

Human-built osprey nest welcomes the real deal

A PASSIONATE environmentalist from Bridge of Cally is celebrating the successful arrival of two ospreys to a nest built by her and a member of the Forestry Commission.

Val Gall has been monitoring two of the fish-eating birds near her home for last three years.

The 16-year-old female osprey was born in Crieff but along with an adult male, has been enjoying the woods of East Perthshire as a nesting ground.

However their return was in jeopardy after their nest was

By Andrew Harris

blown down in gales last year so Val decided to build a nest in an area less exposed to high winds.

The female arrived at the nest on Sunday, April 3, and the male three days later.

Val said: "I was absolutely thrilled to see they had returned. I was under no illusions that the nest would be accepted but to see they have is just incredible."

Val, who has had a lifelong love of raptors and keeps two Harris hawks of her own, was given assistance by Rob Coope of the Forestry Commission who climbed up a tree to re-

construct the nest with sticks, branches and moss.

The site is a closely guarded secret as osprey eggs are a valuable commodity on the black market.

"We have scene suspect characters assessing the area before so we know there is always a risk for the pair but we have 24-hour monitoring teams.

"Walkers who do encounter them, I would urge them to stay away from the nest," she added.

Val hopes the pair will produce four eggs during their stay, which depends on a continual food supply and lack of human intrusion.



MAJESTIC: The Bridge of Cally ospreys have taken to their new nest provided by a local resident.

Blair welcomes arrival of African swifts



WELCOME: Stuart Ainslie and Daniele Muir with a swift box, similar to the one fixed to the roof of the Co-operative building at the Wellmeadow.

THE CO-OP in Blairgowrie's Wellmeadow is awaiting an influx of swifts after a birdbox was installed before their arrival from Africa.

Perth and Kinross Council ranger Daniele Muir working with the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership has recently donated a swift nestbox to the local supermarket.

This was installed last week on the wall of the store, just in time for the swifts' expected arrival in early May.

Stuart Ainslie, manager of the Co-op said that they have a number of bio-diversity projects running on their farms and he was pleased to be able to take part in the Tayside Swift project which will improve urban bio-diversity.

Daniele told the Blairie: "Swift numbers have dropped over recent years as there have been fewer places to nest as old buildings are demolished or renovated. I hope that the nestbox will be taken on by a pair of young birds looking for a nest site for the first

time, though it can take a few years for them to find a new nesting location."

The ranger service conducted a survey last summer of swift populations in the area with members of the public finding new colonies in Rattray, Crook of Devon and Inchture.

Daniele said Hillcrest Housing Association was hoping to become involved in making and installing boxes across the town as they have donated some money to the Tayside swift project.