

Swift Nesting Sites Survey 2011 – Help needed !

Information collected by the British Trust for Ornithology shows that the number of swifts breeding in Britain has declined considerably - by 44% in the South East between 1995 and 2008. Much of this decline is caused by the loss of nesting sites, due to building repairs or even simple re-pointing of brickwork, which means that swifts can no longer access a traditional site.

Swifts nest in the eaves of buildings or in gaps in the wall or tiles of a building. Their nests are not visible from the outside. In fact they use very little by way of nest material at all. It is not easy to find the exact site of a swift's nest, unless you see one entering the building where it nests. However, breeding swifts have a distinctive screaming display flight particularly noticeable on fine summer evenings around buildings. When you hear this you can be sure that they are breeding nearby.



Working with swift expert Chris Mason in Kirtlington (Oxfordshire) and Wycombe District Council, I am hoping to collect together as many records as possible of swift nests in the mid Bucks area – primarily the area covered by the Wycombe District Council. To help identify the area of interest, the following are some of the settlements found in the Wycombe District geographical area :

High Wycombe

Hazlemere, Flackwell Heath, Tylers Green, Loudwater, Speen, Great Kingshill
Wooburn, Wooburn Green

Marlow, Marlow Bottom, Bourne End, Hambleden, Stokenchurch, Lane End

Princes Risborough, Longwick, Ellesborough, Butlers Cross

Lacey Green, Naphill, Walters Ash, Hughenden, Bledlow, Bledlow Ridge

During the rest of the summer months please can you return any swift nest sightings to me on the attached form by post or email. **Please pass this request on to any other people you know who may be interested or have information on swift nest sites.** The swifts will leave from the beginning of August but I am hoping to carry on with the project next year and continue to build up a register for the area. Could you therefore indicate if you are happy to be re-contacted next year.

For this survey please do not send in casual records of flying swifts. These birds can cover very long distances to collect food in adverse weather conditions so you may see swifts far away from the nesting place.

The register of swift nesting sites will be shared with Bucks and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre, the RSPB who are running a national swift survey, and Wycombe District Council so that nests can be considered when planning applications are made. This should help conserve or reinstate existing nest sites. Where swifts are nesting new nest sites can be designed and built into the eaves, or swift bricks inserted into walls.

If you have any questions please ask and thank you for reading this.

For further information the Swift Conservation and RSPB web sites can be found at :

<http://www.swift-conservation.org/>

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/s/swift/index.aspx>

Swift Nesting Sites Survey 2011 – Have you seen this bird ?

RSPB images (Graham Katley)



Record of possible swift nesting site -
please fill out as completely as you can but
don't worry if you don't have all the details

Your name and contact details (address, phone or email)

.....
.....

Are you willing to be contacted again next year to help with records ? Yes/No

Date, time of sighting.....

Location (as detailed as possible please)

.....
.....

Behaviour of birds :

Flying high in the sky	Yes/No
Flying low and screaming around buildings	Yes/No
Seen entering holes in buildings	Yes/No

Number of birds.....

Any other comments

.....
.....

Helen Webb
19 Cannon Place
Princes Risborough
Bucks
HP27 9HL

01844 347822
hjwebb1@btinternet.com