

Morven's Movements in 2009

Spring Migration

17th March 2009: She's off!

As usual Morven roosted overnight in the desert, and flew to the Atlantic coast just before 7am. At 8am she was on the coast and an hour later was perched in from the coast 5 kilometres south where she stayed until at least 10am, probably eating a fish. At 11am she was back 8 kilometres north on the coast, and by midday she had started her migration, being 7 kms inland flying ENE at 59km/h and was already at 420metres above the land. Morven flew strongly into the Sahara Desert, being 21 kms further on at 1pm flying ENE at 32km/h, she was flying the same speed at 2pm, and increased height to 725 metres. She continued in this direction and the last GPS signal of the transmission at 5pm showed her soaring to 1239 metres - she completed another 59 kilometres before roosting overnight in the desert. Her day's flight was 258 kilometres.

18th March 2009

Morven was at her roost at 0640GMT - she has 136 kilometres to go to Atar, where today the weather is bright sun, 83F/28C with a light 7mph north wind. She was at her roost until 4am and then moved 1.2 kilometres in the moonlight to another roost, where she remained until 10am. An hour later she was migrating NNE 10 kilometres to the north-east. The GPS signals are still to come in but by 5.50pm she had migrated 225 kilometres, cutting the corner of Western Sahara.

19th March 2009

At her roost in the stone deserts north of Choum until 8am; then moved to new roost 2 kilometres north. Just before 9am she started her day's migration over the bleak Mauritanian desert, because at 9am she was 3 kms north flying at 57km/h NNW at 504 metres altitude. The next fix at 2pm showed her north of Zouirat, after flying over or past the massive iron ore mine at Fderik. She was flying NNE at 47km/hr at 1356 metres and she kept this steady NNE course at well over 1000 metres for the next three hours. A last non GPS signal at 6.17pm showed that she had flown 337 kilometres during the day.

20th March 2009

She was at her night roost in remote deserts until am, and then as often moved 1.25 kilometres to another place by 10am, probably to preen feathers and get ready for her day's migration. By 11am she had flown NNW and was circling to gain height at 63km/h. The lag in transmissions means that for the moment the next fix was at 6pm. Earlier, probably around early afternoon she passed Bir Moghreïn in northern Mauritania, and then flew into the northern part of Western Sahara to the west of Tifariti. At 6pm she was again circling at 1212 metres at 47km/h, and settled to roost for the night at 7pm in the Aydar Lahmadi desert. She travelled 324 kilometres during the day, a total of 1157 kilometres since she started. Tomorrow's weather forecast is bright clear skies with temperatures to 78F/26C and a light (6mph) wind.

21st March 2009

She was still at the overnight roost in Western Sahara at 9am, but was 5 kilometres north at 10am, flying at 39km/h north at 558 metres. Soon after 11am she crossed the border into Morocco and at midday was flying at 66 km/h north at 1006 metres into higher into the mountains, heading for Garet Kheibichat mountain. She crossed the great fault line at 1pm and continued flying strongly north at heights between 1113 and 1934 metres. At 4pm she changed course to NE to cross mountain ridges in the Anti Atlas and at 6pm she had set for NNE at 53 km/h at 1706 metres. By 7pm she has settled for her night time roost in rural populated mountain plateaux at 1362 metres, between two rural roads near Ighill. Morven flew 280 kilometres during the day and is 40 kilometres SE of Tiznit and the weather ahead today is sunny and clear, with no wind and a temperature of 75F/24C. She has 783 kilometres to go before the sea crossing to Europe.

22nd March 2009

She had just left her roost at am and was flying at 53km/h NNW at 1414 metres. She passed Tafroute and then kept a steady flight north at 40 km/h passing over the River Sous after midday. Morven continued north into the western end of the High Atlas mountains and at 3pm was flying N at 73 km/h at 1261 metres. Her route took her 40 kilometres west of Marrakesh and by 5pm she had flown 272 kilometres during the day. She is now heading into northern Morocco and has crossed the desert and the main mountains. Her heading suggests she will fly well west of the Straits to southern Spain, if the weather stays clear, but we will see in next two days. At this rate she may catch up with Beatrice.

23rd March 2009

Still at her roost at 6am, but at 7am was 3 kms N flying NNW at 56km/h probably disturbed) as at 8am she was perched a little further north and at 9am was resting in farmland 17 kms further north. Wonder if she had fished? At 10 am she was migrating NE at 38km/h over farmed lands and at 11am was near JeSobt-Brikvine heading into the hills again. She continued north and NE and passed Oulad Said, without stopping at a big reservoir, before 2pm. She continued flying at 2 -39 km/h NE and at 5pm was perched on the banks of the river Mellah near Tlela-Oulad-Sebbah. This river runs to the Atlantic coast at Mohammedia, to the north of Casablanca. The weather in the Straits of Gibraltar is not good for migration, with a strong Levantine wind (20 mph from the east), with mainly cloud cover. Her day's flight was 208 kms.

24th March 2009

Morven was still at her roost at 8am and the next fix was south of Kenitra at 1pm, when she was flying NW at 32km/h. She continued north and at 4pm was over the big reservoir- Qued -el-Makhazine - where she probably fished. She was roosting at 6pm in farmlands further north.

25th March 2009

Still at roost at 8am, and then flying NW for next three hours at 47 km/h, and crossed coast north of Asilah and headed north over the Atlantic. At midday, she was well west of the Straits of Gibraltar flying NW at 53km/h at 163 metres over the sea. An hour later she was just above the waves flying north and at 1pm was just south of Cadiz in Spain, flying N at 21 metres. Morven was in salt lagoons at 3pm and 4pm just east of Rota. Then she headed north over the River Guadalquivir and rested in southern end of the Coto Donana reserve, before roosting just north of Lucio del Cano.

26th March 2009

Still in lagoons at 8 am and then flew north west to the west of Seville. The next signal at 3 pm showed Morven was flying north at 93 km/h near Higuera de Vargas in Badojoz. She continued north into Portugal and roosted for the night at the west end of the reservoir do Caia.

27th March 2009

Morven remained at the roost until 9 am and at 10 am was flying north west just south west of Esperanca. She continued north along the border of Portugal and Spain, flying north west at 55 km/h. At 2 pm she was just south of Guarda. The last signal for the day was at 3 pm when she was flying at 1715 m northwards near Penedono in Portugal. Later signals showed that she roosted overnight six kilometres north-west of Braganca in wooded farmland. She's quite far west - I wonder if she will strike out over the Bay of Biscay or head for the western end of the Pyrennes and overtake Beatrice.

28th March 2009

Morven had started her migration by 8 am when she was flying north east and crossing into Spain. At 9 am she was near Puebla de Sanabria and then over the next three hours she was flying at 30 kilometres per hour north to north-east, generally between 1088 and 1559 metres. At 1 pm she was flying to the west of Leon and by 5 pm had come to roost by a little river to the west of Villamania. To the north were the Cantabrian mountains.

29th March 2009

She was hampered by poor weather over the mountains and spent the day in the valleys south of the main peaks of the Cantabrian mountains. At 9 am she was at a small river to the east of her roost site and then turned back west and at midday was flying NNW at 1540 metres into the mountains but she was forced to turn back and at 1 pm and 2 pm she was perched just west of the reservoir de Casares. Morven then moved a little further south to the much larger reservoir of de Los Barrios de Luna, where she roosted.

30th March 2009

Morven set off after eight, and at 9 am was flying WNW at 26 km/h at 1579 metres cutting into the mountains, just to the west of the high peaks of Cerredo and Pena, which rise to over 2000 metres. At 10 pm she was still flying north west seeking a way through in cloudy conditions and light easterly winds, and at 11 am she was flying north at 63 km/h low down through a deep valley running north to the lowlands near Grado. She got through and at midday was south of Avilles flying north at 62 km/h at 338 metres. She then turned to the north-east

and 2 pm was perched in the estuary of the River Villaviciosa on the Asturian coast of north Spain.

31st March 2009

She roosted in a small wooded cliff or hillside on the east side of the estuary and spent her day there (data until 1pm on this transmission). Adolfo Villaverde emailed to say that he had observed her on the estuary and seen the colour ring and the transmitter - the estuary is a Natural Reserve. She should have plenty of food to choose from grey mullet and flatfish.

1st April 2009

Adolfo Villaverde reports that he saw Morven resting and feeding in the estuary during today.

3rd April 2009

GPS data shows that Morven has been in the estuary all the time, and Adolfo Villaverde saw her again today in the usual haunts. The weather is good so she should move on, but the fishing will be excellent. I also heard from Aitor at Urdabai estuary further east along the Spanish coast, he reports two unringed ospreys passing today, but no sign of Logie (it's the estuary where she rested last April).

5th April 2009

Adolfo saw Morven in the estuary today and yesterday, often close to an unringed osprey, which also arrived in the reserve.

7th April 2009

Morven's data shows she has been in the Rio Villaviciosa Natural reserve all the time and that agrees with Adolfo's reports; he has seen her each day. Adolfo also reports two other interesting news items. Today, the Spanish papers cover Morven's stay on the Asturian coast - at

<http://www.elcomerciodigital.com/gijon/20090407/villaviciosa/nuevas-visitantes-20090407.html> and he received a report of another osprey with a satellite transmitter, seen on the 5th April further east on the Cantabrian coast in the Rubin marshes. Could it be Logie?!! with a non functioning radio, or was it a Swedish osprey on migration.

7th April later Adolfo did not see her today, and when the data started to come later in the afternoon, it showed that she had re-started her migration. She was still in the estuary in the early morning but at 9am GMT was 31 kilometres ENE on a crossing of the Bay of Biscay. At 10am she was flying at 45km/h ENE at 137 metres, and an hour later was flying at 61km/h NNE at 127 metres. The next two hours showed her travelling slower and also low over the sea to the north. At 2pm showed she was flying NNE at 48km/h at 48 metres above the sea and the last signal (non GPS at 3.41pm) showed she had covered 326 kilometres. The weather had improved and she had a following SW wind of 15mph to help her northwards. She was also clever in crossing the Bay of Biscay towards Brittany, because the Pyrenees and the south-west coast of France was cloud covered and it was raining; and there were cloud bands to the west. She should reach Brittany today, which gives her the chance of crossing the English Channel tomorrow. Finally, many thanks to Adolfo Villaverde for keeping us up to date with Morven's stop-over in the Villaviciosa estuary - his last report was that he saw her eating a fish in the early morning!.

9th April 2009

Should have heard something new but the transmission of 7th showed that Morven's battery was low because of overcast weather, so maybe she has not yet been in sunshine to charge the batteries. She should be in England by now. Later data - Morven roosted the night at a fish farm a mile from Barnstaple, after arriving there before 6pm.

10th April 2009

Morven flew across the Bristol Channel and arrived in Wales to the east of Swansea; at 2pm was flying N at 62km/h over Sennybridge, and then flew north past the Elan Valley and so to roost for the night in a wooded hillside facing the North Wales coast at Trelogan between Prestatyn and Holywell.

11th April 2009

Morven left early - she was determined to get home - at 6am she was flying N at 52 km/h 102 metres above the sea 5 miles west of Hoylake. She tracked up the coast and at 8am was perched in the middle of Morecambe Bay. At am, she was flyiong NW out of the bay, and an hour later was flying N over Esthwaite Water in the Lake District. At 11am she was skirting the eastern side of Carrick Fell. and heading over Carlisle for the Scottish Border. At 1pm she was flying over Headshaw Loch, SW of Selkirk where Beatrice roosted, and at 2pm she was flying N at 0km/h over Newlands Gardens, Libberton on the south side of Edinburgh. She crossed the Firth of Forth and the last GPS position was at 3pm as she circled between Auchtermuchty and Ladybank. Non GPS signals came in later and at 6.18pm she was in Moray. In fact I may have seen her at Logie's nest at dusk - more news tomorrow and see Blog. The wind today in the Highlands was strong SW with bright skies.

Summer

12th April 2009

I was at the nest just after 7am, and Morven was at the nest with the male, and all was looking settled. Later, the GPS signals showed me that at 6am, Morven was still at a roost 2.4 miles away which she used a lot last summer - at the exact same time nearby Beatrice was actually at this nest, but then went home. What a lot of visiting goes on with some of the ospreys before they get down to breeding. The nest was adorned today by a large strip of black baler plastic, and when I checked to see if Logie was back in the evening, the male brought in another long piece of black wrap, and Morven was not worried at all by the flapping plastic. I'll try to remove it from the nest edge with a long pole because plastic in the nest can be dangerous for snagging chicks later in the season.

25 April 2009

Everything has been settled at the nest site; Morven is just about ready to lay eggs and the old male has been bringing fish to her and they have built up the nest. Last evening both of them were standing together just above the eyrie in the dead tree.

28 June 2009

Morven has now got chicks in her nest, and her mate 6R has been bringing in fish. I have not yet managed to check how many chicks she has in the nest.

02 July 2009

This evening, Morven was on the nest and then flew to the top of the dead Scots pine next door. Soon I could see that she had one chick, which was stretching its wings on the nest and about half grown.

14 July 2009

At midday, the male perched in the top of the dead tree, mantling at an intruding osprey which was flying overhead. Morven was perched on the nest and then flew up beside the male. One life one large chick was sitting in the nest.

19 July 2009

We went to the nest site and caught Morven's mate for satellite tracking. Morven herself would not come low enough to get caught in the net which was a pity because I wanted to change her transmitter, which has been rather intermittent this summer.

25 July 2009

Morven on the nest feeding her big single chick with fish, but it still has some days to go before it will fly for the first time.

08 August 2009

On 3rd August, Morven's chick was flying near the eyrie, and then flew in and landed heavily on branch beside Morven at the top of the dead Scots pine. Morven's transmitter has restarted and given some locations, all at her nest site.

10 August 2009

Morven was perched on the very top of the dead pine, but there was no sign of the chick, probably perched on edge of wood.

17 August 2009

Morven roosted on the banks of the River Findhorn on the nights of 13th/14th and 14th/15th August several miles from her nest, but roosted overnight 15th/16th August in the wood close to the eyrie, near where her mate regularly roosts. I would guess she will be off soon. Her mate has been regularly fishing in Findhorn bay and bringing back flounders to the nest.



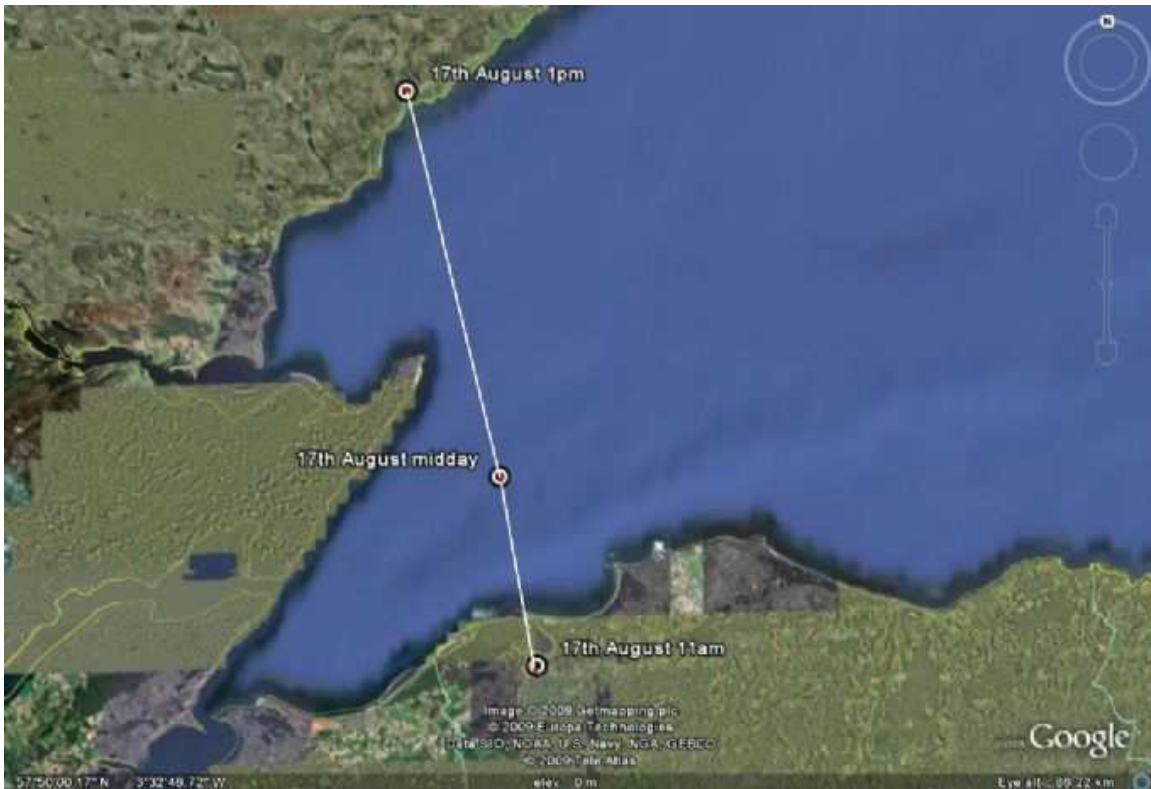
18 August 2009

Checked the nest area at 19:48 hours and found nothing at the nest or the next door favourite perches. With a bit of searching I found the juvenile perched low in an oak tree at the edge of wood. No sign of Morven.

20 August 2009

A few signals came in for Morven last night - disappointingly her transmitter is not working well unless there is steady sunlight - but the three fixes showed that at midday on Monday 17th August she flew to Caithness (the weather improved at this time from rain to sunny conditions). This is the same behaviour as last year when she had no young, so I'm surprised she gone north first before migrating south. She was still at her nest site at 11am, and was 9 miles north of Findhorn flying over the Moray Firth at midday and made landfall between Brora and Loth Point in Sutherland and at 1pm was heading over Glen Loth for Caithness. What an interesting bird - and I hope some of the Caithness birdwatchers see her fishing at Loch Calder or Loch Olginiey to confirm her Caithness visit.

(Evening) After writing this I telephoned Stan Laybourne in Caithness and left a message; Stan phoned back later to say that at 3.50pm he saw an osprey carrying a fish across Loch Calder and it flew on to perch on a fence post near Loch Olginiey to eat its fish. It was too far away to see colour ring or aerial, but he was sure it was Morven. Thanks Stan. I checked her nest site in the late afternoon and her mate was perched on the top of the dead tree, no sign of the juvenile as it had presumably just been given a fish and was away in the trees eating. An intruder male was hassling the male for a short while.



Morven's flight across the Moray Firth 17th Aug 2009



Morven's visit to Caithness late July 2008

22 August 2009: Back to Moray

She was on the west side of Loch Calder at 9am, apparently perched at the side of a plantation, possibly feeding. At 11am she was flying SW a third of mile offshore, one mile south of Dunbeath Castle, and at 2.24pm she was at Culbin Forest near Findhorn. I checked her nest in the evening and found her chick on the eyrie calling for food, but not sign of Morven - maybe she continued south.

30 August 2009

I was starting to get worried because no signals were coming in and I had expected some if she had flown south, where she should have been getting some sun on the solar battery to give us data on her migration. But this evening, Stan Laybourne, telephoned from Caithness, to say that he'd been watching an osprey this afternoon at Loch Olginiey, on Morven's perch, and he was sure it was her. He watched her fly off to fish on Loch Calder, and he also saw an osprey perched on the same fence post on Wednesday and Thursday, so it looks as though Morven went back to Caithness and the reason for the lack of signals is that the weather up there has been grey and rainy. I hope that's the case. Last autumn, she set off from Caithness on her migration on 27th August.

02 September 2009: Morven soars out of Caithness

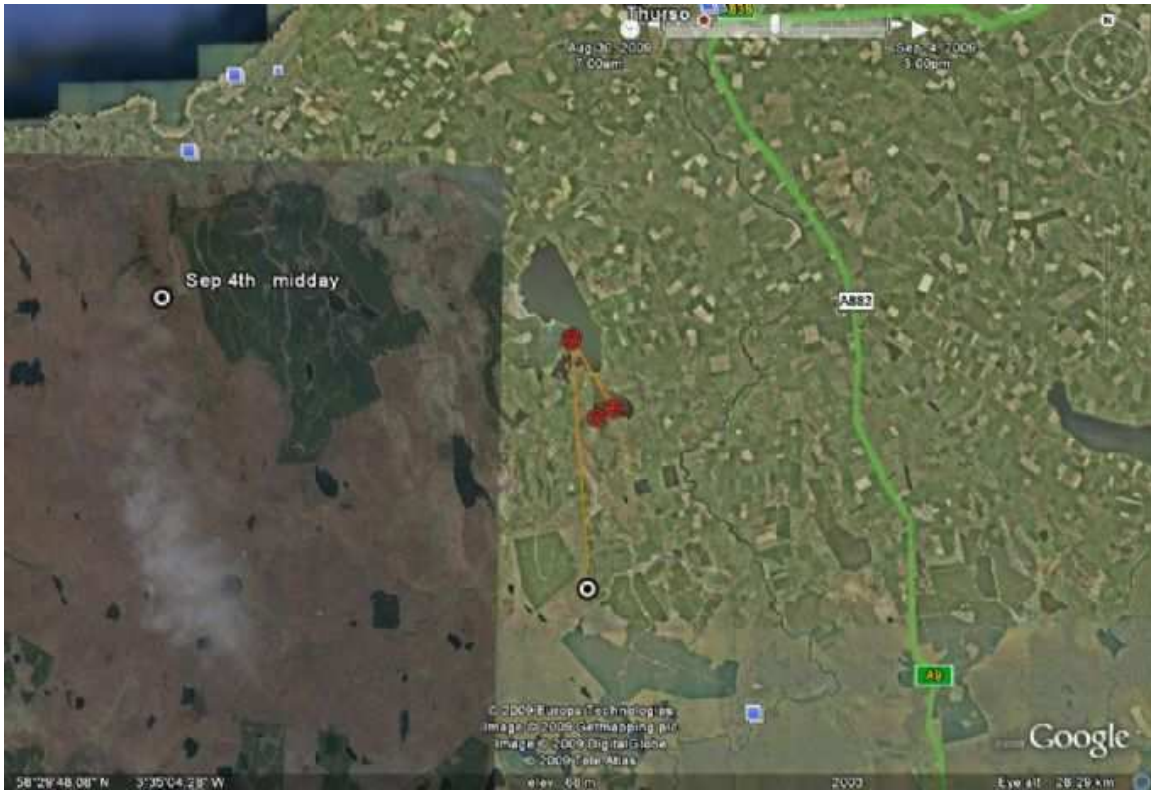
A few signals came in last night, and for the 30th August, they showed her roosting at a favourite roost site from last summer between conifer plantations and the railway line, south of the Loch Olginiey; and then at 8am and 9am she was perched beside Loch Calder.

Stan Laybourne telephoned this evening. He saw her perched at Loch Olginiey at 7.50pm last evening; and at 9.40am today she was fishing at Loch Calder, but after two unsuccessful dives she soared to a great height. It was a beautiful sunny day with light winds and great visibility. Stan followed her with his binoculars until she was a dot in the sky and last seen she was very high up heading for Morven (her namesake - a very distinctive mountain in southern Caithness) - he said her heading was direct for Findhorn Bay.

I was at Findhorn bay this morning and saw various of the local male ospreys, and a passing female (but not Morven) and a passing juvenile. It was a beautiful sunny clear day - ideal for Morven to recross the Moray Firth and head south for Africa. Cannot wait to get the next GPS readings.

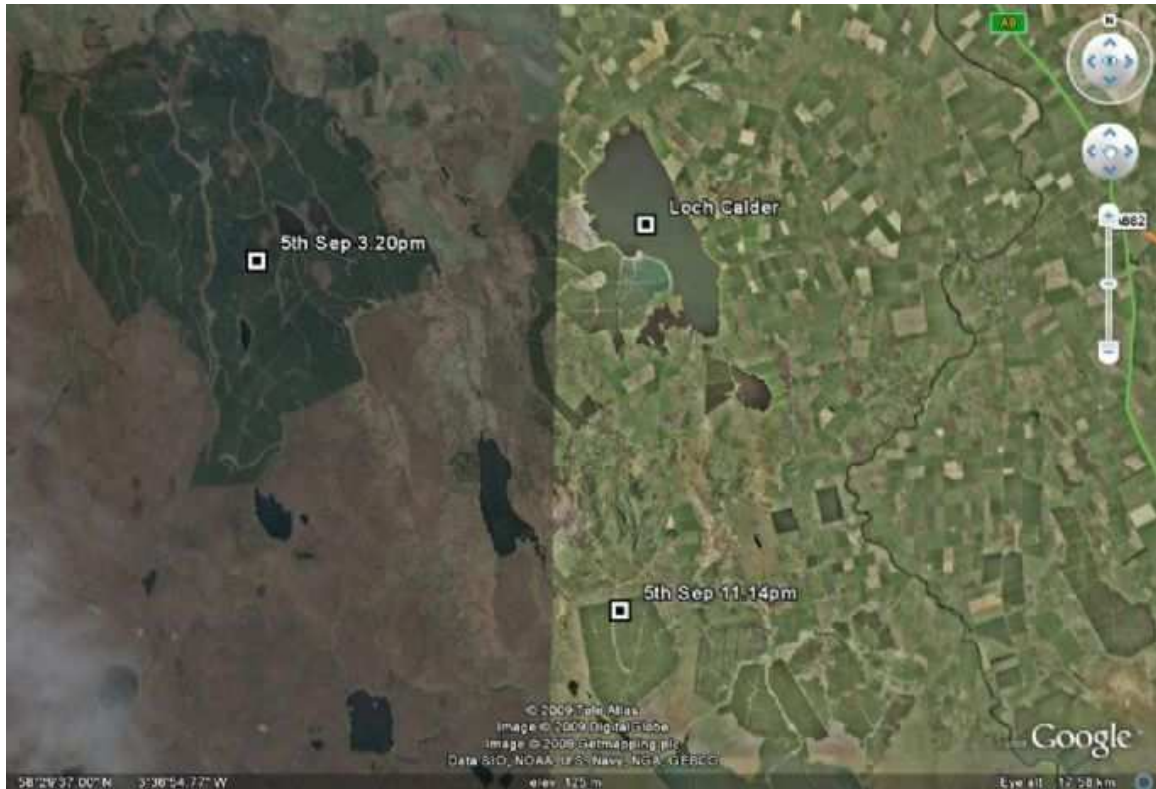
04 September 2009

Well, she did not leave Caithness - in the early hours of 3rd September she was at the roost south of Olginiey and today at midday she was some miles west of Loch Calder, south of Reay. Dreadful wet day in Moray and overcast and windy through the Highlands.



05 September 2009

Morven still in Caithness - unfortunately the poor weather is causing GPS failures - so today's location are only accurate to 1 km - at 3.20 pm she was in a big forest west of Loch Calder and at 11.14pm was roosting of edge of plantation to the south.



06 September 2009

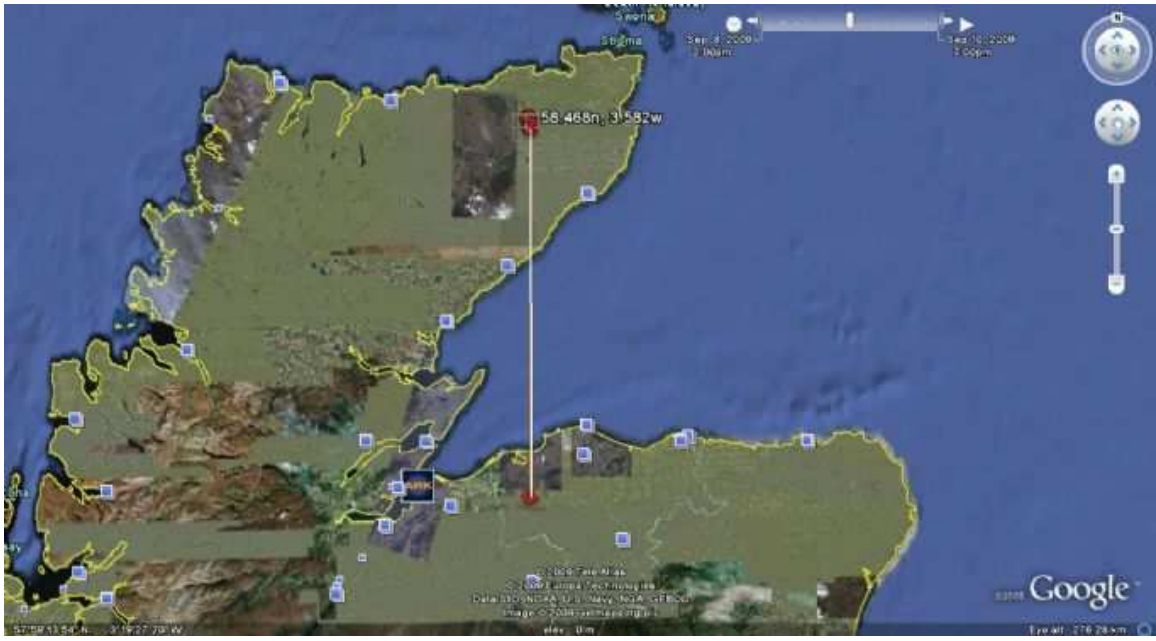
7.30pm this evening she was hunting over Loch Calder.

07 September 2009

Stan Laybourne telephoned to say that she was sitting on the same fence post, finishing a fish, near Loch Olginiey at 3.30pm. She's still feeding up in Caithness and waiting for good weather to start off for Africa.

10 September 2009

Morven was roosting near the railway line south of Loch Olginiey at 4.34am, but the next good signal came from Moray, when at 11.11pm she was roosting in woodlands beside Loch Romach, just south of Forres. It was a lovely day yesterday - ideal for migration.



Autumn Migration

11 September 2009: Off to Africa

Morven near Forres - back from Caithness. Morven's transmitter is not working properly so transmission will be irregular unfortunately, but as she gets into sunny climes it may improve.

12 September 2009: Through England and so on

She roosted in the Scottish Borders and then set off south through England; at 5pm she was north of Congleton and at 7pm she was SE of Bridgenorth, and then I think she continued fast southwards in the high pressure system - giving her clear skies and strong north winds. She was keeping up speeds up to 77km/h during the day. There were no further locations yet but my guess is she set off over the sea, probably from South Devon.



13 September 2009: Troubles in Bay of Biscay

At 0400GMT, Morven was 200 kilometres SW of the point of Brittany, so she had been flying through the night from the UK - she then had a very staggered crossing and just made NW Galicia at 1400GMT and then continued down the Spanish coast. If a strong experienced overseas migrator like Morven was having trouble with her course - I guess that the weather system yesterday and today was likely to have blown migrating young ospreys from the UK out across the Bay of Biscay, drifting them west in the easterly winds and some would have missed NW Spain, and may die in the Atlantic Ocean. Rothiemurchus was lucky to make it. By evening was south of Vigo.



14 September 2009

Morven travelled 287 kilometres down through Portugal today - I need to plot the GPS locations by hand as her transmitter is still giving confusing messages.



15 September 2009

She roosted overnight near a tiny wooded river in farmland and orchards to the north-west of Torres Noras. She was still there at 0500GMT, but the next signal at 0900GMT saw her heading south at 41km/h towards Santarem. At 1100GMT she was 30 kilometres east of Lisbon, and travelling fast to the south. She flew south inland along the coast of Alentajo. At 1500GMT she was flying SSE at 55km/h at 652 metres altitude towards the south coast of Portugal, and headed straight out to sea over Lagos. An hour later she was 27 kms out to sea, still flying SSE at 53km/h but now just 50 m above the water. The last signal was an hour later when she was continuing at the same speed and in the same direction. This is interesting as it is another case where an experienced adult has decided to set off a migration over the ocean, knowing that it will involve night-time flying.

16 September 2009: Non-stop flight to Africa

At 0400 hours, more than was 57 kilometres off the Moroccan coast, flying east at 52km/h, an hour later she was flying south and then at 0600GMT she came ashore just south of Rabat in northern Morocco. Later in the day, non-GPS

positions showed that she had continued her migration south in a dogleg through the mountains. By the time that she had stopped she had flown for about 36 hours and covered about 600 miles.



18 September 2009

Moving south through Morocco.



Morven's location and last Autumn's track

19 September 2009

Morven is migrating towards the Western Sahara border.



20 September 2009

Now probably in northern Mauritania as yesterday she was migrating down through Western Sahara. Looks very like she is heading for last winter's haunts.



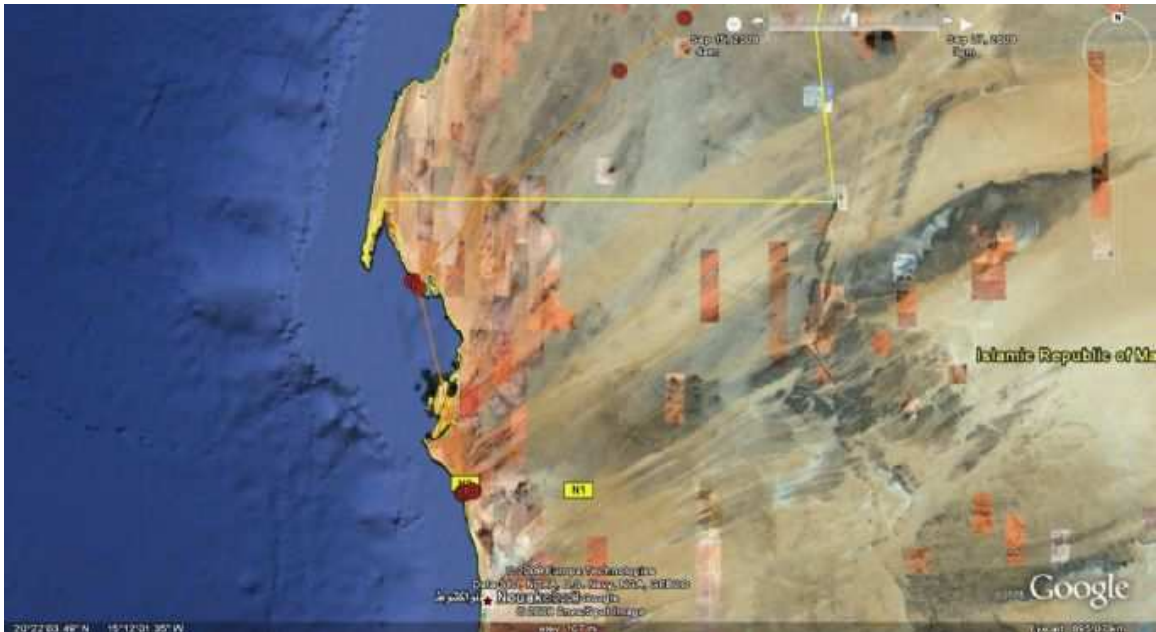
23 September 2009

Transmissions are on the blink again - but at 1500GMT on 21st she was just south of Nouadhibou in northern Mauritania, so I would guess now she is back at her last year's wintering site on the Mauritanian coast.

Winter 2009-2010

26 September 2009: Back in wintering quarters

Morven is now at the same wintering site on Mauritanian coast as last winter.



29 September 2009

Morven has settled into a similar pattern of daily activities as last winter. Today she was at the night roost inland in an area of scattered scrub in the desert, exactly like last winter, until 0600 GMT. Sometime after that she flew to the Atlantic coast, and at 0700GMT she was 10.67 kilometres away flying over the sea. She probably caught a fish and went back to eat it on the beach. During the rest of the day she moved up and down the beach over a distance of 1.5 km; possibly due to disturbance if fishermen are travelling up and down the coast. At 1900GMT she was flying east, back to the roost site at 45km/h and 30 metres above the desert. Her day's travels between locations was 27.5 kilometres.



02 October 2009

Another very similar day on the Mauritanian coast. Morven was still at the same night roost at 0600GMT, and an hour later was fishing over the sea 12.18 kilometres away from the roost. She spent the day on the beaches and travelled up and down for a distance of 690 metres. At 1900GMT she was on her way back to the night roost and was perched in a depression in the desert.



17 October 2009

Morven now very settled in to her wintering routine - roosting at night in the sand dunes 10 kilometres inland from the coast, and ranging over just 2 kms of Atlantic coast.

24 October 2009

No change in behaviour - reporting on her wintering behaviour will now be less frequent unless something different happens.



Morven's locations in last week and Nimrod's flyby route

10 November 2009

Following the same routine as last winter.



22 November 2009

Still wintering same area, although transmitter playing up again and not giving many GPS locations.

29 November 2009

Transmitter again not working properly just one GPS position in normal place in desert 7pm on 27th November.

14 December 2009

Morven's transmitter is intermittent like last winter, but GPS signals in first week of December showed she was using 0.8 kilometres of Atlantic coast for fishing and daytime loafing.

26 December 2009

Transmitter only intermittent - but one signal 20th showed that she was in usual location.

10 January 2010

Morven's transmitter working again and a group of locations showed she is roosting in the same place in the desert, 9 kilometres inland from the coast, and using 900 metres of coastline for resting and fishing.

21 January 2010

Just one signal - transmitter on the blink again - but she's at her wintering site.

26 February 2010

A few intermittent signals came in showing she is at her normal wintering site - this transmitter has been faulty for months. Hope it improves for the spring migration.