

A survey of Swift (*Apus apus*) nesting sites in Tralee May 2018.

Sites continue in number from the 2016 survey carried out by Lynda Huxley to give the total number of known nest sites (13) and 39 active nests.

By Pádraig Webb.

(padraigwebb165@gmail.com).



Site 9. Terraced housing opposite council buildings (Number 4). Princes St.

1 nest site found under gutter with a total of 2 swifts banging. Only one bird went into hole suggesting possibility of another nest site here. Blue dot indicates nest site.

10 digit Grid Ref = **Q 83224 14067**

Latitude = **52.26600** (north)

Longitude = **-9.71073** (west)

Orientation: South East



Site 10. Mill at Friary lane.

3 nests each under windowsill/slates below windows as seen in picture. Swifts only heard from middle nest but seen going into other 2. Possibly more swifts here.

10 digit Grid Ref = **Q 83298 14369**

Latitude = **52.26872** (north)

Longitude = **-9.70976** (west)

Orientation: South West and South East.







Site 11. Back of terraced housing (Numbers 47/48) off Moyderwell viewed from Dom O' Donnel furniture carpark.

2 nests with 3 birds banging. Nest on left bird went in quick. Other nest both remaining birds checked out for 20 mins with one bird entering. The final bird kept landing at various points along the terrace downpipes and wires at the gutters suggesting possible first time breeder.

10 digit Grid Ref = **Q 83938 14305**

Latitude = **52.26829** (north)

Longitude = **-9.70037** (west)

Orientation: North East.



Site 12. Clogher House. Caherweesheen.

1 nest found (South west). Nest under overhanging eave left of the middle wooden beam. Exact point not known. 5 bangers on south west and north west sides. 1 bird possibly with nest at roof over front curve south east.

10 digit Grid Ref = **Q 84185 13300**

Latitude = **52.25931** (north)

Longitude = **-9.69641** (west)

Orientation: South West





Site 13. Presentation Convent. Green Lane.

2 nests between gutter and brickwork under chimney.

10 digit Grid Ref = **Q 83835 14329**

Latitude = **52.26848** (north)

Longitude = **-9.70188** (west)

Orientation: South



Possible sites where birds have been seen active.

4 birds regularly flying behind junction of lower castle street and Edward street. During daytime. Another possible site is above the Slieve Mish Bar and Ballymac Bar, Castle Street, Boherbee. Cahills Park housing estate off Spa Road.

Observations

Also, the mill at mill market lane was very active with swifts but no birds were seen entering the building though it is likely that there are more pairs here than the 1 already identified. At Kelliher's Electrical one swift was repeatedly seen (over a couple of nights) trying to enter its nesting hole over in which Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) had made their home. Another swift successfully entered its nest site which a starling flew out of prior to the swift entering. A call system may be needed to alert the swifts to the boxes on 8 and 9 Pembroke street whose nests have been blocked up by renovation.

The middle hole of the right nest box on the Balloonagh school is occupied by House Sparrows. A call system at the boxes at the Wetlands centre should be erected to make swifts aware of their presence. The tower at the Mercy Moyderwell primary school could be a suitable site for nest boxes as the school is close to an active swift colony and many birds have been seen around this area.

It is likely that there are more nests at each of these newly identified nest sites as it is early in the season and the birds were not entering as readily as they could have. Plenty of activity in the form of screeching birds over the town and birds banging at the new sites suggests additional pairs. It is possible that there are nesting swifts at the sites mentioned above where birds were seen actively screeching. Clogher house, the Presentation Convent and the mill will likely hold more pairs.

Following on from the 2016 survey this leaves Tralee town with 13 known nest sites spread around the town holding a definite 39 pairs.

Conclusion

5 new breeding sites were identified with a combined total of 9 pairs. Further surveying of these and existing sites in July when chicks are being fed could prove to identify additional nesting pairs.



House Sparrows nesting in middle of right schwelger box on Balloonagh School below.



Map of Tralee town showing location of new nest sites

