



Guildford Environmental Forum

www.gefweb.org.uk

Guildford Swifts

A project to protect this beloved bird in sharp decline in the UK.

Swifts are an iconic and incredible migrant species that:

- migrate over 14,000 miles every year
- can stay in the air for up to 10 months without landing once
- eat, sleep and even mate on the wing
- fly 500 miles a day to feed on airborne insects
- can live for up to 21 years

They are nationally recognised to be in sharp decline with The State of the UK's Birds report (SUKB) 2017 recording swifts as being in the amber list, meaning of 'moderate conservation concern'.

Swifts arrive in the UK end April/early May to breed, before returning all the way to Africa in August. However, they now find it hard to find places to breed because so many of our buildings have been renovated, meaning they can no longer nest in them. Alongside this, there is less food for them as there are fewer insects to feed on due to factors such as increasing pesticide use.

To help reverse this Guildford Environment Forum are teaming up with members of the local community to do the following:

- Raise awareness of the plight of swifts in the Guildford area
- Recruit volunteer swift spotters to find out where we currently have swifts
- Work with developers and the local community to provide more nesting opportunities for swifts, so we can increase their numbers

Want to get involved?

This summer, we are calling out for people to scan the skies looking for swifts. If we know where the birds are nesting, then we'll know the best places to put up new nest boxes which the swifts will be able to use to grow their colonies.

To report your sightings, send information including location; number of swifts; behaviour (e.g nesting, flying low over buildings etc) and date to johnwbannister40@gmail.com. We'll use the information to build up a picture of where swifts are in our area, so we can find the best places to help them in future.

If you want to be more involved in the project, you can be. We want to hear from people who might be able to help us with the following:

- Building nest boxes
- Installing nest boxes
- Volunteering to raise awareness
- People who would like to have a swift nest box on their own property

If you would like to help, email johnwbannister40@gmail.com for more details.

Swift identification

While swifts are very distinctive, they can sometimes be confused with other birds such as swallows or house martins. To help avoid any cases of mistaken identity, visit this very useful article to find out what to look out for: www.bbc.co.uk/nature/22527420

There is also a whole swathe of information on the www.swift-conservation.org/ should help you, including [this leaflet](#) on swift surveying techniques.

Finally, [this video](#) is great to see what they look and sound like in action.

Good luck, and happy swift spotting!

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