

# Common Swift

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Apus apus*

The swift is a fast-flying and distinctive bird with long, curved wings. Swifts are larger than swallows and martins, with a wingspan up to 48cm. Originally nesting on cliffs and in holes in trees, it now mainly nests in buildings, such as churches, and is particularly common in older parts of towns and cities. Swifts spend the winter in Africa, with the first birds usually returning to the UK in April, though most don't arrive until May. Specially designed nestboxes help this species to survive in our towns and villages, where renovation work often blocks the small holes they use to access their nest sites.

This species is classified in the UK as Amber under the Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds (2015).



Photo: David Tipling/2020VISION

## Key ID features

Curved wings give boomerang-like appearance in flight

Small pale patch on throat

Dark brown colouration all over—often appears black

Short forked tail

**Don't confuse with...**

Swallow, house martin or sand martin. Refer to ID guides for information.

Piercing screaming call in flight



Photo: David Tipling/2020VISION