

## FLAGSHIP SPECIES

### SWIFT INFORMATION SHEET

by Chris Mason of Swift Conservation

#### Nest sites

Swifts nest in crevices in the walls of buildings or under eaves or tiles. Churches are favourite sites. Their numbers are declining as a result of loss of nest sites, which occurs when buildings are demolished or renovated, or roofs are repaired and insulated.

#### How to help

Check to see if Swifts are nesting in your church. They are often overlooked because they are so unobtrusive and make no mess.

Ensure that Swifts and their nests are taken into account if repairs or renovation work have to be done.

Avoid building work during the nesting season if it will affect nesting birds. All birds' nests are protected by law whilst in use.

Get advice from experts on preserving nest sites during building work, or on how to provide new ones.

Spread the word about these extraordinary birds and the risks they face.

If there are Swifts near your church, display a poster in the church porch to raise awareness.

See <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/church-porch-poster.html>

#### Nest boxes

If Swifts are already nesting in the church or nearby it may be possible to add to their numbers by installing a nest box. This has been done in many places around Britain, for instance in the tower of All Saints Church, Worlington in Cambridgeshire, where Swifts have now bred successfully for the last three years.



All Saints Worlington. There are boxes in each of the louvred windows in the tower. Each has at least one Swift's nest.



The box cabinet behind a louvred window. The back has been removed. Floors 1 & 2 both contain Swift's nests

## Permission

The Parochial Church Council has to be consulted and agree, and a faculty may be needed.

For further information see:

<http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/getting-provision-for-swifts-into.html>

## Costs

The boxes will have to be made to measure but a good local carpenter can make them quite easily. With voluntary help the only costs involved are buying the wood; but the chances of success are greatly increased if a recording of Swifts calls is played during the summer breeding season (also quite cheap and simple to install).

## Results and Outcomes

With patience and a bit of luck nesting Swifts may occupy the boxes within a few years, thus providing them with home to which they can return for many years. It will also raise the profile of Swifts in the area.

## KEY CONTACTS

**Action for Swifts.** Their website ([www.actionforswifts.blogspot.com](http://www.actionforswifts.blogspot.com)) has information on how to instal nest boxes in churches with examples and designs, as well as other case studies of individual and local initiatives to help Swifts.

**Swift Conservation.** The website ([www.swift-conservation.org](http://www.swift-conservation.org)) has a vast amount of information about Swifts in Britain and abroad. It also includes a list of local contacts for first aid advice if you find a grounded Swift.



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