

swifts are amazing!

how much do you know about our summer visitors?

- **Swifts are one of the last of our summer migrants to arrive in the UK and are the first to leave (staying for around 3 months).**
- **They typically spend much of the winter time in the Congo, with a brief visit to Mozambique around Christmas.**
- **They have been recorded flying at an astonishing 69mph!**
- **Swifts feed, mate, sleep & collect nest material entirely on the wing.**
- **The only time they land is when they return to the UK to nest.**
- **The young take 4-5 years to mature during which they never land.**
- **To build up strength in their flight muscles before leaving the nest, young birds use their wings to do “press-ups” in the nest .**
- **They have very short, stubby legs – their scientific name *apus apus* means no legs.**
- **They weigh about 44 grams (just under the weight of 4 £2 coins).**
- **Swifts are entirely reliant on buildings in which to nest, but they are very clean, quiet house-guests and should not be confused with other birds that nest in or on buildings:**
 - **They do not leave lots of mess down walls and windows (starlings, pigeons, house martins)**
 - **They do not scrabble around above ceilings squawking (starlings)**
 - **They do not build a mud cup under the eaves of houses (house martins)**
 - **They do not build a mud cup on the rafters inside a barn or other out-building (swallows)**



For even more amazing facts about swifts, for further information on how to help these enigmatic birds and to participate in an online swift inventory, please visit www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts