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Case Study

Project Location: Wat Tyler Country Park, Basildon, Essex

Client: RSPB

Date: March 2006

Project Description

The RSPB asked Outersight to design and install a multi camera remote observation system to allow visitors to the RSPB Visitor Centre at Wat Tyler Country Park to view the various species of bird that frequent the nearby wetlands area.

After surveying the site and discussing the needs of the RSPB we designed a comprehensive system covering several areas of the park that could be installed in phases.

Phase One consisted of a single remote controlled camera on an Island on the far side of the scrape and a Webcam server and fibre optic link to the RSPB office to allow images to be uploaded to a webpage.

The camera is a "broadcastable" quality colour unit with an 18 x optical zoom allowing excellent close up shots even at long distances. The 360 degree continuous rotation and 270 degree tilt allows visitors to see everything. The camera is linked to the visitors centre via 600 metres of Armoured fibre optic cable to maintain the highest possible video quality and a similar amount of Low voltage power cable. The small form factor of the camera, at only 300mm tall means the camera is discrete and does not suffer from wind induced vibration like traditional CCTV cameras. The integrated windscreen wiper keeps the rain at bay and a washer pump was installed due to the dusty nature of the area. To minimise the visual impact of the camera system it was camouflaged under a net to blend in with the vegetation.



RSPB Warden standing by camera and Camera in distance

Bringing the outside in...

Remote observation systems

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Once the video signal is transmitted to the visitor centre it is displayed on a 42" Plasma screen which allows large groups of visitors to see what is happening out on the scrape. The video feed also goes to a DVD recorder with a built in hard disk so highlights can be recorded for later playback or for making DVD's for wider distribution.

Staff and visitors can control the cameras using the control keyboard, this is especially useful for face to face interpretation to small groups of visitors. When the visitor centre is closed at night, the camera is put into it's 'tour' mode where it moves between preset views ensuring that there is always something of interest to see..

An additional requirement was to be able to view images on the RSPB's local group website. We decided on a six channel web cam server to allow the addition of more cameras in the future. This was connected to the existing ISDN connection in the RSPB office via a 600 metre armoured Fibre optic Ethernet link. The additional benefit of the Ethernet link is that other internet based resources such as information kiosks can be accessed from the visitor centre.

The webcam can be seen here <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk/serspbcam/webcam.htm>.



Examples of Webcam pictures uploaded from the Webpage. Copyright RSPB

The camera allows visitors of all ages and abilities to get closer to wildlife and watch and listen without causing any disturbance to the birds. The camera has proved extremely popular with both the RSPB staff and visitors and early indications show an increase in visitor numbers due to the presence of camera

We look forward to working with the RSPB's team at Wat Tyler for the next phases of the project which will be an additional camera on another area of wetland and a further phase potentially including a Peregrine Falcon nest on a nearby industrial complex.