

London's Swifts



Information for Homeowners

website www.londons-swifts.org.uk e-mail mail@londons-swifts.org.uk

■ About Swifts

The UK's fastest bird, their exiting calls mean Summer is here. Nesting from May to August in buildings, in small holes in the eaves or upper walls, feeding on flying insects and living in cities and towns, they fill the evenings with stunning aerobatic flight. They add excitement and life to any area.

■ Why they need your help

Swifts have shared our buildings for the last 2000+ years. But our adoption of new building techniques and materials is preventing them from nesting. As buildings are replaced or repaired, Swifts find themselves excluded, and facing a population decline.

■ How to help Swifts

With minimum cost and effort homeowners can install nest boxes that preserve inner-city Swift populations, enhance local biodiversity, and improve the local atmosphere. Just like flowers and trees, Swifts bring life to any site.

■ Making Nest Places for Swifts

Making and installing Swift nest places is easy. Using simple DIY carpentry skills you can make at low cost good Swift nest-boxes. Or you can buy ready-made boxes; see www.londons-swifts.org.uk "Shopping" page for details of types and suppliers.

■ Help is available

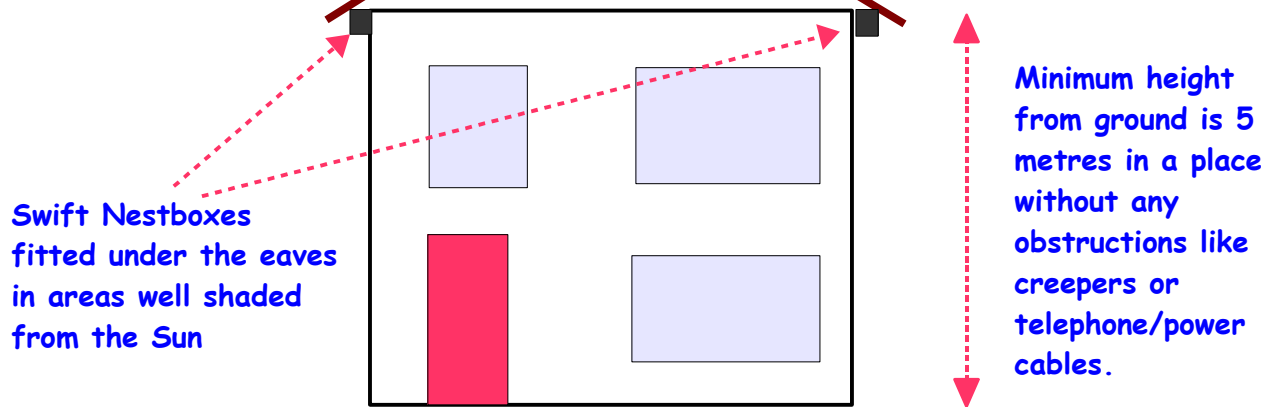
London's Swifts advises the public, government, and building professionals on Swift conservation. We provide guidance, design information and advice about creating homes for Swifts. Ask us and we will help you.

■ Build your own Swifts Nestbox

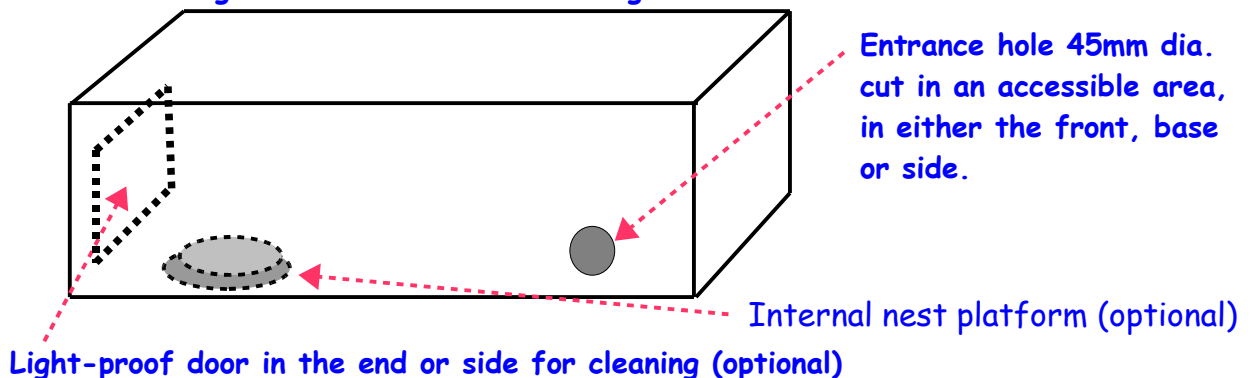
Overleaf is one of our DIY designs. See www.londons-swifts.org.uk for more designs, and advice on installing them and attracting Swifts.

DIY House Eaves Swift Nestbox

Build this nestbox out of 12mm exterior quality plywood. Use some square battens to reinforce it inside at each end. Screw it in place under your eaves with strong weatherproof brackets or fixings. You can clean it out each winter, (leaving the nest inside) but this is not essential. You can fit a webcam inside the box and observe the breeding process on your TV or computer, or show it live on the Internet. You should also fit a small loudspeaker if you want to attract the Swifts using a calls CD, which we can supply.



Size 500mm long x 200mm wide x 200mm high



Build the box to last many years. Glue all edges, screw each piece of ply to internal battens mounted inside the ends. Do not treat the interior of the box, but you can paint or stain the exterior. You may make a 120mm diameter x 25mm high shallow saucer-like nest platform with gently downward sloping sides out of cement, papier maché or potter's clay, and place it in the box. Bolt the box to strong rust-proof steel brackets, and using these, secure it to the external wall or eaves with strong rust-proof fixings.

Observe all safety precautions when making and fitting the box and ensure the box is fixed soundly to avoid any risk of it detaching.

Never disturb the birds during the breeding season (May to August). Good Luck!