



Information for Homeowners



■ About Swifts

The UK's fastest bird, their exciting calls mean that Summer is here.

Nesting from May to August in buildings, in small holes in the eaves, gables or upper walls, feeding on many harmful flying insects and living in cities and town, they fill the evenings with stunning aerobatic flight. They add immense excitement and life to any area.

■ Why they need your help

Swifts have shared our buildings for the last 2000+ years. But new building techniques and materials as well as insulation of older buildings is preventing them from nesting. As buildings are replaced, insulated or repaired, Swifts find themselves excluded, and they are now declining fast. This is an avoidable tragedy.

■ How to help Swifts

Homeowners can install simple nest boxes that preserve inner-city Swift populations, enhance local biodiversity, and improve the local atmosphere. Just like flowers and trees, Swifts bring life to any site.

■ Setting up Nest Places for Swifts

Setting up Swift nest places is not difficult. Using simple DIY carpentry skills you can make low cost Swift nest-boxes. *Or you can buy ready-made boxes; see the www.swift-conservation.org "Shopping" page for details of types and suppliers.*

■ Help is available

Swift Conservation advises the public, government, and building professionals. We provide guidance, design information and advice about creating homes for Swifts. Ask us and we will help you. Contact mail@swift-conservation.org

■ Build your own Swifts Nestbox

Overleaf is one of our DIY designs. See www.swift-conservation.org for more designs, and advice on installation, and attracting Swifts to breed in them with a Swift Calls CD.

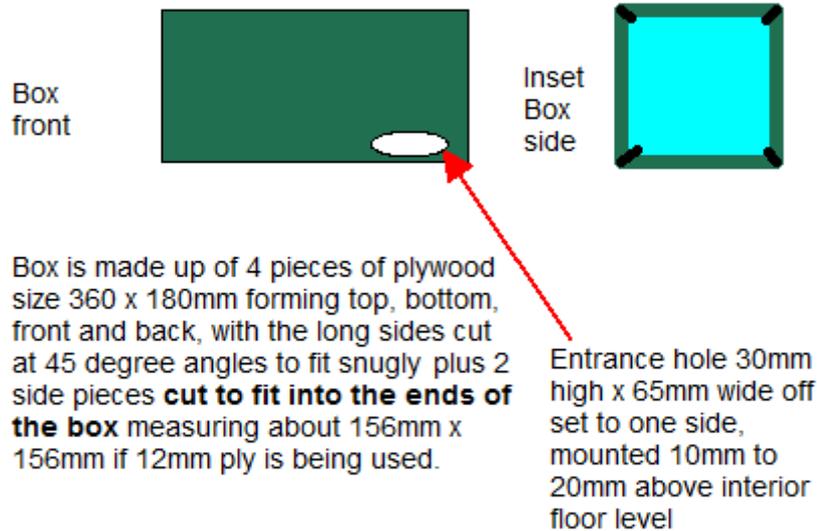
Build this nest box out of 12mm or thicker exterior quality "WBP" plywood. There is no need to clean it unless House Sparrows have used it. You can fit a webcam inside the box and observe the breeding process on your TV or computer, or show it live on the Internet. You should fit a small loudspeaker if you want to attract the Swifts using a calls CD, which we can supply.

Swift Nest Box (for mounting externally)

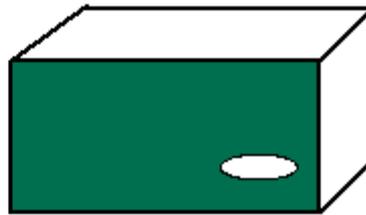
Material 12mm to 25mm thick WBP plywood
Sixes: 360mm wide, 180mm deep, and 180mm high

Entrance hole 30mm high x 65mm wide, offset to one side
set 10mm to 20mm above the interior floor level

**If using ply thicker than 12mm increase overall size to
380mm x 190mm x 190mm**



Below: the finished box - n.b. drawings are not to scale



NB Sizes are approximate – please cut all pieces to avoid exposing edges to the weather.

The above measurements are a guide only. Build the box to last many years. Glue all edges, screw each piece of ply to internal battens mounted inside the ends. NB Trim the end pieces to fit inside the body of the box. Do not treat the interior, but you may paint or stain the exterior.

To encourage nesting, install a 120mm diameter x 20mm high shallow saucer-like nest platform with gently downward sloping outer sides out of papier maché, at the end of the box farthest from the entrance. Secure the box with strong rust-proof fixings to the external wall or eaves, in a shaded or partly shaded position, at least 5 metres above ground level with clear airspace around it. Directly under the eaves is usually the best place for Swift nest boxes. Observe sensible safety precautions when making and fitting the box, and ensure the box is fixed soundly to avoid any risk of it detaching.

Never disturb the birds during the breeding season (May to August).

Good Luck! Edward Mayer