



Bristol Naturalists' Society

Registered Charity No. 235494

"Low-level Screaming Swift Survey.."

This summer I would like all members to send in details of every low-level screaming Swift party they see. This means groups of Swifts flying very fast at roof level or below, screaming loudly. It does not refer to high level screaming in the sky.

These parties are always associated with breeding colonies, and probably, in May, contain the breeding birds, and in June and July may also have members of the extended Swift family. It is not at present clear when these parties usually happen, either in terms of date or of time of day, nor do we know how they relate to weather conditions. Casual observation suggests that they are commoner in fine conditions, and early or late in the day, and can occur in any of the three summer months.

I need the following information. Date, time of day, the site, preferably a road name, or even close address, or Grid reference, and number in the party. Swifts like to nest in groups, and the size of the party may be related to the number of nests nearby.

Please send records either electronically or by post or phone to me. You can keep a record for the season and then send them en bloc.

I am also interested in any records of definite nesting sites, which usually means sites in your own house or that of a neighbour. It is very difficult to see Swifts entering or leaving their nests, as they do so in the blink of an eye, but pairs always spend the whole night together in the nest, and a good time to catch them is in the hour before dusk when both will enter the nest. First eggs are laid from May 15th, and incubation lasts for 19 days, so the young usually hatch in early June. They need up to 50 days to fledge, so rarely fly before July 15th. They can be noisy during July.

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