



Nest box inside closed eaves



S Brick for eaves



Tailored triangle box with 9 chambers



If you find a grounded Swift

and it cannot fly, put it in a closed, ventilated box. Swifts are difficult to care for, so get in touch with a specialist in the field. For links to comprehensive advice:

actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/grounded-swift.html

Need More Help? Free advice is available from:

Action for Swifts

E-Mail: actionforswifts@gmail.com

Website: actionforswifts.blogspot.com

Swift Conservation

E-Mail: mail@swift-conservation.org

Website: swift-conservation.org

Bristol Swifts

Website: bristolswifts.co.uk

RSPB

Website: RSPB.org.uk/helpswifts

Swifts Local Network (SLN)

Link: actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/sln.html



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Swifts Need Help!

**Action for Swifts
Swift Conservation
Swifts Local Network**

Swifts are remarkable birds

They spend almost their whole lives in the air
They eat, drink, sleep and mate on the wing
They come to Europe each summer
They return to Africa at the end of July
a round trip of 14,000 miles!

Similar birds

Unlike Swallows and Martins,
Swifts have dark underparts
and they never perch on wires
Swift nests are always out of sight



© Tom Lindroos



© Ove Claesson

Swifts nest in old buildings

They are faithful to their nest sites
Old buildings are knocked down, repaired or insulated. New buildings have no nooks or crannies, so when Swifts arrive back from Africa they find their nesting places have gone:

THEY ARE HOMELESS!



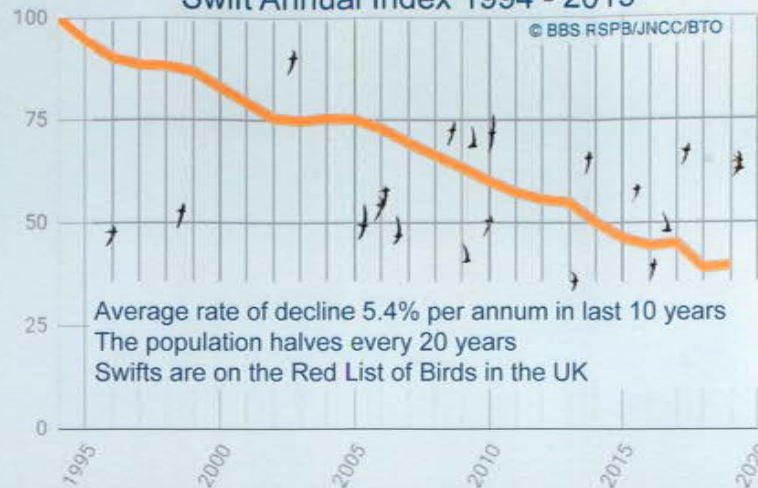
Swift migration

These tracks are from a geolocator attached to a Swift nesting in, Cambridgeshire in 2011.

The Swift returned in 2012 safe and sound.

Swifts are in trouble

Swift Annual Index 1994 - 2019



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Leave existing nest sites undisturbed
Put up nest boxes

At least 4 metres high, higher is better
Defended from sun and rain, with a clear flyway
Swift attraction calls increase your chances

SWIFT NEST BOXES IN CHURCH BELFRIES

Both of these churches in Suffolk and Cambs host substantial colonies

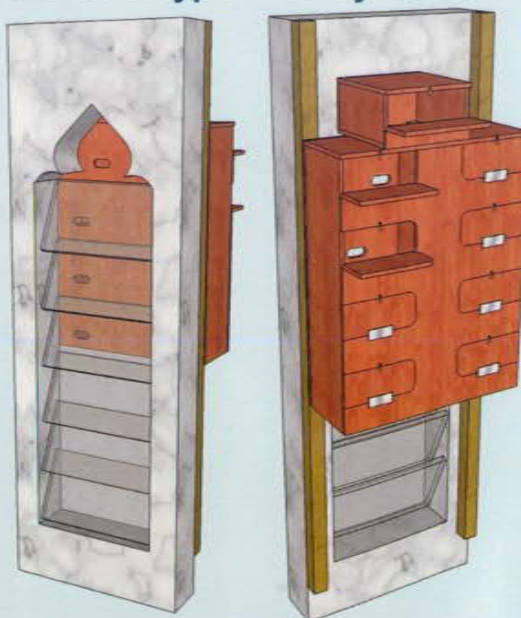


All Saints Worlington
© Judith Wakelam



St Mary the Virgin
St Neots

Model of typical belfry boxes



For guidelines see:
actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/belfry.html



NEST BOXES FOR SWIFTS

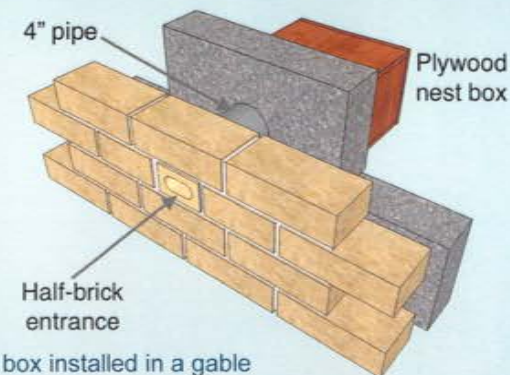


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INTERNAL NEST BOXES: secure, thermally stable, easily installed
in new build, and can be retrofitted



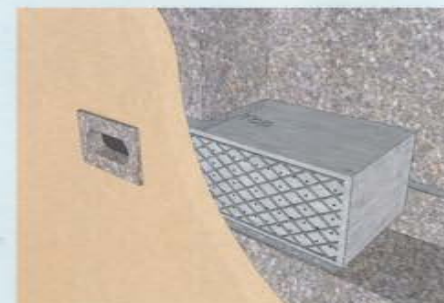
© Clive Cooper



Cambridge System nest box installed in a gable

SWIFT BRICKS: available from a number of manufacturers. Easy in new build.

See actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/swift-bricks.html



Swift Brick for render



Swift Brick

EXTERNAL NEST BOXES: Many commercial products.

See: swift-conservation.org/Shopping!.htm For DIY designs: actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/diy.html

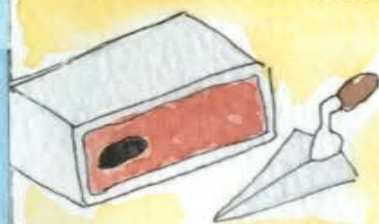


A simple DIY under eaves nest box



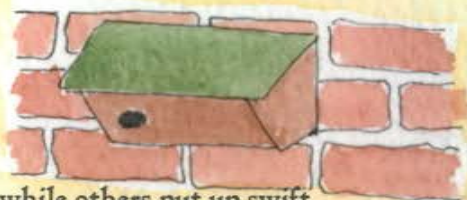
Model 30 - suitable for exposed positions

MAKING NEW HOMES



Some people replace a few bricks in their wall with special nesting bricks ...

Swifts are losing their places to nest, but we can easily provide new places with a little thought and effort.

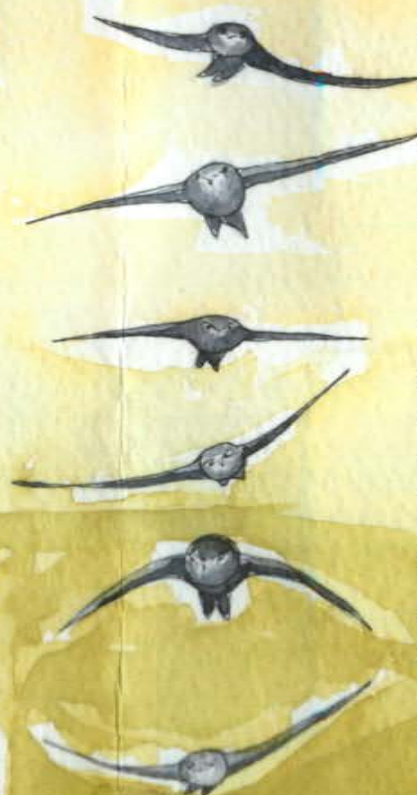


...while others put up swift boxes hoping to attract these lovely birds.

How to Rescue a Swift.

Sometimes, swifts fall to the ground and need help. Even if it is a very young chick with hardly any feathers, specialist carers can give it a chance to live.

1. Don't leave the swift on the ground - a cat will get it.
2. If it looks fully grown, try lifting it up in your open hands to see if it wants to fly away.
3. If it stays in your hand, put it in a box with a lid, and tell the Facebook page "Swift & Swallow SOS Coordinating Rescues"
4. Don't try to feed the swift - the wrong food could seriously damage its chances of survival.



Test your swift knowledge!

Are you ready for a quiz?

Q1 What do swifts eat?

- a) Flying insects b) Berries c) Seeds

Q2 Where do swifts spend the winter?

- a) Lapland b) Southern Africa c) Tenerife

Q3 Where do swifts nest?

- a) in trees b) in walls c) on the ground

Q4 How many miles can they fly each year?

- a) 500 b) 8,000 c) 250,000

Q5 Why are swifts in trouble?

- a) when houses are done up, nesting holes are lost.
b) there are fewer insects for them to eat because we use too many insecticides
c) both of these reasons

Q6 How can we help?

- a) by making our gardens insect friendly
b) by putting up nest boxes and swift bricks on our homes.
c) by being careful not to damage nests when we do up our homes.

Answers
Q1 b) Insects; Q2 b) Southern Africa; Q3 b) in walls; Q4 c) 250,000; Q5 c) both of these reasons. Q6 we can help by doing all these things.

A SWIFT TIMELINE: Start here →

Over 60 million years ago, when dinosaurs were dying out and humans had not yet evolved, swifts were flying

long swifts have existed, this tiny section of it, coloured red, would show how long we humans have been around. Makes you think, doesn't it?

This is a swift...

They journey from southern Africa to Britain every summer to rear their chicks.

In the last few days before they fledge, the chicks can be seen peeping out at the world they are about to join. Do you think they might be excited, scared, or puzzled? All they have known so far in their lives is a dark hole!

Once they have fledged, it will be at least 2 or 3 years before they touch land again. They fly straight off to Africa, but come back to Britain each summer until they are ready to find a partner and breed.

In an average year, a swift can fly about 250,000 miles. That's just a bit further than flying to the moon!

When they find a partner, they make a nest and become parents themselves. Each year from then on, they meet up with the same partner at the same nest every summer.

If their nest is destroyed while they are gone, they will have nowhere to lay their eggs and they will be distressed.

For food, they catch flying insects and tiny spiders that float on the air.

They fly low over the surface of lakes and ponds to scoop up the water they need to live.

We can help swifts by planting wildflowers in our gardens, to attract a range of pollinating insects that swifts like to eat.

The very best thing you can do in your garden is to make a pond, however small, because they are great for breeding insects.

You really can make a difference!

And remember - don't use insecticides!

They nest under the eaves of our houses in cracks and crevices, and lay 2 or 3 eggs.

Both the male and the female feed the chicks and keep them warm.

After about 40 days the chicks are fully grown and weigh about 40g - roughly the same as a creme egg!

lost their nesting places, until there were only a few left. But when the Greeks and the Romans started to construct tall buildings out of stone, swifts saw that they could use the high up cracks between stones in the walls and roofs for nesting. For nearly 2000 years, swifts have safely reared their chicks in our houses and buildings. Sadly, in the last 40 years, people have begun to seal up the cracks and holes used by swifts, with plastic. The plastic boards do not provide cracks like stone and bricks do, so places to nest have become difficult to find. As a result, the number of swifts has become fewer and fewer. If this timeline shows how long we have been around, this tiny section of it, coloured red, would show how long we humans have been around. Makes you think, doesn't it?