



## PRESS RELEASE

No. 274/2017

Date: 4th May 2017

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### Environment launches wildlife cameras

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Climate Change (DEHCC) has today launched the second phase of its Gibraltar Nature Cameras Project with the installation of two live-feed cameras showing the nests of one of Gibraltar's most well-known visiting birds, the Pallid Swift. These fast moving, sickle-shaped birds, signal the start of the spring and are a characteristic feature of the Spring and Summer skies of Gibraltar.

Following the earlier deployment of the greatly successful live marine camera, the initiative will be used as part of the Department's wider Environmental Education Programme aiming to increase knowledge of and protect both our natural and urban environments. It is hoped that the live-feed Swift cameras will help raise awareness on the fascinating lives of these birds, as well encourage the wider public to protect them and their nest sites. Swifts fly all the way down to tropical Africa and back every single year, and once they leave the nest as youngsters are known to spend several years continuously on the wing.

Two species of swifts have historically nested in built-up areas in Gibraltar; the Common swift characterised by its dark, almost black colour and the Pallid swift, which is paler brown. Older buildings in Gibraltar were constructed using traditional methods, leaving gaps under the eaves and gables. These have long been used by swifts for nesting. However, modern building styles and techniques have had an adverse effect on the local swift population by decreasing the habitat that these birds use for nesting. Government is placing nests around Gibraltar and it is the policy of the Development and Planning Commission to require the installation of swift nests in all new construction. There is a third species, the larger and much rarer Alpine swift, which nests in crags on the east side of the Rock.

Additional cameras showcasing Gibraltar's rich wildlife, such as birds of prey, will be launched later this Spring. The Swift cameras can be viewed online from the DEHCC's Thinking Green website [www.thinkinggreen.gov.gi](http://www.thinkinggreen.gov.gi).

Minister for the Environment, Dr John Cortes said, "These cameras will bring our urban wildlife



right into our homes. We will be able to follow the development of these swifts from eggs to fledging. In Gibraltar, we love our swifts. We do a great deal to protect them and their nests, so it's only right that we should get to know them better".



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