

Traffic officers fly to the rescue of distressed buzzard

The distressed buzzard was unable to fly and looking a little ruffled when traffic officers spotted it near junction 8 on the coastbound carriageway of the M20.

The team of rescuers which included Highways England traffic officers, Stephen Moakes, Nick Sivell, Jo Langton and Mike Reynolds, flew into action with their specialist equipment, following a tip off from a member of the public.

They worked with experts from the Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation near Eynsford who suggested it was left in the care of Newnham Court Veterinary Hospital, Bearsted, where it's currently recovering.

Emily Fairhurst, veterinary nurse at Newnham veterinary hospital near Bearsted, said:

The buzzard was a little dishevelled, and very quiet. Previous experience with birds of this type suggest it may have hit a car windscreen and become a little disorientated.

Once it's recovered the bird will be given to local raptor experts for a long holiday at the Folly Wildlife Rescue Centre near Tunbridge Wells, where it will stay until it's released into the wild.

Stephen Moakes said:

No single day is the same in this job, and we come across all manner of different issues. Although we are more used to dealing with human customers, animals do end up on the motorway more often than you would think, and we are trained in dealing with a wide range of situations – so we didn't have to wing it.

It's always satisfying to help to know we have made a difference to such a majestic bird like this one and I want to thank my colleagues and partners involved to ensure we could resolve this swiftly and successfully. Hopefully if it decides to cross a busy road in future, it will use the flyover next time.

Experts say that birds of this type can be quite territorial. Once it has recovered it will be brought back to where it was found and released back into the wild.

The bird will be released in the next few weeks.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.