

# Investigation underway following attempt to steal sparrowhawk chicks



Police are appealing for the public's assistance as part of ongoing enquiries into an attempted theft of sparrowhawk chicks near Newbridge.

At around 2pm on Saturday 6th July, two men were seen in a wooded area close to the Almond Aqueduct at the River Almond, near to Cliftonhall Road. They stated to a member of the public that there was a nearby nest that contained five chicks.

The suspects then intimated that they planned to take the chicks with a view to sell on and had attempted to remove a number of the chicks from the nest.

The incident was reported to police and officers attended the scene who in turn contacted the Scottish SPCA to assist with conducting inquiries into the matter.

The men are both described as white and with local accents. The first man was aged in his fifties, around 5ft 6ins to 5ft 9ins tall and was wearing a black baseball cap, black down jacket, black jeans and black shoes.

The second man was younger, aged in his thirties, of slim build and slightly taller at 5ft 9ins to 6ft tall. He was wearing an Aberdeen FC shirt, Aberdeen FC shorts, and white trainers.

Inquiries are currently ongoing and anyone who may have any information is asked to come forward.

PC Charles Davidson, Wildlife Crime Officer said: "We are working with our partners to fully investigate this report and would remind the public that the taking, or harming, of these raptors is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

"I'd appeal to any dog walkers or member of the public who may have been near the Union Canal on Saturday afternoon, and who saw these two men, to get in touch with officers should they have information to assist our inquiries."

Scottish SPCA special investigations unit undercover inspector said: "We are pleased the attempt to steal the sparrowhawk chicks was halted by the vigilant members of the public.

"We want to make it clear to the public that all birds, including birds of prey, are protected by law and it is a criminal offence to remove eggs, chicks or birds from the wild.

"Under no circumstances should they be removed from the wild.

"Any incident of this nature will be fully investigated by the Scottish SPCA together with Police Scotland."

Those with information should contact Police Scotland on 101, quoting incident number 3414 of 6th July. Alternatively a report can be made anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.