



Breeding Swifts

What to do if you find a blocked nest

This information sheet is intended to support you to take action if you find a swift nest that is blocked.

Swift facts

1. Swifts arrive in the UK to breed in May and migrate back to central Africa by the end of August
2. They are aerial birds that only land to nest in holes in houses and buildings, mostly around eaves
3. Swifts are site-faithful – they will NOT move to a new nest if disturbed. Swifts may keep trying all season to access the nest and can die trying
4. They are a Bird of Conservation Concern Red Listed Species and have declined by 70 per cent between 1995 and 2024

It is essential that we preserve swift nests, as nest loss is the main reason for swifts' decline

5. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides legal protection for wild birds, their nests, and eggs. Specifically, **it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird, or to damage or destroy a nest while it is in use or being built.** This protection extends to the eggs of wild birds and includes all **wild birds, nests, and eggs from being killed, taken, damaged, or destroyed.**
6. Swifts do not perch. They swoop in an arc, from below, straight into their nests which mean anything in front of the holes, like scaffolding, stops them entering and could constitute a criminal offence.



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- 1. If you feel confident, talk to the homeowner, scaffolder or builder.** The homeowner is the key person in the situation, but everyone is responsible for NOT disturbing the nest. **The law is on the side of the swifts.**
- 2. Show them this information** that is produced by South Yorkshire Police and Sheffield Swift Network.
- 3. If they do not respond to your request or on being shown this information,** tell them you are concerned and are in touch with Sheffield Swift Network. Polite persistence is key, and things don't always happen immediately.

It is important that the birds can access their nest again as soon as possible to prevent them injuring themselves and so they can feed their chicks, time is critical.
- 4. If you feel able to safely, film the situation.**
- 5. Note the exact location and any details you have about who is involved.**
- 6. Report it.** Ring 101 and ask to speak to a Wildlife Crime Trained Officer.
- 7. Ask for an incident number, so it's logged.**
- 8. We may keep in touch with you** letting you know what next steps are.
- 9. Keep Sheffield Swift Network up to date and we will support you,** when we can.



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