

Hot Topic



Nests Birds in Towers

A team preparing to carry out maintenance discovered a nest in the cross-arm of a 132kV lattice tower. They sought specialist advice from an Environmental Advisor, who was able to determine through a vantage point survey, that it was a pair of peregrine falcons. Peregrines are a Schedule 1 bird species, meaning that it is afforded extra protection. It is illegal to disturb a Schedule 1 bird whilst it is on a nest, which includes climbing the tower. Promptly seeking specialist advice has ensured the correct identification of the species and the type of protection it is afforded under the legislation.

Carion crow nest in the cross-arm of a tower



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What to do if you discover a nest in your work area.

If a nest is discovered, any work in the surrounding area that may cause disturbance must stop. Seek further advice from the relevant environmental advisors (see below) on how to proceed.

An ecologist will need to visit the site to advise on the legal protection of the nest, along with a course of action to allow works to proceed without causing a wildlife offence.

What bird species typically nest in towers?

There are a number of bird species that use lattice towers as nesting sites. The majority of birds found nesting in towers are carrion crows. These can often be removed or worked around under an SNH General Licence (see across). Other species that are prone to nesting in towers are:



Raven



Kestrel



Osprey



Peregrine

Remember – It is a legal requirement not to disturb a nest when it is in use. Any breach may be investigated by the Police Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer.

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What happens if a bird is found nesting within a tower?

This depends on the species of bird.

Carrion Crow

If the nest belongs to a carrion crow, these can often be disturbed or removed under an SNH or RSPB General Licence. Seek guidance from the Environmental or Sustainability teams as to whether the use of this licence is appropriate. Never assume that a nest is being used by a carrion crow. From a distance a raven could be misidentified as a crow.

Other bird species

For bird nests other than carrion crow, works cannot proceed on the tower without mitigation measures being put in place beforehand. An ecologist can advise on this. For Schedule 1 species, a buffer zone will be applied around the nest. A licence will be required from SNH/NE/NRW/ RSPB to work inside this buffer zone.

For further information and guidance contact your local Environmental or Sustainability teams.

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