

Kentucky Environmental Education  
Projects (KEEP, Inc.)

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## Press Release

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### EASTER EGGS OR OSPREY EGGS?

The correct answer is both; you can “have” Easter eggs and “see” real Osprey eggs! Kentucky Environmental Education Projects (KEEP), Inc., a non-profit organization, is happy to announce that “our” Osprey pair, presently featured live via an Internet camera at Lake Barkley, KY, have returned for the 2010 nesting season! This is no surprise to those who have recently looked into the huge nest at KEEP’s web site at: <http://keepky.org> The first egg of the season arrived April 2! Almost all wild birds, eggs and nests are strictly protected by state and federal laws, so it is best to view wild bird nests on Internet bird sites or in the outdoors from a respectful distance.

April 2, Linda Chambers sent an e-mail to KEEP writing that she had spotted the first egg on KEEP’s Osprey nesting platform at Lake Barkley!! Linda spotted the egg located near Kuttawa, KY all the way from her home at Falmouth, Maryland near Cape Cod, Massachusetts. No, Linda does not have eagle eyes, Linda’s ability to see inside an Osprey nest in Kentucky from Maryland is made possible by KEEP’s camera pointed into the nest. The images Linda is viewing are available to everyone at KEEP’s Internet web page. If you do not have a computer and Internet connection at your home, your local public library has computers for public use to access the KEEP web site for viewing. Thousands of people in the US and around the world are also watching the same Kentucky Osprey nest and learning about Osprey life. Linda wrote last year that she posted a saved KEEP Osprey image on the “Bird Cams Around the World Forum.” A resident of England e-mailed KEEP a few seasons ago and asked us to please keep our images on line longer since the young birds were returning to the nest now and then after they had learned to fly. We were happy to extend our camera season for the citizens of England and the world. Our camera nest had three eggs last year. All the eggs hatched on camera (most during thunder storms) and all of the young Ospreys successfully flew from their

nest (fledged). This action was captured on video and many of these behaviors have been saved at the KEEP web site for viewing any time.

To see live images simply go to the KEEP web page any time during daylight hours. Go to the live cam by selecting the nest cam tab and refresh the live nest image every 12-15 seconds for a new image.

Why the interest in Ospreys? Ospreys are a very majestic beautiful bird of prey almost as large as an eagle and are one of the best environmental indicator species. Historically, ospreys nested in Kentucky but ceased to do so for about fifty years due mostly to the harmful effects of the pesticide DDT that was banned in the US in 1972. Once the environment was relatively safe again, sixty-one young Osprey nestlings were flown to Kentucky during the 80s by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). These transplanted Ospreys were mostly from the US east coast. After growing up in substitute man-made nests, the Ospreys were banded and released at Lake Barkley, most at Honker Bay. Birds return to nest in the area where they learn to fly. Ospreys are highly migratory so after spending the winter somewhere between southern Florida and South America, after reaching adult age in two years, the released Ospreys began to return to their new warm season home at Lake Barkley to nest. As a result of this very successful wildlife management effort, Kentucky had its first Osprey nest in fifty years beginning in the late 1980s. The Osprey population has continued to grow and spread since the first few nests in the 1980s. Over 50 active nests are now found at Lake Barkley mostly on man-made artificial nesting platforms donated to the US Coast Guard and KDFWR by KEEP, Inc. The KEEP platforms are very important to Ospreys since they prevent high water flooding and prevents nest from being blown away during high winds. A smaller number of Osprey nests are found mostly south of Hwy 68 on Kentucky Lake and a few other locations throughout mostly western Kentucky. Recently KEEP, Inc. donated five new Osprey nesting platforms to KDFWR for Peabody Wildlife Management Area where at least two pairs of Ospreys are now nesting. KEEP volunteers construct the platforms mostly of long lasting steel materials.

More information on Kentucky's Ospreys and KEEP can be found at the KEEP, Inc. web page in addition to seeing how our Osprey pair's nesting is doing this season. Viewers especially enjoy watching the female feeding the chicks pieces of fish caught mostly by the male at Lake Barkley. Perhaps nest viewers are most amazed at how fast the chicks grow.

KEEP's camera mounted fifty feet high can be zoomed, panned and tilted from anywhere in the world by our volunteer camera administrative operator providing unique public and school viewing. School introductory study questions are available at KEEP's web site. Schools from the US and England have reported learning about Ospreys including life cycles by observing our Ospreys.

Ospreys begin incubation as soon as the first egg is produced so the first egg will hatch several days before the second egg and about a week before the third egg.

**Osprey adults sit low in the nest when incubating. Watch for the adult to be higher in the nest when hatching begins. As a result of different hatching dates and ages, even though just a few days apart, the chicks' size differences are apparent as they quickly grow. The Osprey chicks will grow to the large size of their parents and will be flying by early to mid July.**

**Obviously there were environmental problems in Kentucky when Ospreys could not nest for fifty years. We are now keeping a close watch on our Ospreys and other indicator species such as bluebirds <http://www.biology.eku.edu/kbs/> We are glad that these species are doing far better than they were for so many years.**

**To see and learn more about Ospreys and other KEEP projects, please visit KEEP's web site at <http://keepky.org> KEEP projects are supported entirely by donations and volunteers. KEEP appreciates everyone that is helping make KEEP projects possible and successful! Please check the KEEP web site often to see how our Osprey family is doing and for new web site features and projects. Additional contact information can be found at the "Contact Us" tab at the website.**

**Submitted by Ed Ray, KEEP, Inc. Founder/Director**

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