

The harriers are back

(2009 season report) Marsh harrier chicks on camera



Marsh harriers are back breeding successfully on the Hawk and Owl Trust's Sculthorpe Moor nature reserve in north Norfolk, with even more newly hatched chicks (see left) on camera than ever before.

Last year one marsh harrier female successfully raised three nestlings to fledging in front of the Trust's 24-hour webcam. This year she's back with five newly hatched young – the first emerging on 9 May, and so is the webcam.

Also at the reserve is one further female with five young of her own, and a third nest so inaccessible that reserve staff have not been able to monitor it. There are also two males and possibly a third around the reserve. Marsh harriers do not generally form monogamous pairs.

Visitors to the reserve can watch the young at the nest on the large screen monitor in the visitor centre. A monitor is also available in the hide nearest the nest, meaning fans can see through the hide windows the male visit and pass food to the female as she rises into the air, then watch on screen as she returns to earth and the chicks are fed. For the first time this year visitors can hear the chicks via an audio link from a microphone hidden in the reeds that disguise the camera. [Have a look here.](#)

The five nestlings are a tribute to the increasingly suitable conditions being created at the reserve and are a great encouragement as the Hawk and Owl Trust launches an [appeal to celebrate its 40th anniversary](#) of protecting owls and other birds of prey in the wild. It hopes to raise £40,000 to help continue its vital work

The live screening of marsh harrier chicks was pioneered by the Hawk and Owl Trust last year in a unique scientific exercise shared with TV viewers of Springwatch on BBC2. The footage is currently undergoing minute scientific analysis at Leicester University, supervised by Dr David Harper, to reveal for the first time intimate details of the marsh harrier's ecology, diet and behaviour. A brief DVD of last year's nestlings is available [for sale at £5.95](#).

This year's on-screen display is also thought to be the only live video of marsh harriers on the nest anywhere in the UK.

Listen to BBC Radio 4's broadcast from Sculthorpe Moor on *The Living World* at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kh4dm

To view the latest images from the nest (without sound track) [click here](#); for images from last year's brood [click here](#) and to buy the DVD of last year's nestlings [click here](#). For more information about Sculthorpe Moor and how to get there [click here](#); for more on marsh harriers [click here](#). To support the Trust's 40th anniversary appeal [click here](#).

See also

- [Visitor information](#)
- [Latest webcam views](#)

of the reserve updated every minute



- [Reed Cam](#)

disguised camera before installation

- [BBC Radio 4 Living World](#)

20-minutes on Sculthorpe's marsh harriers featuring an exclusive interview with warden Nigel Middleton

- [Last year's brood](#)

First few weeks of the marsh harrier chicks in 2008

- [Marsh harriers](#)

more about Sculthorpe's star attraction



- [Marsh harrier chicks on DVD : the 2008 brood](#)

only £5.95 inc UK p&p

- [Press release](#)

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