

Top of the bill at next T in the Park... wings

Nesting ospreys threat to future of music festival

By Pamela Paterson

PLANS to stage next year's T in the Park on a country estate could be scuppered – by nesting ospreys.

The festival, which attracts up to 85,000 revellers a day, was set to move to Strathallan Estate in Perthshire next July after 18 years at Balado, Kinross-shire.

But yesterday it was disclosed that the Scottish Government has ordered an environmental impact assessment on the site after local residents raised concerns about nesting ospreys in the area.

The officials will examine the effect the music festival will have on local wildlife. If the protected birds of prey are discovered nesting at the edge of the proposed festival site then 'upwards of half' of the estate would be off limits to T in the Park, which could put the whole event in jeopardy.

The decision by ministers could also cause huge delays for preparations for next year's event, as it forces T in the

the Liddiards, said: 'The specific acknowledgement in the Scottish ministers' screening direction of osprey activity in and around the Strathallan Estate raises difficult questions for DFC in terms of the timing of the survey that will need to be carried out now ahead of the

submission of its planning application.

'The problem they have is that the breeding season of this protected species coincides with the period in summer when the event is set up and held.

'This means the survey will require to be conducted through the summer months, which raises the serious question of whether DFC will be in a position to lodge its planning application with the

council before the event is due to take place.

'Ministers have been advised by Scottish Natural Heritage that a 750 metres buffer zone will need to be put in place between the nesting areas and the event.

'This means if the survey identifies osprey activity near the edge of the site upwards of half of it could be prevented from being used, with ramifications in terms of viability.'

Mrs Liddiard, 56, said: 'We wel-

'Breeding season coincides with event'

Park organiser DF Concerts to submit a full planning application with at least three months' public consultation.

Kim and Mark Liddiard, who own a home on the estate, took legal advice soon after it was announced T in the Park would be moving there.

Their lawyers wrote to ministers to express the couple's concerns about

wildlife, as well as worries that a single-track road network around the site would be unable to cope with the volume of festival traffic.

Sandy Telford, of law firm DLA Piper, which is acting on behalf of

come the news. I don't think many people will think this is a perfect site for a festival of this size.'

A spokesman for DF Concerts said: 'When we were working on the basis of operating under permitted development, there was no record of any ospreys.

'The fact that the Scottish Government have decided full planning permission is required will not change how we operate the event and we are all looking forward to



moving to our new home at Strathallan Castle in 2015.'

A Scottish Government spokesman said: 'Ministers consider there is likely to be a significant environmental impact, primarily due to the close proximity of nesting ospreys and the likelihood that the event will cause disturbance to the birds during the nesting period.'

'Ministers offer to work with DF Concerts to examine the options and next steps.'



Legal advice: Mark Liddiard



Planning hitch: The ospreys' breeding season coincides with the time when T in the Park takes place

