

Latest on harrier chicks 2009

3rd July update on progress

All five chicks featured on nestcam have fledged successfully. They are now building up their strength and flying skills over the reed bed in front of the Whitley hide. So another great year for this particular female who is now reckoned to be at least 5 years old. Unlike last year the male stayed on the scene and helped her, particularly in the early weeks.

Unlike last year, when the weather was wet and cold, most bird and mammal species are more abundant providing extra food for the harriers. This has helped to make it a super year for marsh harriers at Sculthorpe Moor. We have another nest on site with five chicks in that will be flying soon and third nest contents unknown.

So if you are heading our way this summer, pay us visit and spend some time in the hide where you will see, not only harriers but also many other species of bird, dragonfly and damselfly in a peaceful colourful environment.

10th June update on the chicks

The marsh harrier chicks being monitored on our webcam are between 35 and 25 days old now. All are fine despite the recent hot weather. The temperature has been up to 25 degrees C and in the shelter of the reed bed there is no cooling breeze.

The female, when not off the nest for food, has been seen sheltering the chicks with her wings. The parents have been very busy and the chicks are not without food for long at any time throughout the day and are growing at a prodigious rate.

The reedcam has two more cameras mounted upon it. All have been giving more insight into the behaviour of the female and the chicks. We have a camera that looks down onto the nest giving us another angle to study behaviour.



The third points directly up to view the adult birds flying over and the female entering the nest. As you can see, the female is aware of the lens on this occasion and gives it a few exploratory pecks then afterwards ignores it.

The eldest chick looks to be about a week to ten days before it is ready to take to the air. The chicks were ringed yesterday evening (9 June) and as far as we can tell, there are 3 males and 2 females. (This is an estimate based on the weight and the hatch date.)

It has been a particularly successful year for the harriers at Sculthorpe Moor. We have another nest with five chicks on site. Food is plentiful, not only for the harriers but also for our barn owls and the small bird nest boxes have been well used.

Interestingly it has also been a very successful year for treecreepers.



The five nestlings (*left: shortly after hatching*) Listen to BBC Radio 4's broadcast from Sculthorpe Moor on *The Living World* at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kh4dm

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](#).

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of the reserve updated every minute



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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

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Dated May 2009