

Dear Swift Friend,

The Swifts put on a show!

June has been fantastic for the Swifts and enabled them to catch up after a late start to the season, albeit some will still have Chicks into September. Some colonies have witnessed exceptional displays. Let's hope July is equally good, especially whilst the breeders have their broods to feed.

House Martins & Swallows

Sadly, their numbers seem to be down across the country, if you have any experience of where they are nesting or no longer nest do let us know, especially in the local area. They were badly impacted again last year by a poor breeding season which is showing the disappointing results this year. There are concerns re hunting by mist nests on the migration too, in North Africa but you can help them by putting up nest bowls if you are near a colony or in the case of Swallows have a barn!

Mart & Martha - up-date

After thwarting her love rival and resuming her rightful place on the nest Martha had to deal with another trauma this year, an unattached House Sparrow, with a box close by decided to try and take over the nest, as the sitting Swift was incubating 3 eggs. After enduring the Sparrow repeatedly entering the tunnel, Mart(ha)? decided enough was enough, when it lunged towards her with it's beak. She pulled it into the box and there was a short but vicious fight, the Sparrow was clearly in fear and escaped not to return! Thankfully the eggs were undisturbed and they actually hatched last week....we now have 3 tiny young Swiftlets. This year I am posting a video diary of Mart and Martha's seasonal highs and lows...

Here is the link to the House Sparrow kerfuffle (shown in 2 parts)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS3vPmPG7p0>

New Boxes occupied...

It's the best feeling to hear that one of our boxes has attracted Swifts, our project at St Wilfrid's Church in Longridge is already proving successful in it's first year. Swifts were seen flying into the boxes and an inspection from inside has revealed an egg has been laid! We also received this comment from a lady in Smithalls..."Thank you so much for bringing this experience to our doorstep, both boxes are now occupied and it's an absolute joy to watch the Swifts"

Jonathan Pomroy's Swift Diary

This is an essential read for any Swift fan (along with Bristol Swift's Diary too)

This article in particular is a fascinating look at prospecting behaviour by young Swifts, it can be very frustrating watching Swift fly up to the boxes repeatedly without seeming to work out how to get in.....so do read Jonathan's very perceptive observations built over many years of living with Swifts.

<https://jonathanpomroy.wordpress.com/2021/06/14/swift-diary-forming-a-new-colony-and-some-observations-on-banging-and-nest-site-selection/>

Swifts – The 3 Wave arrival – Bernard Genton

Bernard is a dedicated observer of Swifts, especially since he has created an impressive colony of over 60 occupied Swift Boxes from which have fledged almost 1000 chicks, he colour rings the nestlings and then is able to observe when they return to his colony, which a percentage do. He also describes very well what is known as the 3 waves of Swifts ie the Breeding birds are the 1st Wave, arriving in t.he UK 1st 2 weeks in May, followed by the 2nd Wave of 2 and 3 year old birds arriving upto the end of May or later and then the 3rd Wave made up of yearlings, who arrive here in June. Bernard lives in Switzerland; his fascinating paper of observations is linked nearby on this page.

Swift Rescue & Rehab

This is our second year rehabbing Swifts, both adults, that occasionally find themselves grounded perhaps after mid air collision when they are engaged in the frenzied business of nest hunting and chasing other Swifts! One was grounded by a Magpie as it approached the eaves, another found in a busy road in Bowness and quickly retrieved without injury, Bowness was fit for release after a health check the following day, it was a complete joy to see him/her soaring above Bowness Ruby Club and making straight back towards the colony. We also have 3 Swiftlets that had fallen from their nests, they are doing very well and have about another 3 weeks of development yet.

Swift Awareness Week is 3rd to 11th July

We plan to host a Swift watching evening in a private garden at Bradshaw, Bolton. With the help of attraction calls the birds have taken up several bespoke boxes in the area and have been putting on some superb aerial displays around this brand new colony, in the last few weeks. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining us there may just be 1 or 2 places left. The date is now fixed as 10th July, if the weather is good it promises to be a wonderful evening.

Finally, don't forget to get out and about to see where Swifts are nesting locally and add your records of low flying Swifts around rooftops to <https://www.swiftmapper.org.uk/> or download the app both the website and the app are super quick and easy to use. Enjoy the Swifts before they are gone and do keep playing calls to attract them until the end of July. I would love to hear from any of you that have had Swifts showing interest in your boxes this year.

Best Wishes,

Louise

Bolton and Bury Swift Group



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<https://twitter.com/swiftsweek>