

News story: Traffic officers rescue family swanning around on M20

A couple of swans and their six cygnets were spotted wandering the hard shoulder of the M20 near junction 4, with the A228 at Larkfield in Kent, likely trying to get to the lake on the far side.

Traffic officers Nick Sivell and Roy Roberts, assisted by their colleagues Lee Turner and Mike Peterson, along with RSPCA animal collection officer Emma Byrne, flew into action to help the family get to safety after they were alerted to the birds' blunder by Kent Police.

The swans made a break for freedom but faced a perilous situation as they looked to wing it up the junction 4 exit slip road for London.

The traffic officers swiftly stopped drivers on the slip road and motorway to avoid an accident, while the RSPCA's Emma Byrne was able to scoop up the birds before they could waddle into any more woe. Those involved managed to ensure the swan family stayed to-feather and were successfully relocated to nearby Leybourne Lakes.

Traffic officer Nick Sivell said:

This is a hugely varied job and you come across all manner of different issues. Although they are usually to do with drivers, sometimes we face challenges like this involving animals.

It was certainly interesting having to help chaperone the swan family to safety, and I want to thank my colleagues and partners involved to ensure we could resolve this swiftly and successfully. We're not too sure what they were doing, and think they may have been trying to get to the lake because they were feeling peckish. Hopefully if the birds decide they need to cross a busy road in the future, they'll cygnal properly and use the flyover next time.

RSPCA animal collection officer, Emma Byrne, said:

I'd like to say a big thank you to Highways England for assisting with this rescue. As the swans were on a busy motorway I wouldn't have been able to reach them without their assistance. Luckily, Highways England was able to stop traffic so that we could reach the family of swans.

The male had some wire round his leg which I removed but apart from this they were all in a good condition. We have no idea how or why they ended up on the London-bound carriageway of the M20 but I'm so glad that this story had a happy ending and after being checked

over I was able to release them at an appropriate site.

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