

swifts are amazing!

how much do you know about our summer visitors?

- Swifts are one of the last of our summer migrants to arrive in the UK and are the first to leave (staying for around 3 months).
- They typically spend much of the winter time in the Congo, with a brief visit to Mozambique around Christmas.
- They have been recorded flying at an astonishing 69mph!
- Swifts feed, mate, sleep & collect nest material entirely on the wing.
- The only time they land is when they return to the UK to nest.
- The young take 4-5 years to mature during which they never land.
- To build up strength in their flight muscles before leaving the nest, young birds use their wings to do “press-ups” in the nest .
- They have very short, stubby legs – their scientific name *apus apus* means no legs.
- They weigh about 44 grams (just under the weight of 4 £2 coins).
- Swifts are entirely reliant on buildings in which to nest, but they are very clean, quiet house-guests and should not be confused with other birds that nest in or on buildings:
 - They do not leave lots of mess down walls and windows (starlings, pigeons, house martins)
 - They do not scrabble around above ceilings squawking (starlings)
 - They do not build a mud cup under the eaves of houses (house martins)
 - They do not build a mud cup on the rafters inside a barn or other out-building (swallows)



For even more amazing facts about swifts, for further information on how to help these enigmatic birds and to participate in an online swift inventory, please visit www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts