

London's Swifts



How to use the Swift Calls CD

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

These 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, perhaps because other birds have failed to return from migration.

Swifts look for nest places in two phases. During May and June they are looking for places to breed in this year; in June and July they are looking for places to breed in next year.

You can play the Swift calls CD throughout the three-month long nesting season. In the UK this starts at the end of April to about mid May, depending on the weather, and usually ends in August. If this is not feasible, then play the CD from the beginning of May to the end of June, then again for the last two weeks of July, to coincide with the peaks of nest seeking activity.

Set your CD player's timer to play the calls at suitable times, (from dawn for about 6 hours, then from about 16.00 until it gets dark). Alternatively, play the duets from about 6.30am to 11am, the peak time for nest-seeking activity by Swifts. Please note that if the weather is cold and wet, playing the duets will have no effect at all. Swifts only look for new nest places in fine weather.

The loudspeakers should be as close to the boxes as possible, it is even beneficial to mount them inside the boxes. The volume level should be set to sound no louder than a real Swift's scream. If the call comes from inside the nest box remember it will therefore be rather muffled. This is natural and 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, then falling away again from the apex of their flight into a looping dive.

For more information about the life of the Swift, including articles, statistics, photographs, nest box designs, and information for enthusiasts, architects, builders, planners, vets and teachers, see our information-packed web sites.

www.londons-swifts.org.uk

www.commonswift.org

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