

## Eaglets Blog #2: Emily in the Aviaries

It takes around **6** hours for Eagle Officer, John to drive back down from the Highlands to the south of Scotland. He drives slowly to take the greatest of care of Emily the golden eagle who sits comfortably on a bed of moss inside her travel box in the back of the pickup truck.

John drives down the motorway and then on to A roads and eventually B roads before taking a turn onto a muddy and bumpy track. The track winds its way up into the hills of the south of Scotland until they eventually reach the aviaries at a secret location.



*Emily having another health check*

It is late in the evening when they arrive at the aviaries. It's quite **drizzly** up in the hills and there are clouds of midges but the vet takes time to check Emily over again to make sure she is happy and healthy which she is. They take Emily out of her travel box and inside the aviary where she is left to get used to her new surroundings. Inside the aviary, there is a nest tray where Emily can sit and there are perches where she can exercise.

From her aviary, Emily has an amazing view of the valley and hills beyond.

Although she is alone inside her aviary, next door there are two other golden eagles; **Edward and Beaky** who were collected separately to Emily but who will also be released into southern skies.



*Aviaries from the front*



*Inside an aviary with nesting tray, perches and feeding hatch*



John and the vet quietly leave but just before they go, John opens up a small hatch at the back of the aviary and drops in some food; two plump **quail**. As soon as they have left, Emily tucks in.

Emily spends the next 6 weeks feeding as John quietly drops in food from the hatch at the back. On the menu are all things she will one day hunt in the wild; **grey squirrels, rabbit, fox, crows and deer**. As she gets bigger, Emily starts to lose her soft downy feathers and grows larger and stronger flight feathers. She flaps from perch to perch exercising her wings and explores the plants and perches on the ground.

As her release quickly approaches, John and the team have one more important job to do. So that we can track Emily's progress and learn more about golden eagles in the south of Scotland, a **satellite tag** with little straps is fitted on her back, a bit like a small rucksack. It only weighs around **70 grams** which is not much more than a bar of chocolate. The tag sits comfortably on Emily's back and she is not bothered by it. The tag can tell us where Emily is, what she is doing and even her body temperature so we can tell she is healthy. The tag has a little **solar** panel which recharges the battery from the sun.

After her satellite tag is fitted, Emily is given another couple of days inside the aviary before her release. This is a big day for the eagle project team as well as for Emily. John gets up very early in the morning and makes his way to the aviaries, opening the front hatch before the sun is up so he doesn't disturb the eagles too much.

The eagles take their time to make their first flight and when they do, they don't go too far at first.

Check back next week to learn about Emily's first year in the wild. In the meantime, have a go at the quiz and why not come up with your own story for Emily. If you send it to us, we will feature it on our blog and send you an Emily the Eagle pin badge!



*Moment of release for other golden eagles*





ANSWERS  
1: C, 2: B, 3: C, 4: rabbit/squirrel/deer/  
fox/crow, 5: A, 6: B, 7: C, 8: A

## EAGLET'S BLOG #2: Emily in the Aviaries QUIZ

**Question 1:** How long does it take John to drive back from the Highlands?

**A:** 12 hours

**B:** 4 hours

**C:** 6 hours

**Question 2:** What is the weather like when they arrive back at the aviaries?

**A:** Glorious sunshine

**B:** Drizzly

**C:** Snowing

**Question 3:** Who are Emily's neighbours in the aviaries?

**A:** Egbert and Barbara

**B:** Edwin and Betty

**C:** Edward and Beaky

**Question 4:** What is the first thing that Emily eats inside the aviary?

**A:** Quail

**B:** Rabbit

**C:** Fox

**Question 5:** Name three other meals, John will feed Emily inside the aviary?

**A:** .....

**B:** .....

**C:** .....

**Question 6:** What is the important job the team must do before Emily is released?

**A:** Clean the aviaries

**B:** Fit a satellite tag

**C:** Have a cup of tea

**Question 7:** How much does the satellite tag weigh?

**A:** 1kg

**B:** 78g

**C:** 70g

**Question 8:** What recharges the battery inside the satellite tag?

**A:** Solar power

**B:** Wind power

**C:** Wave power

