








## Birds in your building – what to look for

Species	Designation	Where do they nest?	What to look for		What to do
			Spring	Rest of year	
<b>Swift</b> 	Amber list (species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe)	The nest is hidden inside a crevice or hole in eaves, in brickwork, under tiles etc. Very unobtrusive. The nest itself is just a small cup of feathers and bits of vegetation, held together with saliva.	Adults flying at around rooftop height, in parties of two or more, screaming. Look for adults slipping into nests in the evening. Listen for screaming from inside the nest too.  Loosely colonial, so may be several pairs nearby.	Swifts spend the winter in Africa. All that is visible is remains of cup – note that these can disintegrate over winter. Birds flying up to and ‘banging’ at potential holes in late summer may indicate future colonisation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leave existing nest places undisturbed.</li> <li>2. If re-roofing, make new nest access holes to match the old ones.</li> <li>3. New build - It is always best to create internal nest spaces.</li> <li>4. If you cannot do "3 " above, fit external nest boxes.</li> </ol> For more information go to <a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts">www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts</a>
<b>House martin</b> 	Amber list	Nest under eaves of suitable buildings between 5 and 10 m above the ground. Nest is a mud cup, closed at the top with a small opening.	Look for nest cup, and adults flying up to the nest. Well grown young will often poke their heads out of the hole. Young of late broods may still be in the nest in September.  Colonial, typically 3-5 pairs per colony.	Look for nest cup.	House martins cannot build nests on plastic or metal surfaces, so lining eaves with suitable materials such as wooden planks will provide a nest-building opportunity. Several pre-fabricated nests can be placed alongside each other to encourage house martins. If droppings are a problem, put a small shelf beneath.

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<b>Swallow</b> 	Amber list	Nest sites are traditional, and provided the food supply has not changed, the same nests or sites are used from one year to another, frequently by the same two birds. Prefer outbuildings that provide dark ledges or rafters.	Open-topped nest cup made of mud, <u>inside</u> building. Look for adults flying in and out from April until the end of summer. Tend to be just a solitary pair.	Swallows spend the winter in Africa. Look for nest cup.	Maintain access to the inside of buildings wherever possible. Swallows can enter a building through a very small gap (5cm high by 7cm wide) and need very little light. Maintain ledges/beams where present or provide shelving, high in the building.
<b>House sparrow</b> 	Red list (Globally Threatened) BAP	Nests behind holes in brick/stone work and under roof tiles and ridges.  Loosely colonial.	Look for males chirping from perch near by from March onwards – typically stay of downpipe or overflow.	Look for nest of grass/feathers in suitable holes.	Maintain hole wherever possible. Otherwise, internal or external boxes with 32mm hole can be provided. Nest in loose colonies so several boxes a few metres apart are of greatest benefit.
<b>Starling</b> 	Red list BAP	Nests behind soffits and fascias. Also inside chimneys and between wall cavities.  Loosely colonial.	Males sing prominently close to nest. Adults are easily seen flying in and out. Well-grown young are noisy in the nest, and the wall below may be marked with droppings.	A messy nest may be seen in eaves or other cavities, and bird lime may be visible on the wall below.	Internal or external box. Ideally provide small holes on the outside of a building that give access to a larger open space. Internal boxes can be sited behind fascias and soffits. Leave gaps when re-pointing or walling. Nest boxes with 45mm hole readily accepted – make these about 30% deeper than a conventional box.

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<p><b>Kestrel</b></p> 	Amber list	Uses open access through loft gable window or similar. Nests on internal ledges and sills, usually in proximity to window.	<p>Adults may be seen flying in and out. Young may stay around the nesting site for a month or so until fully independent.</p> <p>Prey remains and regurgitated pellets may be visible.</p>	There is little in the way of nesting material, but prey remains and regurgitated pellets may be visible.	<p>Window and loft or open-fronted box, high on external wall.</p> <p>Exercise great care if controlling rodents – birds of prey suffer readily from secondary poisoning from affected prey.</p>
<p><b>Barn owl</b></p>  <p>Barn owls have special legal protection against disturbance and nest destruction. For more information go to the RSPB website and visit our wildlife law pages.</p>	Amber list	Barn owls were so valued for rodent control that many barns were built with small windows to allow them access. Barn owls will nest on internal ledges and floors above rafters.	<p>Adults may be seen flying in and out. Young may produced hissing or snoring sounds from within the nest. Regurgitated pellets (thumb sized and dark) containing rodent bones and hair can be very obvious on the floor.</p>	Regurgitated pellets (thumb sized and dark) containing rodent bones and hair can be very obvious on the floor.	<p>Buildings can continue to provide nesting and roosting sites for barn owls after conversion through an owl window and loft. Behind the window, board off an area beneath the apex of the roof to provide a floor area of not less than 90cm. A half partition gives the nesting female more protection. Alternatively, a large box inside the upper roof space of buildings or high on an external wall may be used, but suitable perches will need to be constructed where absent. Boxes can also be located on poles sited within field boundaries.</p> <p>Exercise great care if controlling rodents because of secondary poisoning.</p>