



# Swift

(*Apus apus*)

*“His whole melody is a scream, unmusical but most joyous....to me it seems such an expression of pent-up joy as little children would make if unexpectedly released from school, furnished with wings, and flung up into the air for a game of hide-and-seek among the clouds”*

The Rev C A Johns (1909)



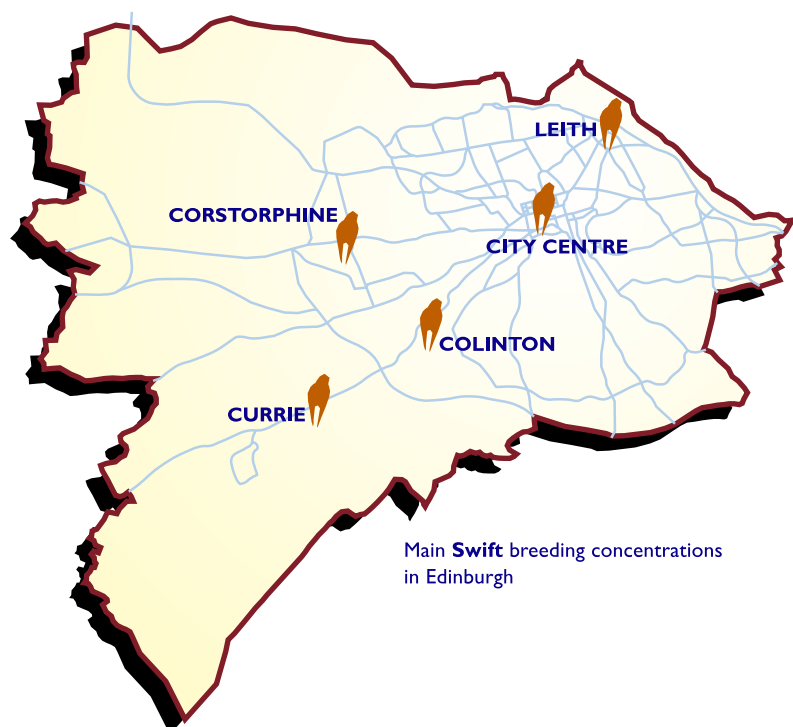
## OBJECTIVE

To stabilise and then increase Edinburgh's swift population.

## CONTEXT AND REVIEW OF PAST ACTION

The City of Edinburgh was identified in EBAP 2000 as an important area for swifts in SE Scotland containing up to a quarter of the estimated 1500-1800 pairs. Swifts are migrants arriving in early May and leaving in August. Breeding populations are particularly concentrated in areas with tenements or suitable tall buildings which provide nesting opportunities under the eaves, in ventilators or other available cavities. Most nest sites are at least 5 metres high and all have a drop to allow birds to gather speed as they leave. A recent Joint Nature Conservation Council press release reported a 62% decline in swift numbers since 1994 in Scotland. As other aerial feeders (e.g. swallow, house martin) are stable this suggests that "the loss of suitable nest sites through redevelopment of buildings may be contributing to the decline". For more background information on swifts see previous Swift Species Action Plan (EBAP 2000).

When the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan was being drafted in 1997-99, swift was an obvious species to be included, as an easily identified bird found within the City which was perceived to have suffered a decline in Edinburgh over a number of years. The public surveys co-ordinated by SOC in 1999 and 2000 confirmed this view by identifying swift distribution and numbers in Edinburgh and comparing results with an earlier survey. These results and subsequent reported records have made it possible to start to build up a picture of current swift distribution in the Edinburgh Area. This information can be used to advise planners of areas where provision for swifts should be made on suitable buildings and restoration projects.



Action	Date	Partners
<p><b>Built up areas with tall buildings</b></p> <p>Approach developers and residents within and adjacent to tenement areas where swifts are declining and encourage them to make provision for swifts by installing swift bricks or boxes or by providing spaces for swifts to access roof space. (Swift nest bricks are available for demonstration from City Development Dept).</p>	2004-2009	<b>CEC City Dev</b> SOC, Local volunteers
<p>Housing Department to include installation of swift nest bricks in tenement refurbishment schemes.</p>	2004-2009	<b>CEC Housing</b> CEC City Dev, SOC, & RSPB
<p>Promote use of biodiversity guidance in development quality handbook to ensure providing swift nesting space is a condition of planning in suitable developments.</p>	Ongoing	<b>CEC City Dev</b> SNH, RSPB
<p><b>Other Actions</b></p> <p>Raise awareness of the declining numbers of swifts in urban areas and their needs to architects, planners and the public.</p>	Ongoing	<b>CEC City Dev</b> CEC Rangers
<p>Encourage members of the public to report swift sightings (postcodes) and swift behaviour to Biodiversity Officers.</p>	Ongoing	<b>CEC Rangers</b> All Partners
<p>Repeat swift survey and use distribution information to provide GIS information to Development Quality Planners on zones within the city where provision for swifts should be sought on new developments or tenement restorations.</p>	2004-2005	<b>SOC</b> CEC CD, LWIC

LEAD PARTNERS ARE SHOWN IN **BOLD** FOR EACH ACTION.

FOR DETAILS OF PARTNERS LISTED PLEASE REFER TO THE ACRONYMS TABLE ON PAGE 18

## CHAMPIONS

