

Staycation Idea: View Penguins and Ospreys Live Online via Webcams at the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk

Need a great rainy day or “staycation” activity? Try following the antics of 10 amusing African penguins, as well as the developments with a nesting pair of ospreys and their young, from your home computer—thanks to two live webcams hosted by The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk.

Both webcams are accessible on the Aquarium’s web site, www.maritimeaquarium.org. On the main page, click on the “Long Island Sound” tab across the top, then on “Live Animal Cams” in the left margin and follow the instructions to access the cams.

The Penguin Cam camera is located within the Aquarium’s “African Penguins” exhibit, which features a colony of 10 penguins native to Africa’s southwestern coast. Webcam viewers can watch the penguins as they swim, preen, eat and explore their rocky habitat.

“It’s a lot of fun to pop online and see what the penguins are doing from time-to-time,” said Chris Loynd, marketing director of The Maritime Aquarium. “Just like when you’re watching the penguins here at the Aquarium, seeing them online is certain to just put a smile on your face.”

Cam viewers may be able to hear the penguins’ call, which is much like a braying donkey. A camera icon lets you take screen snapshots, which you can save to your computer.

The “African Penguins” special exhibit debuted in February on the Aquarium’s riverfront courtyard and is included with general admission. It will be open through December 2010. In July, a new program called “Penguins on the Loose” will allow the penguins to walk freely amongst visitors.

The Osprey Cam monitors an active osprey nest which has been used for several years, located on the property of NRG Energy’s Manresa Island power plant in South Norwalk. The nest’s osprey pair arrived in late March, and two eggs hatched in late May.

Once listed as a threatened species in Connecticut, the osprey population has been making a comeback since the 1972 ban on DDT, which weakened birds’ egg shells and caused many eggs to fail. Now, osprey nests are



Clicking the camera icon in the top left corner allows the viewer to take a snapshot of African penguins from the Maritime Aquarium’s webcam.

spotted in coastal areas all along the Connecticut shoreline.

Ospreys arrive along the Long Island Sound shoreline between mid-March and early April, from their wintering areas in the southern United States and Central and South America. They lay their eggs mid-April to early May, and the eggs hatch starting around mid-May. The young are usually full-grown and flying by August, at which point some start to migrate south.

Because ospreys are one of the food chain’s top predators, monitoring the birds and their habits gives researchers insights into the health and activity of Long Island Sound. Federal regulations protect ospreys from disturbance, so the camera provides everyone a great, non-intrusive way to watch the birds.

School teachers can use the osprey cam as a teaching tool to illustrate life cycles, a required unit in the Connecticut Science Framework.

Windows Media Player is needed to view the Osprey Cam, but it is free and can be found at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/download/>.

For more information about the webcams or programs, go online to www.maritimeaquarium.org or call The Maritime Aquarium at (203) 852-0700.