

SWIFTS IN TAYSIDE

Newsletter Issue 5



Welcome

Our last Newsletter carried the alarming headline "UK Swifts Now Officially Endangered". This wasn't some empty news item – the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had, in fact, confirmed that our Common Swift, *apus apus*, was officially on the Red List.

The emphasis of the IUCN Red List approach is on 'extinction risk', informed by a species' rarity, its range restrictions and its rate of recent decline measured over the last ten years, or three generations, whichever is longer. This is a serious designation: a call for urgent action if ever there was one. It is even more alarming to discover that Swifts have now made it onto the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern in the UK. This is because their numbers fell by 62% between 1995 and 2021.

The intervening time between that newsletter and this one has seen a great deal of work across the UK to try and turn this round. Several wonderful books have been published which have raised a great deal of awareness for our beloved birds. A national campaign has been waged, local authorities and developers engaged, and, vitally, local communities have been coming together to safeguard their swifts. There are now some 100 local swift groups like Tayside Swifts and many of these use World Swift Day and the UK Swift Awareness Week to join together to celebrate our much-loved birds. There are even designated 'Swift Cities' (including Belfast, Cardiff and Exeter); Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, is our only Scottish Swift City so far. With the imminent roll out of some 20 Biodiversity Villages, Towns and Neighbourhoods in Perth & Kinross, though, we will be including as one of the core projects a Saving our Swifts component.

We can't be complacent. In some ways we have hardly started: we have a great deal more to do to even begin to turn the fortunes round for our Scottish-born swifts. They have been on the planet for between 35 and 45 million years – as against our 2 million years. Our species, I don't think, has any right to cause their extinction, especially when so many of our own species eagerly await the swifts' return to their homeplace each spring and revel in their company for a precious 12 weeks a year!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Swifts live entirely on the wing – feeding, mating and sleeping. They only land to breed.
- They return to Scotland from Africa at the beginning of May and leave again in early August.
- The birds are boomerang-shaped and look all black against the sky (their white throat patch is not often visible).
- They feed on large quantities of insects.
- They only feed on the wing, so are very dependant on weather conditions. The adults will fly hundreds of miles, if necessary, to find food.
- On fine summer evenings swifts gather in "screaming colonies", chasing around the buildings where they nest at high speed.
- Over an average lifetime, each swift will fly approximately 4 million miles to and fro Africa from its birthplace in Scotland.

WHERE DO SWIFTS LIVE?

- Almost exclusively in buildings – under roof tiles, on the wall head of buildings (gaining access via gaps and cracks in the wall or soffit), or in holes in the walls of buildings.
- Usually in older buildings, including church towers, but they will use new buildings if there are suitable gaps and spaces. They need a clear flight path to and from the nest, usually over 4m above ground.
- They can use holes too small for starlings or pigeons.
- They are loyal to their nest sites. If disturbed or excluded, they rarely relocate to a new nest site for that season.



© David Moreton,
courtesy of Swift Conservation



Please report removal of Swift, Swallow or House Martin nests within their breeding season (May–September). Please also note any erection of scaffolding from the start or during the breeding season, or machinery working in close proximity of a sand martin nest site.

If you witness any wildlife crime taking place, call 999 immediately - ask to speak to a Wildlife Crime Officer if one is available but any Police Officer can help.

For a non-emergency – ring Police Scotland 101 or email: contactus@scotland.pnn.police.uk

If you want to report wildlife crime anonymously call Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

- If safe to do so, please take photographs, video or sketch - or have a witness with you (note their name and contact details too)
- Note the date, time, and weather conditions
- Note the address where the incident is taking place or identify a map reference using the My Three Words app
- Note a description of person/s involved including gender, age, height, clothing, etc
- Note any relevant vehicle registration numbers, make, model, and colour – and company name if on vehicle

More information is also available via the National Wildlife Crime Unit - <http://www.nwcu.police.uk/> or <https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/wildlife-crime/>

Rock a Bye Baby

Swifts really do sleep on the wing! Established breeding birds will return from migration directly to their nest site to raise their family and will spend their nights in the nest with the chicks. The younger non-breeding birds and yearlings without a nest site will sleep the night away up in the clouds, even as high as 10,000 feet above us.

Swifts have the ability to shut down alternate sides of their brain, keeping one side awake and alert. This enables them to 'keep an eye out' for predators, to remain on course when on migration and so wake up at more or less the same point they fell asleep! This is called Uni-hemispherical Slow Wave Sleep. The left side of the brain shuts off first and alternates with the right which would cause the bird to sway from side to side like rocking in a cradle!

Reproduced from the Huntly Swift Group newsletter

Swifts in Perth

Over twenty years ago I created two swift nest sites in the loft of my house with entrance access from under the fascia. Although one of the sites was occupied only once, I have had the satisfaction of reporting the successful rearing and departure of swift youngsters from the other site every year since it was established. Last year was no exception and I was able to record that two youngsters left for their migration to Africa on 23rd July.

Several years ago, following heavy rain, I found a bedraggled swift lying on the lawn. I placed it in a cardboard box and left it in a warm conservatory. After three hours it appeared remarkably active and after combing two flat flies from its plumage and taking it to an upstairs outdoor landing, I held it out in my palm and the bird left the hand and flew off. It then flew in an anti-clockwise circular direction and as it passed directly over my head it dipped its left wing and then disappeared into the blue yonder. Was this a

coincidence? Probably - or was it an acknowledgment? Unlikely, of course, but nevertheless, an unforgettable moment.

Unfortunately, swift numbers have declined. I remember, not so long ago, screaming parties zooming up and down George Street in Perth and hearing their cries above the sound of traffic. Can we do anything to help the species recover? Good question! I think we need more insects, more nest sites and less people. Tayside Swifts is working on how to create more nest sites but it is up to all of us to improve our gardens, farmland and greenspace for insects.

Charlie MacPherson, Tayside Swifts

Charlie has been a hard-working member of Tayside Swifts since its inception. He is the archetypal Swift Champion, not only caring for the swifts he welcomes back to his house every year, but in surveying areas around his home and speaking passionately about swifts. Thank you for your enthusiasm and knowledge, Charlie.

But What Can I Do?

There are many ways you can help save our swifts!

1 - Become a Citizen Scientist

Adding your sightings of screaming swifts or sharing your knowledge of where swifts are nesting (in a natural nest site or in a nest box) helps create Swift Priority Zones - <https://www.swiftmapper.org.uk/>. Local planners and developers can get to know where the swifts are, take care to safeguard them in buildings about to be renovated or add integral nest boxes to new builds. This, in addition to what local communities are achieving, will ultimately help increase nesting options for our swifts - and hopefully contribute to a larger population.

2 - Put up a nest box

Swifts need specialist nest boxes, but you can easily make your own (being careful to get the size of the aperture right) or you can buy them. Woodcrete ones are best as they last, without any maintenance, for 20+ years. Swifts make very little mess (if at all) and also very little noise but they do need easy access to the box which should be at least 4-5m above the

ground. Find out more here: <https://swift-conservation.org/Shopping%21.htm> and also <https://gardenature.co.uk/> and <https://nhbs.com>.

3 - Garden for nature

You may not see the connection, but if you attract a wide range of insects to your garden or patio that will bring in the birds, swifts included. Think "pollinators" and plant nectar-rich flowers for your herbaceous border, flowering herbs, pretty open-flowered annuals or even a wild patch of native wildflowers in a corner by the compost bin perhaps. Leave your lawn to flower and enjoy the clovers and daisies knowing they are feeding the bumblebees, moths and butterflies too. Stop using garden chemicals and leave fresh water out for birds and hedgehogs. Check our Making Way of Nature booklet for many more hints and tips - <https://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/2016/07/04/making-way-for-nature/>

Tayside Swifts Volunteer Opportunities

We are rolling out even more swift projects over the next year but really need help to make it happen. If you can spare a few hours each month (even over the winter), there are a variety of tasks which may be of interest – for instance, collating and inputting survey data, helping with the Swift School Twinning project, making up Swift Information Packs for householders and businesses, occasionally helping with events or setting up display banners and leaflets at local libraries.

Ahead of each swift season we also welcome anyone wishing to 'adopt a street' to survey (anywhere in Tayside). We can provide maps, advice, risk assessments and relevant ID so that you can survey during June and July and input your findings into the SwiftMapper App. You can share the survey walks with a friend or family member of course – and if a few people adopt a street each, we need Street Survey Co-ordinators to bring it all together. None of this is onerous – and

we can provide informal training as each season starts.

If you would like to be part of the Tayside Swifts team, just let us know. Where appropriate, travel/mileage expenses can be reimbursed. If there is a student seeking an unpaid internship, we can also offer something equally suitable.

Contact either Catherine via caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk or Daniele via DMuir@taysideswifts.co.uk.

Swifts Included in Africa-Scotland Teaching Resources

At Tayside Swifts' request, Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust (PKCT) is very proud to expand its Highland Perthshire Primary Schools bird box teaching resource package to include Africa!

Together with GreenTweed Eco and Tom Rawson, conservationist and primary school teacher, PKCT created a wealth of teaching and education resources for primary school children around local Scottish birds.

With this brand-new partnership between schools in Highland Perthshire and schools in Malawi and Uganda, however, both Africa and Scotland will be able to share knowledge of the wildlife of their respective homes – and celebrate the shared species that migrate between the two, including swifts!

The core of the teaching pack will include activity sheets such as wordsearches, colouring-by-number sheets, card games, line mazes and more to test children's knowledge of local and migratory birds and their habitats and diets.

Scottish teachers can already make use of the original Highland Perthshire Education Pack. Just visit www.pkct.org and find the OpenLearn section in 'Education' to benefit from interactive elements streamlined for projectors and classroom smartboards to pair with exciting paper activities.

PKCT and Tayside Swifts are already working with others to officially launch the next phase of the Tayside School Swift Twinning Project and very much hope the initiative will be shared beyond our boundaries as time goes on. Please contact Catherine about the Twinning Project if you would know of a school who would like to get involved – caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

Christy Bridgeman



Not sure which is a swift, house martin or swallow? Our colourful postcard will help with your identification skills! Swift-Hirundine PCard.cdr (taysidebiodiversity.co.uk). If you would like copies of this postcard for any events in Tayside, just let us know.

Forfar Swift Conservation Project

Tayside Swifts has successfully run swift conservation projects all over Tayside – working with local people in Pitlochry, Edzell, Kirriemuir, Crieff, Carse of Gowrie and several villages. Our most recent success to celebrate centres around the amazing work done in Forfar!

A number of years ago, the Angus Alive Ranger Service helped install nest boxes at the Orchardbank Industrial Estate to invite in nesting swifts. The style of box, however, proved to be far more successful with starlings and house martins. Not a bad thing in itself, but for Tayside Swifts and enthusiasts alike, the work in Forfar was not done yet!

The new project, which was kindly supported by the Angus Council Town Centre Fund, launched during the first Covid lockdown and progress was, naturally, initially very slow. Nonetheless, that didn't stop the local community getting involved. January of the same year saw 15 people sign up to help get the project off the ground with discussions between planners, architects, Angus Council and the community.

As with similar projects elsewhere, the Forfar Swift Conservation Project began with a guided walk courtesy of Daniele of Tayside Swifts. Not only was this a great bird watching session for everyone, but six volunteers came forward to get involved in survey training. As ever, such training and recruiting is crucial for any project to continue. Gathering data on swift locations (or, indeed, lack of swift locations) is vital for the installation of future nest boxes and boosting the overall numbers of this endangered bird. It doesn't only help organisations such as ourselves, but future town planners and developers and other businesses in the area.

Volunteer recorders, in nest surveys or just during their daily walks, were encouraged to upload sightings onto Swift Mapper, the now-established RSPB web-map with community-generated data on swift locations – <https://www.swiftmapper.org.uk/>.

The project received wide media coverage in the Courier, in Forfar library,



Letham Primary School © Tayside Swifts

Murton Nature Reserve, Tayside Swifts and The Real Forfar Facebook pages. STV unfortunately missed filming the swift nests going up but said they would love to get involved with future projects.

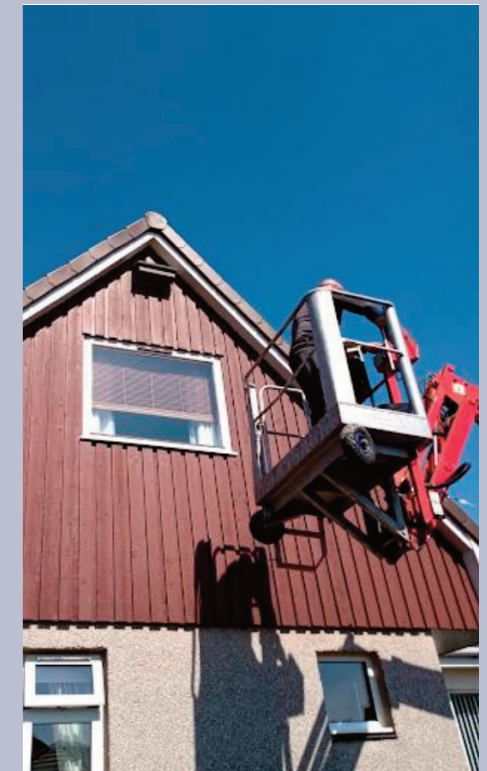
The months of June, July and early August had some great successes in spotting spectacular screaming parties in and around Forfar with nesting hotspots discovered by Doigs, The Vennel, Gordon Street, Glamis Road, and Green Street. Screaming parties were identified on Arbroath Road, Castle Street, High Street and the previously mentioned Green Street and The Vennel.

With Covid lockdowns doing no favours whatsoever, the project's progress was inevitably slow. In April 2022, however, many fabulous volunteers got involved to install new nest boxes on schools and properties in the town. We're thankful for the involvement of two local schools, Letham Primary School and Inverarity Primary School, who installed nest boxes on site and learned all about the importance of swifts and other birds too. Addresses all over Forfar were kind enough to erect nest boxes on their own homes as well.

The project may have come to an end, but that's not the end of the project. We still need local people to continue their Swift mapping and letting us know where nest sites are. If there are any communities still keen to help by

coming together to "adopt a street" please contact Daniele – dmuir@taysideswifts.co.uk – we can provide maps and additional training/advice to keep this side of the project up and running.

Christy Bridgeman



Swift box being erected on a home in Forfar © Tayside Swifts

Chance to Become a 'Swiftie' Thanks to New Project

A new initiative which aims to raise awareness of swifts in Blairgowrie and Rattray - and the important role they play in an area's biodiversity - has been launched thanks to support from Blairgowrie and Rattray Development Trust's (BRDT) Biodiversity Blair project and the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership.

The Blairgowrie & Rattray Swift Conservation Project has been granted £4,960 to run the project for two years, with Tayside Biodiversity Partnership contributing an additional £3,610 to go towards working with local developers and setting up a new Swift School Twinning Project.

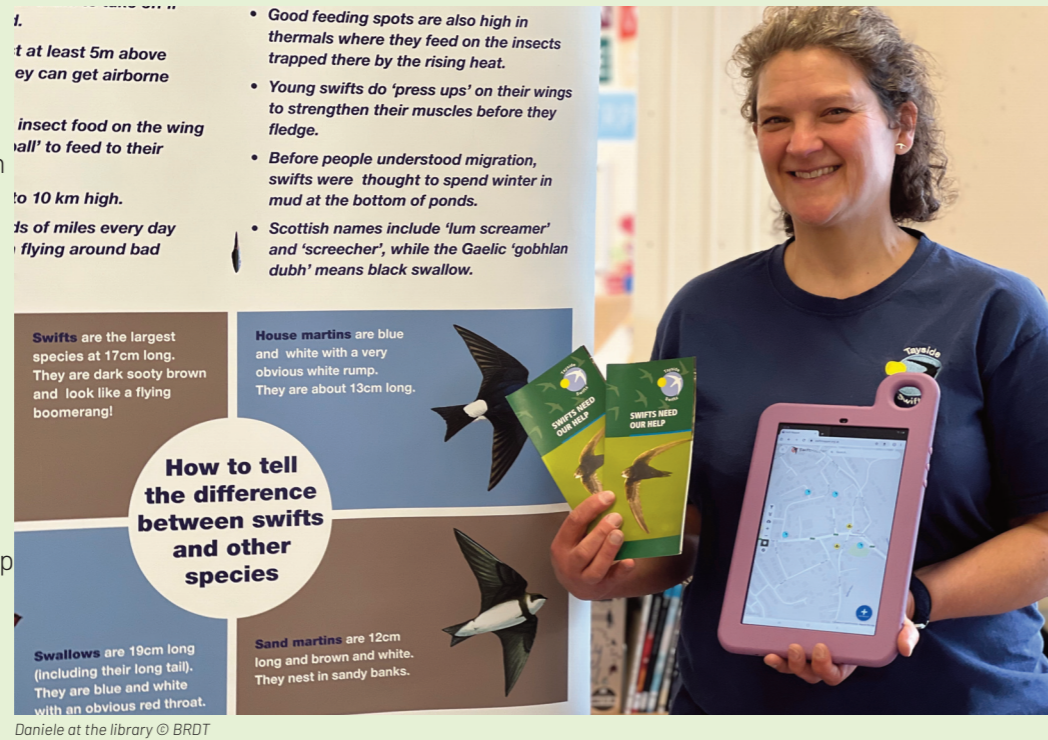
Helping to raise awareness of local swifts with the local communities within Blairgowrie and Rattray, there will be information events and guided walks to encourage recording swift sightings, plus a swifts mapping exercise to pinpoint existing swift nest sites and screaming party locations using Swiftmapper.

Those involved in the project will also work with local businesses and householders to discover good locations for swift nest boxes and erect a small number of them, funded by the project. As much information about swifts will be shared across not just Tayside, but also across Scotland, the UK and the international swift community.

The first information event took place in Blairgowrie Library recently and organisers were very pleased with the turnout, with a number of people going along specifically to talk about swifts and several streets in the town immediately adopted for surveys. Locations for new nest boxes were also identified.

The second event was a guided walk and survey training session for local volunteers keen to support the project a bit further. Participants were able to discover the difference between swifts, swallows and house martins, learn how to spot a swift nest site and then learn how to carry out a simple survey.

Catherine Lloyd is the Biodiversity Co-ordinator for Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and a co-leader of Tayside Swifts. She said: "Tayside Swifts is a species interest group set up by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership many years ago. "We have rolled out similar



programmes to this initiative whenever we have been able to secure funding, with projects taking place all across the region.

She continued "We are really thrilled to now be working in Blairgowrie and Rattray - Scotland's First Biodiversity Town - and would like to thank BRDT for its support. Although Blairgowrie and Rattray is currently a good area for swifts, that creates its own urgency in that we need to keep it that way - and hopefully improve it - as population numbers are declining elsewhere. Awareness-raising is just as vital as the practical task of installing the specialist nest boxes that are needed and we are looking forward to making a lasting difference through this project."

Danièle Muir from locally based Perthshire Wildlife is also a co-leader of Tayside Swifts. She said: "Swift numbers in Scotland have dropped by over 60% in the past 25 years or so, largely owing to how we manage buildings. As we renovate or demolish older buildings, the small gaps where swifts like to nest are destroyed, so if they can't find a new location to nest then they can't breed.

She continued "The huge drop in insect numbers also affects them - rather than being able to raise three chicks per year on lots of insect prey, they are probably lucky to raise one or two chicks these days. However, the good news is that Blairgowrie and Rattray still have good numbers of swifts and we can help them in our homes and gardens by putting up specialised swift nest boxes and by gardening for wildlife to encourage invertebrate life."

In conclusion, Daniele said "On a personal level, I have wanted to help the population grow here for many years as

there are many buildings in the town that are suitable for nest boxes so it's great that funding has finally become available to do this."

Nest Box Sponsors from local businesses - or donations towards the purchase of new nest boxes or an extra day's hire of a cherry picker and operator - would also be very welcome. Current funds will not cover everything we wish, so any additional help would be very welcome.

Contact Catherine Lloyd by emailing caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk for more details.

Lesley McDonald is responsible for project development for the BRDT and is part of the Biodiversity Blair group. She commented: "BRDT's work is led by the community for the community and we support community groups, individuals, and volunteers to deliver projects to enhance the town for the benefit of all. "Blairgowrie and Rattray has an exceptional local environment and, along with others, BRDT is keen to promote and protect that and support improvements to the environmental sustainability of the town."



She continued "Thanks to local groups involved in BRDT's Open Spaces Initiative in developing a Biodiversity Action Plan for the town, Blairgowrie and Rattray is now Scotland's first biodiversity town. Local volunteers are working towards enhancing the local environment and becoming more nature friendly in a way that fits in with local preferences."

"One aspect of that is working to safeguard our local swifts, which play an important part in the overall biodiversity picture, and we were therefore delighted to be able to support Tayside Swifts to deliver this valuable project. Everyone can get involved and we would love to hear from anyone who would like to be part of this initiative."

For further information, email Lesley McDonald on lesley@discoverblairgowrie.co.uk.

Lesley McDonald

Nature of Scotland Highly Commends Tayside Swifts

In late 2022 we were absolutely thrilled to receive the Highly Commended Certificate in the Nature of Scotland Community Initiative Awards!

The RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards, co-sponsored by NatureScot, recognise the very best in Scottish nature conservation and are much coveted. As ever there was very stiff competition and in an ideal world all those shortlisted would receive the recognition they deserve. Tayside Swifts, however, received the Highly Commended Certificate within the Community Initiative Award category which is very special as it acknowledges a local project's achievements right across Scotland.

Saving our Swifts is a true long term community project. Without committed local groups and individuals our swift numbers would likely be far less. Over the years we have installed specialist nest boxes and run training sessions to encourage the surveying of not just the swifts' enigmatic nest sites, but also those swifts who use our village and town airspace to swoop and soar in the summer before departing for Africa. Now those local communities have been acknowledged for their commitment which was a great way to end 2022 but also a boost to what we want to achieve in the future.



Award certificate © D. Muir

Sustainable Kirriemuir Swift-Related Activities

As part of our first Kirriemuir BioBlitz in 2022, Sustainable Kirriemuir's Restoring Nature Group enjoyed a Swift Walk in the town run by Daniele Muir. We were shown how to identify nesting sites in buildings and counted a screaming party of 30 swift at one time.

We also viewed our new Swift Sign (part of our Nature Detectives information series for families) which has been placed in a really central position outside the town library and town hall. We have recently completed a Pollinators and

Wildflower sign which will be fixed on Kirrie Hill and which encourages people to leave wild areas to support beleaguered insects and the species - like swifts - that feed on them.

This, and forthcoming, Swift seasons will see the group undertaking more nest identifying/finding and all the discoveries will, of course, be shared via SwiftMapper so that everyone can access the information in the future.

Ann Warren, Sustainable Kirriemuir's Restoring Nature Group



Kirrie is a swift town! We are so lucky to have families of these incredible international travellers that call Kirrie home. Each year they return thousands of miles to Scotland to their nest sites to have their young - how amazing is that? Hopefully in the summer you'll be able to see them screaming in the sky over the town.

They return to Scotland from Africa at the beginning of May and leave again in early August.



FACTS

How do I know it's a swift?
The birds are boomerang-shaped and look all black against the sky. They fly very fast, catching insects and sometimes they gather in 'screaming colonies' as they like to be in groups, chasing around the buildings where they nest.

Where do they live?
Swifts spend their whole lives flying: they eat, mate and sleep on the wing, only landing to lay eggs and feed their chicks. They return to Scotland from Africa at the beginning of May and leave again in early August. Each year they return to traditional nesting sites in buildings (so continued access to these roof spaces is essential for successful breeding). New nest boxes have been put up around Kirrie in suitable places to encourage breeding (they have even been painted to match Kirrie sandstone).

What do they eat?
Swifts only eat insects and other invertebrates such as airborne spiders which they gather when flying. They need large quantities and they are very dependent on weather conditions so the adults may fly hundreds of miles to find food.

When do they breed?
Swifts mature and breed when they are three or four years old. Pair bonds are often formed when the birds are one year old and they pair for life, meeting up each spring at the same nest site. They build nests in small spaces, high up under eaves of old houses, churches and nest boxes. The nests are made of material gathered when flying, like feathers, paper, dry grass and seeds held together by saliva. They start breeding as soon as they return in May and lay two or three eggs. The adults keep the eggs warm but, unusually if the eggs are chilled when the adults are out hunting they can still continue to hatch chicks.

Where can you see them?
During the summer months you can often see swifts flying over Kirrie hunting for insects. If you are very lucky you may be able to see them flying into their nests in buildings. You can often see them seeking insects over the RSPB reserve at Kinnordy and further afield.

What problems do they face?
Sadly, swifts have recently been declared endangered as their numbers in Scotland have dropped by over 53% between 1995 and

2013. Swifts can sometimes be killed by storms and cold, wet weather in the Mediterranean during their migration north from Africa in April. These unseasonal storms are becoming more common due to the changing climate. Lack of available insects during their journey can reduce their strength to fly. Once swifts reach Scotland they can be badly affected if their nest sites under eaves of houses are blocked up and if their insect food is limited.

During the summer months you can often see swifts flying over Kirrie hunting for insects.



Kirrie swifts

When we're walking around Kirrie looking at swifts, it's incredible to think that the swifts we see may fly up to 4 million miles during their life, travelling many times from their homes in Scotland, back and forward to Africa!

Since work was done in Kirrie by Tayside Swifts (& their partners) between 2014 & 2017 we know there were then 9 definite and 44 probable nest sites for swifts in Kirrie. There were also 115 new nest boxes & sites set up. Hopefully, this work and the work we all now do will help protect the birds and ensure they keep on calling Kirrie home!

If we see swifts it is important to report our sightings to the RSPB on swiftmapper.org so they can monitor local numbers and changes to nest sites.

Original photo by Stephen Hall, using a photograph of the bird by Bob Wood and the Year Issue #8(1) 2017. Angus Council

Perth & Kinross Council Champions Swifts



© D. Muir

A new 'Protecting Swifts in Conservation Buildings' Working Group was created within Perth and Kinross Council in May 2023 to ensure swift nest conservation is considered when Listed Building Consents and planning applications for old buildings are submitted to PKC. Council officers are now working with the Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust as they distribute the Perth City Heritage Fund to improve the condition of listed buildings as often these contain nest sites for swifts. Working with the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Tayside Swifts, this important species will be considered early in the process and the provision of nesting boxes or bricks considered where appropriate.

Joanna Dick, PKC

Wave After Wave of Swifts

Swift arrivals are spread out over a few months which I think is great - for us it keeps the excitement going and allows us to enjoy the noticeable changes in their behavioural activity throughout the season. Three 'Waves' which basically consist of swifts at different life stages all with their own purpose and for this reason behaving very differently. Of course this isn't for our entertainment even if they do appear to be having a ball, but it is all part of the process of building future generations.

1st Wave: established adult breeders will be the ones arriving first in early May and like many other species, will return directly to their nesting area. Swifts are 100% loyal to the same nest site for their entire breeding life. This is why they become highly stressed if they cannot enter their nest site on their return due to infill or obstruction from scaffolding or netting, etc. If this should happen it is thought they will not

relocate or raise a family at all in that breeding year. They can also be injured or killed on their arrival if their nest site is gone, because of their determination to access what is no longer accessible.

Adult breeding swifts arrive with purpose and will meet up with their partner en-route or in the nesting chamber itself. They will spend some time reaffirming their bond and are very vocal and intimate when they first meet up again. They need to be in tip top breeding condition and will build up their energy and bodily fitness after their incredible journey in readiness for egg laying.

2nd Wave: these are the non-breeding birds, 2 - 3 years old and not quite ready to breed. They arrive between mid-May and mid-June and they are looking for nesting sites to use themselves in the following year to raise a family of their own. They may well roost in their

chosen site and breed in their next spring return. These are the birds that when mixed with the breeders cause the Screaming Party commotion we all love to watch! If you catch them at peak time I believe the spectacle to be as awe-inspiring as any starling murmuration!

3rd Wave: the last to arrive in July are the first-year birds. They aren't looking to find a nest site at all, maybe just to join up with a colony and 'learn the ropes' before heading back on their big adventure! You may wonder at this time in the season why your swift counts have risen so much - these youngsters will be boosting the numbers!

Reproduced, with thanks, from the Huntly Swift Group newsletter

Look out for Bangers

The swift Screaming Party is a party well worth gate-crashing! The adult birds call out from their nest sites to encourage the young birds to join them, they respond with loud screams of excitement, tearing down the streets and around roof tops. The swifts will swoop and turn in all directions almost somersaulting in mid-air like crazy little black missiles, often so low you can hear the whistle of their wings cutting the air. I've even seen the whites of their eyes!

Adult birds will join the youngsters seemingly winding them up to a crescendo! The youngsters will land at gutter height

gripping the face of the wall momentarily, sometimes for much longer and this is what gives the youngsters the nickname Banger! This spectacle is best viewed on a still day evening an hour to half an hour before dusk when the adult birds return to their nest site for the night and all falls silent.

Reproduced from the Huntly Swift Group newsletter

Swifts in Renovated Buildings and New Builds

How to protect them during essential repairs and maintenance

Although swifts were never 'made' for living in man-made structures, the species has adapted quite well to taking up residence in locations near humans.

Renovations

It goes without saying as all nesting birds are protected in law, but renovations should not take place when swifts are nesting. But how do you know if swifts are in your fixer-upper?



Redford Construction Swift Nest Site © D. Muir

Watch out for small, long horizontal gaps in walls or under roof tiles; swifts are slim and can fit into very small gaps. Often a white splash near or below the suspect gap may give the game away! It's a good idea to check in gaps under or around gutters or downpipes too. Holes may also appear behind previously installed piping around the house which can make for a good home for swifts. Check for places where pipes may have previously been around the house, such as gutters or downpipes, and inspect for holes, slits or gaps. Depending on when your house last had a lick of paint, there may be some loose tiles, roof timber or felting. If any are loose or out of place, this may be a prime location for swifts or other birds. Be sure to double check behind flashing or cladding where brick ends and other materials begin – or look around chimneys and skylights where gaps may appear.

In the summer, you'll know if swifts are nearby because there is likely to be a screaming party occurring with numbers of swifts flying quickly above buildings proving their local name "Lum Screamers", racing around and above chimneys. If you're not sure if swifts are in or near your property, contact Tayside Swifts for advice or ask an ecologist to undertake a professional survey.

Even minor work can intimidate swifts, so be sure to double check before carrying out any renovations. Demolitions, structural work, roofing, guttering, even pest control operations can obstruct flight paths of swifts or disturb them during their nesting period.

Some examples of renovations with swifts in residence include Glengate Hall in Kirriemuir, where a triple nest box was installed towards the rear of the site while builders carefully worked around the swifts, and Inchture Church where a ventilated plywood nest box was placed back in the same spot after renovations with the exact same materials from the old nest used again to encourage the swifts' return.

New-Builds

It goes without saying as all nesting birds are protected in law, but renovations should not take place when swifts are nesting. But how do you know if swifts are in your fixer-upper?

New builds provide an exciting opportunity to give a new home to new swifts with exciting technologies to encourage their arrival and plenty of opportunities to foster connections between people and wildlife.

The first and most common method is integral swift nest boxes in the shape of hollowed-out bricks. Both integral and internal, meaning they are less exposed to the elements, thus requiring less maintenance over the years – and hopefully less disturbance for our swift friends! A couple of precautions need to be followed, however. It is best that boxes are installed in areas that get the shade, are away from windows and vents and at least five metres up from the ground. They also need to be away from other perches like fences, bird tables or outdoor furniture.

Edward Mayer, Swift Conservation

Can You Help?

Within Perth and Kinross, many housing developments are now including 30% integral swift nest boxes from the start across the whole development. As highlighted in the Stanley Swift update elsewhere in this newsletter, there is no in-built monitoring of the success of this idea, of course, so we will be relying heavily on residents and neighbours to input their sightings into SwiftMapper or let Tayside Swifts know.

Calling All Developers

There is potential here to set up a Tayside-wide (if not Scotland-wide) system to raise awareness of these new integral nest boxes in new developments. We would be happy to work with property and development companies to add details to their sales webpages and new owners' information (including the supply of Householder Information Packs). Please contact cagllloyd@pkc.gov.uk for more information.

A Swift Update from Stanley



Strathord houses © E. Coutts

It has become a little bit of a tradition in Stanley for people to report their first swift sightings to us using a couple of Facebook pages which operate in the village. Occasionally there are sightings in the last week in April, with 5th May a more likely arrival in the skies, whilst some with nest sites in their house look on 12th May as their date for confirmed nesting activity. In 2023, with the chilly spring weather, first sightings seemed a little later than usual, but our swifts are back, which is the main and vital thing.

After years of trying not to believe the slight but still downwards trend we seemed to detect since 2014 in our annual surveying, 2022 was an uplifting year with over 32 active nesting sites confirmed (even without full coverage of the village and some known locations unmonitored). In just one evening, between 80 and 100 swifts were seen flying high together, more typically maxing out at 40 or so in previous years. Only once before have we counted numbers that high, on that occasion seen flying over Kinclaven, when it was thought likely to be combined swift populations from Stanley, Murthly and Meikleour gathering around good feeding conditions above the big loop in the River Tay. But who really knows with these beautiful, enigmatic little birds?

We have become familiar with the

historic natural and nest box locations in the village, grouped in what we have viewed as several distinct sub-colonies of the overall Stanley breeding swift population, including one or two satellite nest sites in properties at the edge of the village or a bit further out. Surveying is underway this year, but we have seen some fantastic swift activity already which is giving us hope for a second good year in a row. Fingers crossed!

Given the delight with which a few years ago we welcomed the new planning condition of swift and bat bricks in 30% of the new houses to be built around Stanley by Muir Homes, already in some 13 houses in the initial Strathord development alone, we are keen to discover how many of those have been occupied by swifts or perhaps other species.

Some ad hoc and fleeting sightings reported by casual passers-by suggest that swifts may indeed be using one or two of these integral nesting bricks, but we need to get a bit more organised with our surveying than that. The layout of the housing estate and swift brick positions on individual houses will make conventional surveying less straightforward than it is along the straight rows of terraced houses where most of the traditional nest sites in the village are to be found, so in Strathord, we are hoping for help

from the householders themselves than the Stanley Swift Project usually depends on.

During Swift Awareness Week 2023 all the houses on the Strathord estate received leaflets asking residents to help us confirm which nest bricks are in use. Indeed, neighbours across the road may well be more aware of swift or other bird activity than the people living in the houses with the active nest bricks! So - wherever you are in Stanley (and its environs), please email us your swift sightings - stanleyswiftproject@gmail.com: we can also visit to help check out what you have, if you wish. Hopefully by the end of the season we will have a better picture of how good the uptake of the swift bricks in Strathord has been.

Elsbeth Coutts, Stanley Swift Project



UK Government Swift Petition Sees Limited Progress

Last winter, the UK Swift Awareness Week's Facebook page sent out a public, online UK Government and Parliament petition to help save the swifts. Calling for what many would consider the bare minimum, various groups including Swift Awareness and the RSPB themselves, petitioned to make swift bricks compulsory in new housing builds.

With a crisis of housing in the UK, new builds are rapidly going up and building standards and environmental standards are often falling behind. Currently, the matter of swift bricks and building standards lies largely with local authorities and developers, who themselves are invariably overworked and can often be slow to act. This bold petition sought to strike at the heart of government by going straight to the top.

The UK government allows anyone in the UK to make and sign online petitions for anything and everything. Once it reaches 100,000 signatures, it is debated in parliament and bills are potentially considered.

Despite the RSPB's ardent support for this petition, the matter was unfortunately deemed to be the responsibility of local authorities on a site-by-site basis by the UK's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This has put us back to square one. In a statement in December 2022, the government stated that they wish to balance the priorities of home ownership and protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and that future consultations will encourage public contributions in this area.

A debate regarding the petition in Westminster on the 10th July 2023 largely agreed that swift bricks come with little cost. However, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State and Levelling Up confirmed that the policy is not being considered by the UK Government, also stating that they do not wish to complicate the already difficult-to-navigate planning permission process, especially in areas where the species is not present.

Other parliamentarians noted that the government already mandates nationally on many hyper-specific building standards as it relates to human occupation, such as doorsteps and window dimensions.

The petition is now closed for signatures so in the UK it seems the subject has gone as far as it can. This does not stop Scotland from being different and with some local authorities leading the way, as Perth and Kinross Council has, in adding swift-related planning conditions to planning permissions, this may be the best way to go. We just need to get the message out to as many local authorities as possible across Scotland.

Christy Bridgeman

Addendum - Following a debate in the House of Lords, ministers are now looking to implement Swift bricks into planning policy.

Swifts in Churches

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership has long championed Green Graveyards and has several small-scale projects up and running to enhance or survey biodiversity in our churchyards. If anyone knows of swift nests in their local church (natural or nest boxes), please let us know as it will soon be possible to include this aspect in our Biodiversity Villages, Towns & Neighbourhoods initiative.

Tayside Swifts has undertaken past work in advising how best to handle church renovations (see our Swift Summary Report - <https://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/2021/02/23/swift-summary-report-2021/>). Contact Catherine at caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

Swifts Local Network

Tayside Swifts is part of the Swifts Local Network which enables the many UK-based individuals and small groups now working on Swift conservation initiatives to share experiences and ideas more easily. Join us via the Action for Swifts website: <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/>

News from Elsewhere

Christy Bridgeman, the Engagement & Communications Intern at Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust has compiled some news from outwith Tayside –

Body Paint Activist Protests to Save Birds

Last autumn, Hannah Bourne-Taylor, known for her campaign to make swift bricks in UK new builds compulsory, took to the streets of London to mix both protest and expressive street art performance.

Bourne-Taylor passed by Westminster and Downing Street painted as a bird to raise awareness to the declining

swift population in the UK and to protest the government's reluctance to take environmental concerns seriously.

In Speaker's Corner at Hyde Park she delivered a now famous speech in the swift community, the Feather Speech, speaking from the point of view of a swift. She highlighted the species' shared singular interest (a safe place

to breed and nest) and its "perilous journey". You can read more about her RSPB-backed campaign here: <https://hannahbournetaylor.com/the-feather-speech-campaign-for-swifts/>

There is a 4-minute animated video "A Swift Story Full" from Hannah here: <https://youtu.be/AJhc-vcssKc>

King Charles Awarded Swift Nest Box in Aboyne

King Charles III visited Aberdeenshire in January 2023 to meet and commemorate various community groups in the area, including the wood and stone carving group at the Aboyne Men's Shed.

The Shed's Chairman, Mike Brook, presented the King with his very own handmade swift nesting box, knowing that a number are already installed at nearby Balmoral.

The Shed also features a number of antique machinery, tools and artifacts. On display at the community space, King Charles also noted that old George V post boxes would make good bird boxes, if not for swifts, but other enterprising birds.

Yorkshire Fire Station Installs Swift Boxes

A fire station in Harrogate, Yorkshire has installed eight swift nest boxes in its drill tower, as reported by The Stray Ferret, the town's local digital news service.

It came from a plea from the Knaresborough Swift Group which operates in the surrounding towns and villages. The proposal, having been reported in the same news outlet and campaigns from local groups, was fuelled by passionate birder and Harrogate firefighter, Alex van Zeller, who pushed for the installation.

Easy to reach for fire engine ladders, but not for predators, the nest boxes are very high up on the station's brick training tower. Hopefully the firefighter drills are not too loud – or hot!

Cheap Cheap! Budget Swift Calling Device

Action for Swifts is, as it says on its Facebook page, "a commentary on the activities, ideas and thoughts of people who care". Its blogs are full of information and well worth exploring – <https://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/>. What follows is an article gleaned from Action for Swifts and Graham Fell of Kendal Swifts.

Birds of a feather flock together and swifts are no exception! The species nest together and often stay in groups. When looking for a breeding place, these birds look for somewhere already deemed as safe by other swifts. The best way to achieve this? Follow the crowd.

Breeding swifts give out calls to let other swifts know that their nest is taken, but the calls also act as alerts to others regarding a safe location. Minus the calling device's housing, Graham Fell and others from Kendal Swifts, in Cumbria, have innovated a super low-cost swift calling device for around £10. It could be even cheaper if you already have some of the items needed lying around your house.

Using a "TF card U disk MP3 Format decoder", available cheaply on e-Bay as a simple circuit board, all it needs is a USB thumb drive or micro-SD card. The only other item needed is a micro-USB cable and USB mains charger – all of

which we are likely to have spare in our house anyway! You can read more about the DIY swift call solution here: https://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/2020/01/the-swift-micro-caller.html?fbclid=IwAR2F1fnOqTX76yN2obMByRD8Bwq0f9t1Dg3DkMP0gWu0yJw-ALO_bF7EdB8

Swift call MP3s can also be purchased direct from Swift Conservation here: <https://www.swift-conservation.org/Shopping%21.htm>



World Swift Day

World Swift Day (WSD) was created in 2019 by Swifts Without Frontiers. It is celebrated each 7th June with Dr Jane Goodall a very supportive Patron. It has now been marked in over 50 countries, on all continents, covering some 40 swift species.

Everyone is asked to publicise their local swifts on this day, using the hashtag #WorldSwiftDay on social media. There is

more advice here: <https://www.worldswiftday.org/how-to-celebrate-world-swift-day/>, together with a registration form to ensure all events on the day are shared across the world. Dr Goodall's two-minute Message for the Protection of Swifts can also be enjoyed via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H87mKx3IH6U>.

Swift Awareness Week



Swift Awareness Week (1st to 9th July in 2023 but a flexible date from end June to mid-July) gives us the opportunity to celebrate Swifts, plus the myriad people and initiatives involved, in helping our much-loved summer resident.

In 2018 the UK was the first country in the world to dedicate a national week in support of Swifts. By 2020 over 90 Swift Awareness Week events were being held, highlighting the bird's decline and encouraging people to actively do something about it.

The Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/swiftweek> – helps to publicise summer events during and either side of the designated Week. Just contact Nick Brown via swifts@derbyshirewt.co.uk to add an event or exhibition.

SAW2023 was the perfect platform for organising actions such as liaising with local and national

newspapers, community magazines and local swift group Facebook pages to get the plight of the swift known to as many people as possible. Events in libraries, displays and creating art installations were all publicised, as were the making of swift flags and pennants to put up along streets or on buildings. There were nest box making workshops with youth groups, Men's Sheds and WIs all getting involved. Many local schools, churches and community centres across the UK received the gift of a nest box, books were published and national newspaper columnists encouraged to write about swifts during the Week.

Tayside Swifts always tries to incorporate some of its events into this special Week but if you have any ideas for 2024 and beyond where we can have a greater influence, just drop either Daniele or Catherine a line with your suggestions.

Introducing a Thriving Swift Group from North East Scotland



Swift nesting © Gordon Primary School

My husband and I returned to live in Huntly in March 2017 and not long afterwards I saw a notice on Facebook inviting anyone interested in swifts to go along to Huntly Square one evening for a talk. The sound of swifts screaming overhead was the sound of summer evenings in Huntly for me so I was keen to find out more.

The speaker was Cally Smith who gave a really inspiring talk about swifts, their nesting habits and migration. Cally wanted to find out more about swift nest sites in Huntly so that they could be monitored. She explained that nest sites were being increasingly lost because very often homeowners were completely unaware of swift nests and the entry holes would be filled in when repairs were being undertaken.

From that first meeting a group of volunteers got together and began watching and counting swifts as well as identifying nest sites all around the town. This activity involves a lot of standing on street corners at dusk, gazing upwards and attempting to count swifts flying around in groups, usually at great speed. It also involves keeping an eye on specific buildings where screaming parties are flying around, hoping to catch sight of a swift

as it enters or leaves its nesting hole. This isn't easy either, because swifts usually fly straight into the hole, although they occasionally cling on to the wall at the entrance for a few seconds too.

The volunteers eventually identified around 80 nest sites in Huntly and all the records were sent to the North East Biological Recording Centre (NESBReC). Now the Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department uses SwiftMapper for reference so we only have to upload the information via the App which is much easier. The group also keeps an eye on planning applications for the streets in Huntly and if we see scaffolding or repair work going on around buildings with known swift nest sites, we make the builders and planners aware so that they can be careful.

The group now covers a wide area: we have visited schools and have fundraising and information stalls at various events and venues around the north east of Scotland. We have applied for funding from various bodies and supplied and installed swift nest boxes and call systems all around the area. There are nest boxes on the Gordon Schools, the secondary school in Huntly,

and this year a webcam has been installed in an occupied box and live footage can be watched on a monitor in the primary school foyer, which is really exciting for us all. Two chicks hatched the other day!

There are lots of distilleries in the area and their old buildings often have swift nest sites in them. Recently we helped survey the Macallan's site near Craigellachie. They are about to refurbish or demolish some of their old buildings and wanted to know not just where the swift nest sites are located, but also where the swallow and house martin nests are too. Four of us volunteers spent a very interesting and enjoyable evening with four distillery staff monitoring nest sites and watching all the birds. We also had an amazing encounter with a tawny owl, which was chased off by a group of swifts and flew round the corner of the building at great speed.

When I was staying in a guesthouse in Kirkmichael (Perthshire), I contacted Tayside Swifts as I spotted half a dozen swifts flying around there in the evening. I went for a walk the following morning and watched at least nine swifts overhead feeding with a few house martins. I have recorded my sightings on Swift Mapper but it seems such a good number for a small village I hope anyone else in the area has the time to watch for nest sites – and report them too if possible.

Cally is a very good artist and some of the profit from her swift, swallow and house martin cards goes directly to the group – her website is <https://www.colourworx-art.com>. She also writes the group newsletter so if you would like to be added to the mailing list, please send your email address to huntlyswiftgroup@gmail.com. We don't have a website yet but are working on it: everyone in the meantime is welcome to keep in touch via our Huntly Swift Group Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/savetheaviators>.

Flora MacDonald, Huntly Swift Group / NES Swifts

Advisory Note Attracting Swifts with Call Systems

Edward Mayer of Swift Conservation outlines what is needed.

Swift Call Systems

You need patience when trying to attract Swifts to a new nest place. Sometimes they respond immediately, sometimes it can take years to gain their interest. Swifts usually look for breeding places in the area already established by another flock, so the best chance of success is when there are already Swifts breeding nearby.

Swift calls are duets given by a breeding pair defending its nest place from other Swifts. Swifts searching for nest places are attracted by the duets to see if there might be a vacant place for them. They look for nest places during May for places to breed in this year; in July they are looking for places to breed in next year.

They then stick with these nest places for the foreseeable future, but if they return from Africa to find their nest gone, say because of re-roofing or demolition, then they will search frantically for another nest site. Time is not on their side – they are only home for some 12 weeks to breed before they need to head south again. If they cannot breed all that energy to return from Africa is wasted and they then have to wait a year, travelling to Africa and back yet again before they get another chance.

Playing Swift Calls

To coincide with the periods when Swifts are looking for nest places, play the Swift Calls from early May onward, until the end of July. If this is not tolerable or feasible, play the calls from early May to the end of the month, then from mid-June to the end of July. While evicted Swifts will try and choose a new nest place as soon as

possible upon arrival, juveniles will not choose one for use the following year until much later in the season.

Set your sound system's timer to play the calls at suitable times. This will depend on what you and your neighbours can tolerate but could be from dawn for between 3 and 6 hours, then from about 6pm until it gets dark. This example would be ideal for an office or school environment. Alternatively, play the duets for as long as is tolerable (coinciding with the absence of people if their presence is a problem). If the weather is cold and wet, playing the duets will have no effect at all, so can be stopped, starting up again when the weather is better.

The loudspeakers should be mounted inside the nest boxes. The volume level should be as loud as a real Swift's scream. If the call comes from inside the nest box it may be muffled. This is acceptable.

It is easy to see when the birds are looking for new nest sites. They fly directly to potential nest holes, pausing in mid-air, sometimes clinging briefly to the outer surface of the wall, or nest box, then falling away into a dive.

For more about the life of the Swift, including photographs, nest box designs, and information for architects, builders, planners, and vets, see our information-rich website: <https://swift-conservation.org>. There is a shopping section where you can buy the call CDs too.

Edward Mayer, Swift Conservation UK

Swift calls CDs and an MP3 download are available via <https://swift-conservation.org/Shopping%21.htm>

Welcome Back Flags

If you received one of our Tayside Swifts 'Welcome Back Swifts' flag a few years ago please let us know (via taysidebiodiversity@pkc.gov.uk). The flags were part of earlier projects and we spot them every now and again

across Tayside but have mislaid the list as to who originally received them!

Some of the flags will be getting a bit worse for wear now and it would be good to know if anyone needs a

replacement, or even if a local school or community would like to use one in the future.



Swift flag © E. Coutts

Resources

We have a variety of resources available, so if you would like a batch of any of them to share with your community group, local developers or architectural/building clients, please contact us. We can provide swift bookmarks, our general leaflet 'Swifts Need our Help' and the popular identification postcard showing the differences between swifts, swallows, sand martins and house martins. We also have paper copies of the SNH (NatureScot) Swift Best Practice Guidance Advice Note.

If you are in a position to sponsor the reprint of any of these items, please contact us – we will make sure your

company or organisation is acknowledged in the reprint. The same goes for providing Swift Householder Packs – we would welcome the opportunity to raise awareness of swifts in housing developments where there are either integral or external swift nest boxes.

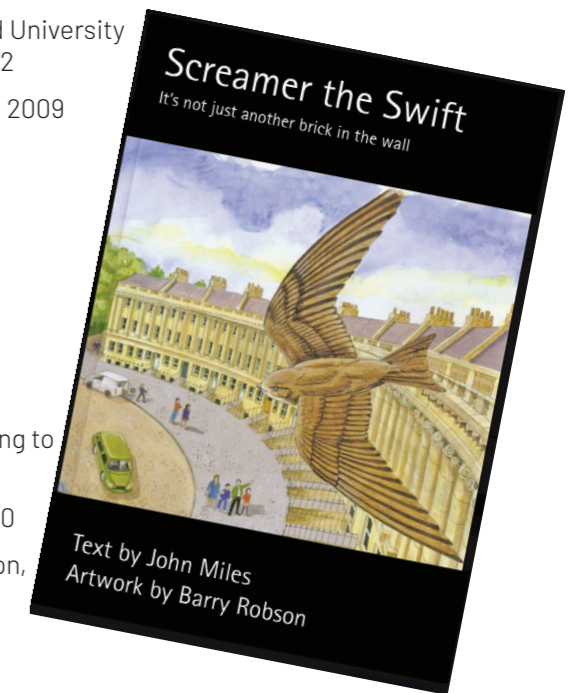
We also have a banner display which we can circulate to libraries, different businesses or schools and colleges across Tayside.

Swifts in Print

Which Swift book started it all for you? A quick glance at my bookshelves reveals a mix of titles: the eponymous 'Swifts in a Tower', the lovely 'On Crescent Wings', the strange and thought-provoking 'Being a Beast', the delightful 'Screamer the Swift' – which in Tayside Swifts terms really started things off where our schools projects are concerned. We had the pleasure of welcoming John Miles to the Carse of Gowrie many years ago to launch our first Twinning pilot project.

There is a rich variety of books on our favourite bird. If you have read any of these and can review them in 150 words or less for our next newsletter, please contact Catherine at caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk. Let us know what favourites you have and let's add to the list – there are bound to be books we have omitted – and many more are being published.

- Devil Birds - Derek Bromhall, 1980
- Swift as a Shadow: Extinct and Endangered Animals - Rosamond Wolff Purcell, 1999
- The Museum Swifts: The Story of the Swifts in the Tower of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History - Andrew John Lack, Roy Overall, et al, 2002
- The Secret Life of Birds: Who they are and what they do - Colin Tudge, 2009
- Screamer the Swift - John Miles and Barry Robson, 2013
- Being a Beast - Charles Foster, 2016
- Swift Summers - Mark Walker, 2016
- Swifts in a Tower - David Lack, 2018
- RSPB Spotlight Swifts and Swallows - Mike Unwin, 2018
- On Crescent Wings: A Portrait of the Swift - Jonathan Pomeroy, 2018
- What It's Like to be a Bird (Sibley Guides): From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing- What Birds Are Doing and Why - David Allen, 2020
- Strela the Swift - a journey from Somerset to Africa - Ajay Bhupal, 2020
- Swifts and Us: The Life of the Bird that Sleeps in the Sky - Sarah Gibson, 2022
- The Screaming Sky: in pursuit of swifts - Charles Foster, 2022
- Swift: An Epic Story of a Small Bird's Courage - Lorna Hill, 2023
- One Midsummer's Day: Swifts and the Story of Life on Earth - Mark Cocker, 2023
- Flight Paths: How the mystery of bird migration was solved - Rebecca Heisman, 2023
- Super Swifts: The Small Bird with Amazing Powers - Justin Anderson and Clover Robin (due 2024)
- Swifts - Broughty Ferry Environmental Project, 2010



Poetry –

- Swift On the Tide - Kat Kehoe, 2014
- Swift: New and Selected Poems - David Baker, 2019
- Nature Poems: Treasured classics and new favourites - Deborah Alma and National Trust Books, 2023
- A Sky with NO Swifts (American Haiku poetry) - Maggie Hess, 2023

Swifts but not as we know them –

- Swifts: A Guide to the Swifts and Treeswifts of the World - Phil Chantler and Gerald Driessens (2nd Edition 2000)
- Spit and Sticks: A Chimney Full of Swifts - Marilyn Grohoske Evans and Nicole Gsell (a story of migration from Texas to South America), 2015
- The Swift, Higher and Farther (Costa Rican swifts) - Anne Señol and Adán González, 2020
- Swift's journey: A bird's travelling experience to Africa - Humaira Qayyum, 2022

Remembering Ann Lolley who was with us from the beginning of our Swift journey and who brought together the much-loved BFEP Swift book mentioned above.

"Be swift, my only soul; my only soul be swift" from Song for a Swift (c) John Glenday



Learn all about Swifts, why they matter, and how you can help at www.swift-conservation.org

Tayside Swifts Contacts



Tayside Swifts (Tayside Biodiversity Partnership):

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Further Information

There is a comprehensive Swift information section on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk

Tayside Swift Summary Report 2013-21: <https://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/2021/02/23/swift-summary-report-2021/>

BirdTrack Migration Blog – swifts are included (the blog archives are also online) –
<https://www.bto.org/community/blog/birdtrack-migration>

Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (Report) – <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/bocc5/bocc5-report.pdf> and
 IUCN List of Threatened Species – <https://www.iucnredlist.org/en>

National Information – Swift Conservation (UK) www.swift-conservation.org / mail@swift-conservation.org



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The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership is supported by Perth and Kinross Council

Published by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership – © 2023

This Newsletter has been printed on 170g Revive Gloss Recycled - Environmentally Friendly paper
 Thanks to the Angus Council Communications Team and Digital Reprographics Unit for their help