

How can I find out more about swifts?

There's lots of information to be found on the RSPB website at: www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts.

Further information and advice may also be found from Action for Swifts: <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/> and Swift Conservation: www.swift-conservation.org

How else can I help swifts?

Providing a nest box is a great way to help swifts. There also many other ways in which you can help in your neighbourhood:

You can submit sightings to the RSPB Swift Survey (www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts). The survey aims to record birds flying low around roof tops calling which is an indication of where they may be nesting. It also records actual nest sites. The information is used to inform planners and consultant ecologists working for developers where to protect existing nests and where to best target new nest provision.

You might want to encourage your local authority to fit integral swift bricks in new developments. Letter templates can be found on the swift survey pages by following links to the survey page from: www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts.

Several groups of swift enthusiasts, collectively called the Swift Local Network have established themselves across the country and are very proactive in helping swifts in their respective areas. Information about the groups can be found here: <https://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/swifts-localnetwork-sln.html>



Image by
Mike Langman

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The RSPB – rspb.org.uk

UK Headquarters, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL.
Telephone 01767 680551

Northern Ireland Headquarters, Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast, BT8 7QT. Telephone 028 9049 1547

Scotland Headquarters, 2 Lochside View, Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh EH12 9DH. Telephone 0131 317 4100

Wales Headquarters, Sutherland House, Castlebridge, Cowbridge Road East. Cardiff CF11 9AB.
Telephone 029 2035 3000



Swift Nest Box



Information about your swift nest box and swifts

Thank you for purchasing this RSPB swift nest box. It has been designed in conjunction with Action for Swifts – a voluntary organisation working solely for the conservation of swifts.

Why help swifts?

The swift is probably the quintessential ‘urban bird’ inextricably linked to sharing our homes, usually nesting in the eaves of houses, commercial buildings, church spires and other historic buildings.

This enigmatic bird has declined by over 50% in recent years and is a priority for conservation action. The cause of decline is not understood. However, many nest sites have been lost due to building renovation or demolition, while new buildings typically do not provide many nesting opportunities for swifts.

It is likely the loss of suitable nest sites is a major problem for swifts and is something we can all act to help address. By purchasing this nestbox you are making a commitment to provide swifts with somewhere safe to nest.

Box design and features

The box has been designed with a pitched roof. This makes it easier to fit beneath even the narrowest of eaves. It allows rain to run off and prevents predators from perching on the roof.

The entrance hole is small enough to deter starlings from colonising the box. Starlings are also in decline and need of help, but can be provided for with our RSPB Apex Starling nest box (R405836), preferably secured to a tree.

The box contains a nest cup which provides the swifts with a nesting structure and stops their eggs from rolling about.

This swift nest box has been handcrafted by UK joiners, using FSC certified wood.

Locating the box

- Avoid placing above doors and windows
- Allow a minimum 5m clear drop beneath and in front of the box
- Maintain a clear flight path to the nest by locating away from large mature trees and shrubs or those likely to become large in the future.
- Fix the box to the wall, tightly beneath the eaves of the house.
- On houses with narrow eaves, it will be necessary for the box to face any easterly aspect.
- On houses with wide eaves that cast shade directly beneath, other aspects (south or west) might be possible alternatives to face the box.
- Before securing the lid, if you can obtain them, you may place a few breast feathers (eg: chicken) or down feathers (eg: from an old pillow or quilt) inside the box. This is believed to further encourage an investigating swift (see diagram 2).



Diagram 1: Face east on narrow eaves.

On wide, shaded eaves other aspects, eg: south and west, are possible (see ✓ areas).

Do **not** locate near large trees which will block flight paths. Give a minimum 5m clearance beneath and in front of the box. Avoid placing above doors and windows (see X areas)

Diagram 2:

A few down or breast feathers help encourage birds to nest



Legal

Please note that the RSPB's usual guarantees relating to workmanship and materials apply to this product and your statutory rights are unaffected. You are responsible for properly and safely installing this product and periodically checking it remains secure.

Maintenance

Nest boxes used by swifts do not require the cleaning and maintenance required by some other species. However, every few years check the fixings remain secure and for signs of possible decay.

How many boxes?

Swifts are colonial birds and would benefit from multiple boxes. It is generally recommended to install 2-4 or more boxes. You may start with one or two and add to them as birds begin to move in.

When will they nest?

It can take several years for swifts to find new nest boxes. In the meantime, other birds such as house sparrows might use the nest box. This is not a bad thing as sparrows need help and their presence is known to attract swifts to look for nests.

You can make it easier for swifts to find a nest box by playing swift calls near the box, for instance using an MP3 player and placing a mini speaker close to the box. Information on how to do this may be found at <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/> .