

How can you help?



Hampshire Swifts



Hampshire Swifts

There are many ways you can help our swifts:

- Count and survey swifts: we still don't know where most of our swifts nest. This information makes it much easier to protect them.
- Identify sites where nest boxes could be installed.
- Make and install nest boxes.
- Report developments which may be damaging swift nest sites.
- Help influence planning policy by writing to newspapers, your council and MP.



Please help our Swifts



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**Is it a bird,
is it a Swift?**



Please help look after these unique
and stunning birds.

Join our Facebook group and
check our website for more
information and updates.

These beautiful and charismatic birds have
declined across Hampshire and the UK by more
than 60% over the past 20 years.

We can stop and reverse this decline.

www.hampshireswifts.co.uk

 Hampshire Swifts

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About our Swifts



One of the most important things you can do to help is to count and find out where swifts are nesting near you. To do that you need to be sure of your identification. Read on to understand more about how to identify swifts.

Every summer we are visited by swallows, house martins, sand martins and swifts. All 4 species can be found almost anywhere in the country, around towns, villages and over lakes and rivers. They are all aerial feeders, catching flying insects and other invertebrates, and are superficially similar so how do you identify and separate them?

With practice it is easy to separate swallows, martins and swifts simply by observing their shape, listening to any calls and noting their mode of flight but these are only obvious once you watched these birds for some time. Initially, when you see birds feeding in the sky look at their colouration, listen for any calls they make and, if possible, identify where they are nesting.



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www.hampshireswifts.co.uk

Please see below for some key facts that will help you to identify these birds.

House Martin:

White underparts, black upper parts and a **white rump** / rasping call / make mud nests under eaves.



3

Swallow:

Pale underparts, dark upper parts with a **red chin** and **long tail streamers** / twittering song & call / make nests inside barns or outbuildings.



4

Sand Martin:

Pale underparts with a **distinct breast band** / rasping call / usually by water / nest in excavated holes in lake, quarries or riverbanks.



5

Swift:

All dark, pale chin if seen well / **screaming call** / concealed nest under eaves or tiles.



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Another feature to look for is how they fly:

Martins have a fluttery flight interspersed with long glides.

Swallows fly fast and low with fewer glides.

Swifts have a distinct winnowing flight, often quite high but can form low, fast flying and screaming groups especially on warm summer evenings.

In late summer martins and swallows will congregate on telephone wires or buildings. Swifts never land except inside their nests.

Whereas house martins, sand martins and swallows all make or excavate their own nests, swifts rely on existing holes and gaps in buildings to access sites in the roof space where they can lay their eggs. As buildings are renovated and renewed the availability of these spaces is much reduced, causing a serious decline in swift numbers. Fortunately swifts will readily nest in artificial boxes or "swift bricks" which provide the spaces they need and we can create new colonies of swifts by putting boxes or bricks up on our houses and churches to compensate for all the nest sites lost over the past few years. In this way we can halt and ultimately reverse the decline of this iconic bird.