

Minister Gormley releases White Tailed Eagles into the Wild in Kerry

16/08/07

Mr. John Gormley T.D. Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government today (16 August) released a number of young White Tailed Eagles into the wild in Killarney National Park as part of the programme to reintroduce this native bird of prey to Ireland.

The Minister said he was delighted to release these magnificent birds into the wild. The Minister added "One of my first duties on becoming Minister was to be present last month in County Wicklow at the re-introduction into the wild of a number of young red kites. This reintroduction of the White Tailed Eagle complements both the red kite and golden eagle projects". The Minister continued, "These eagles had pride of place in the cultural and natural heritage of Ireland for hundreds of years but due to trapping and shooting in the 19th and early 20th centuries they became extinct". The Minister was also pleased to note that the project will help to fulfil part of Ireland's commitment to maintain and enhance our native wildlife under the obligations of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Minister Gormley said that the project will have a viable and long-term benefit for tourism in the South West Region. "I know that in Scotland White Tailed Eagles attract thousands of visitors annually and hopefully in time these eagles will attract similar visitor numbers and will prove another attraction in promoting the wild and unspoilt landscape of the south west region."

The White Tailed Eagle Project is a partnership between the Golden Eagle Trust, The National Parks and Wildlife Service and others with funding provided by the Minister's Department. The eagle chicks came from Norway and were flown into Kerry Airport in June. The project will operate over a five year period and will follow the methods of other successful projects in Ireland and Scotland. It is expected that most of the eagles released today will disperse to the coastline after a few months and monitoring will take place after release.

In conclusion, the Minister thanked the White Tailed Eagle Steering Group in bringing this restoration project to fruition. "I know that the co-operation of all those involved in the project will ensure its continued success," concluded the Minister.

Further Information:

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