

Ludlow Swift Group Newsletter

June 2014

Introduction



Already we are almost half way through the 2014 swift season and fortunately the weather has been better than the last couple of years. We have seen a good number of swifts around town already especially on fine evenings.

In the next few weeks we will see more activity as the birds feed young in nest during the day.

Although the birds do not arrive back until the start of May they soon take to their nest sites and eggs are laid within 2 or 3 weeks of arrival. Eggs hatch after 19 days and then it is a further 6 weeks before the young fledge - by which time it is almost the end of July and it is time for the birds to migrate back to Africa.

So please do watch out for evidence of birds going to nest sites and pass your findings on to me. It is very important that we record where we have swifts nesting in our town.

Just the date, time and where you saw birds in an email to ludlowswiftgroup@gmail.com

Swift Watch

Although several of us are going out on Thursdays to check for swift nest sites – and you are very welcome to join us – we have decided to hold just a further two public events when we hope that residents and visitors to the town will join us to learn about swifts.

We will be holding a Swift Watch on **Thursday 24th June, Meet at the Buttercross at 9pm** for a walk round town to see summer screaming parties and to spot swift nest sites.

We will be meeting in the Church Inn after Swift Watch to share findings and meet with fellow Ludlow swift helpers.

There will another Swift Watch Event on **Thursday 26th July - meeting at 8:45pm at the Buttercross**

Ludlow Ledger

Do look out for the next edition of the great new local paper **Ludlow Ledger** which should be available soon. There will be an article from Ludlow Swift Group in there

. Ludlow's swifts really are special and we all need to work to ensure these birds continue to return to this town to nest and raise their young. Hopefully this article will make others aware of these wonderful birds.

Welcoming the Swifts



The **Welcoming the Swifts** event at the Local to Ludlow Market on 22nd May was well attended with many visitors taking home one of the group's new information postcards. This year we were supported by George Candelin from the RSPB.

Ludlow is recognised by the RSPB as having a good population of swifts and we are working with them to assess the number of nest sites in the town. We are one of only 3 places in the UK helping with this work and it is great opportunity for Ludlow to become known as a swift town.

On Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th May **Welcoming the Swifts** events were held at the Charlton Arms. We watched a good number of swifts feeding over the river and talked to many number of visitors about these birds that come to Ludlow in the summer.

It was also good to see about 30 house martins as these birds face many of the same problems as swifts - i.e. loss of places to build nests and raise young.

Welcoming the Swifts is firmly in the Ludlow Swift Group calendar and plans for next year's events are already being made.



The new [Birders Against Wildlife Crime](#) website has a couple of articles about swifts. Getting the message across about the problems they face - especially as this time of year with the profusion of scaffolding that appears as we all race to get repairs done to our houses in fine weather - is important. Please do what you can to spread the word - and look out for potential problems when you are out and about round town.

These birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act and misplaced scaffolding could be in breach of this law – so do act if you think swifts are being denied access to nest sites.

International Swift Conference



Three members of Ludlow Swift Group attended this conference earlier in the year. There were over 140 people in attendance. It was a great opportunity to talk to everyone who is working hard to ensure that swifts have somewhere to nest in the 21st century when our building materials and methods exclude the nooks and crannies that these birds (and bats) need. There were many people from across the UK and we have now build a loose network of groups so that we can share experiences and offer support to each other. If you would like to see the notes from the conference please email ludlowswiftgroup@gmail.com