

# Swift reaction to tower



**■ MYSTERY:** The swift tower which has been erected at the Bog Meadows nature reserve in west Belfast, close to the M1.

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THE mystery over a strange speed-camera-like object which has appeared near the M1 in Belfast has been solved.

Motorists thought it might have been a new-look high-tech speed camera but it is in fact a swift tower.

The multiple towers, which come complete with a solar-powered bird call, have been erected as part of a project aimed at increasing the swift population.

The Belfast Hills Partnership is behind the erection of the network of pioneering bird boxes, which so far have been installed at its own offices in Hamshilltown, the Bog Meadows nature reserve, Collis allotments, and at Naiscoil Emma in the grounds of St Eunan's GAA in Glengorkey.

The breeding towers aim to encourage colonies of swifts to nest following a decline in populations.

Joe Bradley, Belfast Hills Partnership manager, said: "Our swift population numbers are dropping steadily due to loss of nest and landing sites with redevelopment.



"An innovative way of providing sites for possible swift colonies is to install

swift towers alongside providing boxes and custom-made hollows to fit on existing new buildings. "As swifts tend to look for existing swift nesting sites by listening out for the call of nesting birds, the towers have a calling tape playing swift birdsong, which is powered by solar panels, meaning there is no need for an external power supply." Meanwhile, Belfast's first ever river festival got

underway yesterday. Part of the Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme, the four-day Mountains to Meadows River Festival, which runs until Saturday, will feature wildlife events, music and a children's fun day, as well as talks about the industrial heritage of some of west Belfast's rivers. Details about the event are available from [www.belfasthills.org/events](http://www.belfasthills.org/events).

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