result of human intervention.

Climate change: a change in global or regional climate patterns, largely as a result of increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

ACTIVITIES

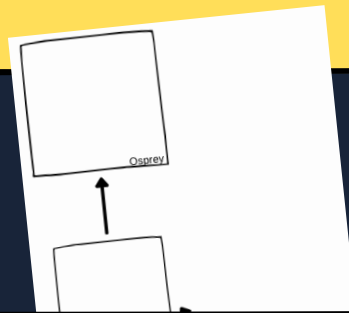
NAME THE SITE:

Using the activity sheet provided, can you name all the sites marked up, with help from this information pack?



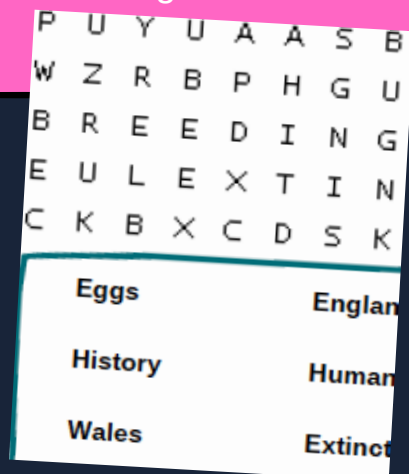
OSPREY: A FOOD CHAIN

Each animal and plant is part of a food chain. It is through the food chain that ospreys ingested dangerous chemicals. Can you fill in an osprey's food chain.



WORDSEARCH:

Or for a quick activity, there is a fun wordsearch to have a go at!



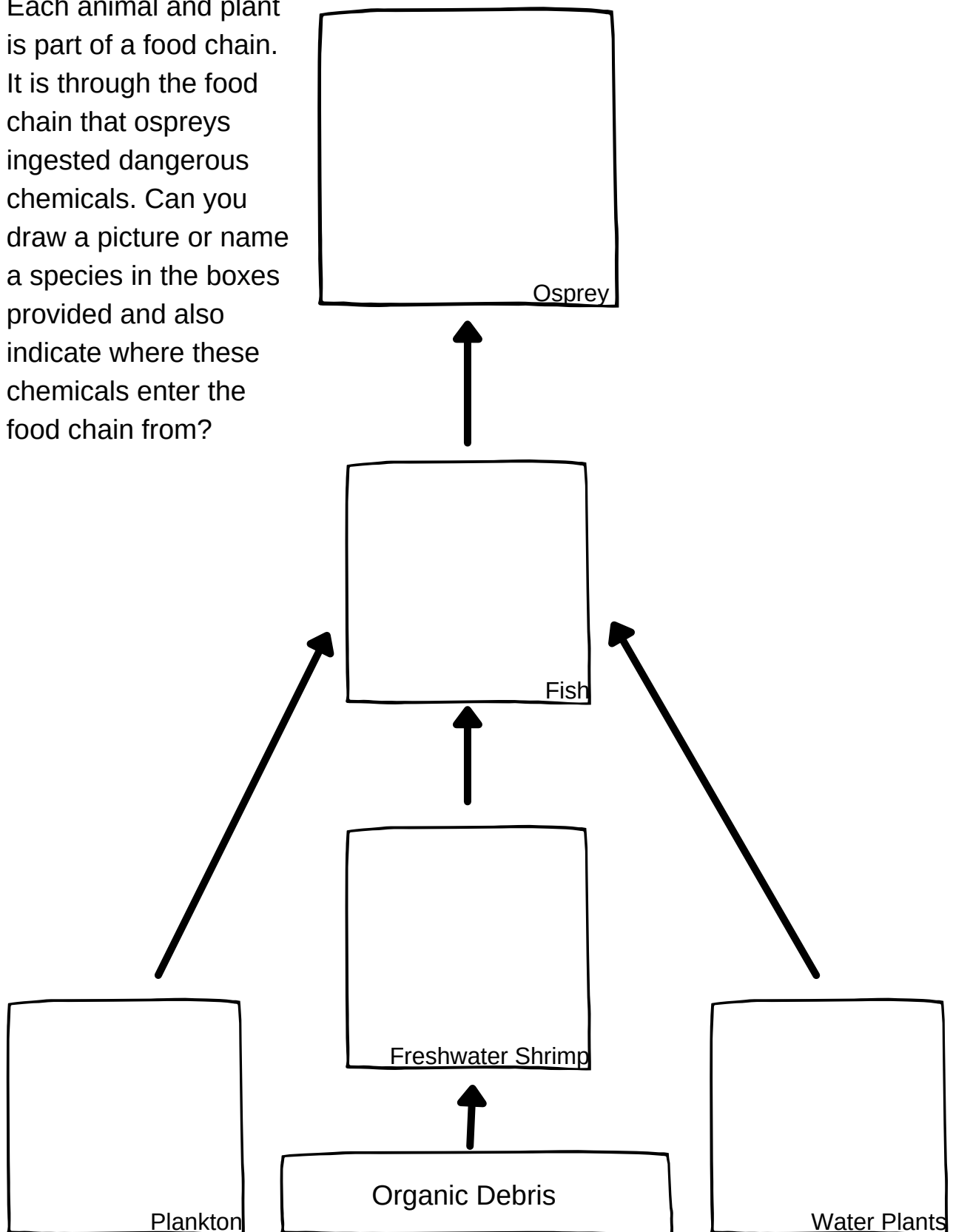
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AN OSPREY'S FOOD CHAIN

Each animal and plant is part of a food chain. It is through the food chain that ospreys ingested dangerous chemicals. Can you draw a picture or name a species in the boxes provided and also indicate where these chemicals enter the food chain from?



HISTORY WORDSEARCH: MEDIUM

Can you find all the history important words?

F N R K I I J B U S Q J D R W
N U O J T C F S H I U Y E H N
Z K N T F V F C G Y J T U K N
W Y I E L Z V L P O A M B P U
V A T N S G G E O W A N N U V
U T V G L L T R D N J T J T Y
W R W L S R Z N S C H O Z R F
J P I A O C A M D N K Y O A Z
A L Y N I L O C L J S T S Y E
N R R D T M P T Q S S E U X P
P U Y U A A S B L I S Y L I D
W Z R B P H G U H A O G O A N
B R E E D I N G S M N E I E W
E U L E X T I N C T T D D K Q
C K B X C D S K W Z F W D W V

Eggs

England

Scotland

History

Humans

Rutland Water

Wales

Extinct

Breeding

NAME THE SITE

On the map of the UK below, there are 8 pinpoints of sites in the UK that have a population of ospreys. Can you name all of them? The red pinpoints are bonuses!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

