

Save Usk's Swifts

Swifts are in severe decline – numbers have plummeted by 58% in the last ten years. They have been placed on the UK red list of birds most in need of conservation and desperately need the support of our community.



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Get involved!

Join us on a one-hour guided walk round Usk to count Swifts, find active nest sites and assess where we could place nest boxes.

Friday 10th June at 8^{pm}

Friday 1st July at 8^{pm}

Meet in the Maryport Street car park

Children (accompanied by an adult) are welcome.
No equipment needed but bring binoculars if you have them.

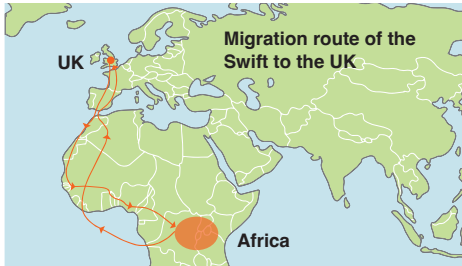
 **Facebook** Group
Search: **Swifts of Usk**

gwentbirds.org.uk

In association with



If you look up to the sky above Usk's rooftops from May to the end of July you will often see, and hear, a screaming party of small, dark sickle-shaped birds whirling over the buildings. These incredible aerial acrobats are Swifts *Apus apus* – the heralds of summer.



Map data source: British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)

Built for a life in the sky

Swifts are masters of the air, able to reach speeds in excess of 69 mph, making them the fastest bird in level flight!

After fledging a juvenile Swift will not touch base on a solid object for three years, only doing so when ready to nest and breed. An adult Swift will spend a staggering ten months of the year in the air, eating, drinking, sleeping and even mating on the wing.

Swifts are fleeting visitors to cities, towns and villages throughout the UK, making the perilous migration to our shores in order to raise a brood. At the end of July Swifts make the epic 3,000-mile journey back to equatorial Africa in a mere five days, to start the cycle all over again.

Swifts need us

Swifts are true urban birds and have relied on our houses and other buildings for thousands of years in order to nest. They pair for life and return to the same nest site year after year. Swifts find the cavities of our roof spaces perfect for rearing their young, gaining access through small gaps between the wall and eaves of a building. They cause absolutely no damage and go largely unnoticed by the human occupants.

Sadly, Swift numbers are plummeting. A major factor in this decline is lack of nest sites! Upon returning here Swifts are more and more frequently finding that access to former nest sites have been blocked due to renewal or repair of roofs, soffits and fascia boards. Moreover, modern buildings are now designed in a way that totally excludes Swifts.

Data sourced from RSPB & Swift Conservation



Swallow



House Martin



Swift

- Unlike swallows and martins, Swifts are all-dark – there is no white on the underparts.
- In its lifetime a single Swift flies the equivalent of the distance to the moon and back EIGHT times – over four million miles!
- A Swift's most common relative is the Hummingbird.

How you can help

Join one of our walks and help us find where they're nesting.

Give Swifts a home - put a nest box under the eaves of your house.



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Design: Instagram @charlotteilittle

John Stimpson's Swift Nest Boxes
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