



With thanks to 'Going Wild in Bishop's Castle' project for sharing this leaflet across Shropshire Town and Parish Councils. This is the first of a series of leaflets

from this Shropshire project: <https://lightfootenterprises.org/going-wild-in-bc>
Please collect them and use them as a resource for your household and Parish.



About Swifts

Swifts are only here for about 3 months and arrive in Shropshire in early May. They spend the rest of the year on migration and in equatorial and eastern Africa.

Swifts usually nest in roof spaces, gaining access via the eaves. They will however use specially designed nest boxes that are fixed under the eaves of houses in Towns & Parishes across Shropshire.

Nationally the number of Swifts is declining but across Shropshire we can help to buck the trend with your help!

Swifts pair for life and return to the same nest sites year after year. They tend to nest in colonies and have a screaming call which is such a feature of fine summer evenings .

We want to make Shropshire as welcoming as possible for swifts searching for nesting sites and are hoping to increase the nesting opportunities with the help of Town and Parish Councils by putting up more nest boxes.¹

Know your Swift

Swifts look rather like swallows and martins but are, in reality, very different.

Swifts are an extremely aerodynamic group of birds, spending almost all of their lives flying.

They feed, drink, mate and sleep on the wing and fly up to 3000m high, reaching speeds of about 70mph.

After leaving the nest, young swifts will not land for three or four years until they have matured and are ready to breed.

The shape of a swift is so suited to flying that they are unable to land on flat ground and have tiny feet and legs.

*NB as a swift will never land on the ground, it is likely that any swift found on the ground may be injured or sick and will require specialist help.*²

What do Swifts eat?

³Wildlife Trust

Swifts feed on tiny flying insects: aphids, flying ants, mosquitoes, hoverflies and small beetles, collecting food in a pouch at the base of the mouth.

An adult swift brings a food ball or 'bolus' back to its young. This bolus is gathered over vast distances and contains thousands of insects. The young can wait a long time between meals!



Swifts tend to eat the droppings of their young and so there is usually little or no mess beneath a swift nest so you may have nesting swifts on your house without realising it!

Further information

- **Shropshire Wildlife Trust**
www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/news/love-your-swifts
- **Swifts in the Strettons**
www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/swifts-in-the-strettons
- **Shropshire Ornithological Society**
www.shropshirebirds.com/action-plan-swift

Making a Swift box

- **RSPB Create a high home for swifts**
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/create-a-high-home-for-swifts/>
- **RSPB You Tube video**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5ebp7U5I9k>

Purchase a swift box

- **CJ Wildlife**
www.birdfood.co.uk/swift-nest-box-woodstoner
- **Peak boxes**
<https://peakboxes.co.uk/shop-1?category=Swift+Boxes>
- **Bristol Swifts**
www.bristolswifts.co.uk