



Information for Homeowners - How to help Swifts



■ About Swifts

The UK's fastest bird, their exciting calls mean Summer is here. Nesting from May to August in crevices in buildings, living in the heart of our villages, towns and cities, eating only insects and spiders, Swifts fill the evening skies with their aerobatic flight, adding immense excitement. Just like flowers and trees, Swifts bring real life to our homes, streets and parks.

■ They need your help!

Why? Swifts have shared our buildings for the last 2000+ years. But as buildings are replaced with new sealed designs, or are insulated or re-roofed, Swifts find themselves excluded. In the past 15 to 20 years we have lost about half our Swifts; they are declining at a rate of 3% every year. This is an avoidable tragedy.

■ How can you help Swifts?

Homeowners can install nest boxes that preserve inner-city Swift populations, enhance local biodiversity, and improve the local atmosphere. They can be bought for as little as £13 plus P&P. See the Swift Conservation web site's "Shopping" page for details of

types and suppliers.

- **Fitting Swift Nest boxes – it's simple!**

Put the nest box at least 5 metres above ground level with clear airspace around it, ideally under eaves or on a gable, somewhere that is fairly shaded from full sun. Secure it with strong rust-proof fixings. There is no need to clean it unless House Sparrows or Starlings have used it. Don't disturb the birds during the breeding season (May to August).

- **Help is available**

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

- **Getting more Swifts and more from your Swifts**

You can fit a small loudspeaker if you want to attract the Swifts using a calls CD or MP3 recording, a useful technique. Swift Conservation supplies the instructions and recordings. You can also fit a webcam inside the box and observe the breeding process on your TV or computer, or show it live on the Internet.



- **Make it a hobby!**

There's lots more that can be done to help your local Swifts; survey them, know where they nest, protect their nest sites, and tell your friends and neighbours all about them. If you need advice, please ask us.

Good Luck!

Edward Mayer