



PRESS RELEASE

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New Artificial Nests Provided for Falcons

Government, an NGO and private developers and contractors have joined forces to provide Gibraltar's first ever artificial nest site aimed at attracting falcons.

The Department of the Environment and Climate Change, GONHS (Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society), King's Wharf Ltd and Casais have worked together to provide an artificial nest placed in one of the towers at the King's Wharf development. With technical expertise from the Department and from Vincent Robba of the GONHS Raptor Rehabilitation Unit, the nest was sourced and paid for by the developer and placed at rooftop level.

Albert Yome of GONHS, during one of his regular surveys of urban wildlife, had observed the frequent use of one of the cranes on the development by a Peregrine falcon as a hunting perch. On being contacted about this by Albert, the Minister for Environment John Cortes, himself an avid birder, suggested that it might be worth providing a nest site nearby. The developer was quick to accept the challenge and make the commitment to do so.

Peregrine falcons nest on buildings in many different parts of the world, even in the heart of cities such as Bristol, Salisbury and New York. Although up to seven pairs of Peregrine have nested in Gibraltar regularly – one of the highest densities for the species anywhere in the world – no nests here have so far been on buildings. King's Wharf is within the territory of one of the cliff-nesting pairs, but Peregrines, like other birds of prey will use alternative nest sites, and this one provides such a possibility. It is also possible that kestrels, another, smaller species of falcon that also nests on the Rock, may also consider the site to be suitable.

The developer has also already provided 24 artificial nests for swifts and will increase the number shortly.

Minister John Cortes commented, "However you feel about tall buildings, it is important that we use the opportunity they can provide to enhance urban wildlife. To a bird of prey, or a swift, what they see is a new cliff springing up, and for them they provide nesting opportunities, as long as we ensure that we cater for them in the new space created. I am encouraged that the developer and contractor so quickly accepted the suggestion, and I am certain that others will follow suit. Now let's wait and see when and whether these avian tenants move in!"

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