



Have you seen swifts in Tayside?



Swifts visit Tayside from Africa for just over three months each summer. They eat, sleep and mate on the wing, never touching an insect or piece of land, and therefore don't get sick. In fact the only time they land is when eating their chicks. They are faithful to one land site and return there year after year. On five summer evenings swifts gather in 'singing' parties, choosing each other around the buildings where they nest.

Swifts are very noisy. If you please let us know we will be building up a picture of where swifts nest and how many Tayside.

How can you help?

Check your house for signs of nesting. Swifts like to nest in chimneys, roof eaves, and other places. If you have a chimney, please let us know we will be building up a picture of where swifts nest and how many Tayside.



Swifts are unique



Swifts are unique because they are the only birds that can fly upside down. They are also the only birds that can fly backwards. They are also the only birds that can fly in a straight line.

- Young swifts can go into deeper water than most birds - grow more and the bird's system stays clean.
- Good nesting spots are also high in barns where they feed on the insects trapped there by the wing beat.
- Young swifts do 'singing' and 'sing' songs to strengthen their muscles before they fly.
- Before people understood migration, swifts were thought to spend winter in the bottom of ponds.
- Scottish names include 'Tynny' and 'Tynny', while the Gaelic name is 'Sìth'.

How to tell the difference between swifts and other species



(left) Daniele Muir, Perth & Kinross Countryside Ranger; (right) David Stewart, Perth College student placement