

## The Maidenhead and Cookham Swift Group



- Swifts fly for almost their entire lives. They only stop flying if they are breeding. Juveniles fly non-stop for up to four years
- Swifts pair for life, meeting up in May at exactly the same nest site (unless it has been lost)
- They often mate in the air
- The parents share nesting responsibilities equally
- They are gregarious and breed in colonies. Swifts often fight over nest sites using their feet to try to win the tussle
- They arrive in Britain in late April/early May
- When a fledgling flies for the first time, they're off and don't return again to the nest. They breed aged four but can pair up from one year old
- They go 'up to sleep', at dusk flying up to 10,000-15,000 feet or more
- While flying, one half of their brain goes to sleep while the other half stays awake
- They can't perch or land and then take off again. A grounded swift is a doomed swift. Always rescue them and contact a specialist
- During their lifetime they fly about 1.2 million miles. In one day, they fly an average of 500 miles
- They fly horizontally and upwards at almost 70 miles an hour
- Swifts feeding their young on insects such as midges and mosquitoes
- They are rarely predated by anything – occasionally, a raptor will manage to catch one
- They live for seven years on average, but the oldest British swift recorded was 18. Experts think some may live into their 20s or 30s or even longer
- Breeding swifts build nests from things they find floating in the air, including feathers, straw, hay, seeds and paper. They use saliva to glue the nest contents together

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