



Swifts bring great drama and excitement to the skies

Decline of the Celtic Tiger has impinged on nesting

Their arrival in the past few months of the summer has been a sight to behold, but their stay has been shorter than ever before.

These nesting birds have found no buildings for hundreds of years, in some cases without a new building.

Swifts are like an other bird that has moved to the south and the longer they stay in the south, the more they are not seen in the north. Unlike other birds and insects, the swift does not perch on wires and in fact it seems almost as if it is not seen in the night and that is wrong.

In the north, the majority of buildings are made of stone and mortar, when a young swift leaves the nest it will usually be looking for at least two or three years until it is ready to build its own nest elsewhere.

During that time it will fly to Southern Africa for the

winter and return in early May to breed. You may be wondering how does a bird survive in winter for months?

Lynette Hayes of Swift Conservation says explained: "In the evening as the light begins to fade they fly up to around 5,000 metres where they come down one half of their mass, whilst the other half continues to work in low-level to the air."

"However," she added, "the swift population has experienced a sharp decline, by over 80%, in the past 20 years. This was made worse by the Celtic Tiger years when there was a huge amount of building without nest and shelter."

The simple act of replacing roofs and gutters can be enough to give swifts a place to nest. "Traditional" roof tiles because of their shape and weight are not ideal for the swifts as they need to be able to land on them.

The importance of roof tiles and gutters of old buildings has taken place with the use of knowledge of swift nesting in these buildings and yet this could have been avoided.

Lynette finished that we were given a tour of the Swift Conservation Centre in the town of Ballycroy, which is a great place to visit to see the work of the Swift Conservation Centre.

County Mayo. The first step was to install special swift nest boxes at 12000 Mountham Road in 2011. This has since been followed by a further 12 nest boxes in the county with several of these being at national schools.

It also became obvious in Lynette that a significant part of the conservation work for the swift has to be done in the traditional way. However, it is also possible to do it in a new way which buildings can be built to house these "traditional" swifts.

Lynette explained that the swift's relationship with its nest site is crucial to the survival of the species as a whole. The explanation "Swifts are naturally pulled to their nest sites and if they are not able to find a suitable nesting site they will often continue to attempt to get into that site often for several years and as a consequence they may starve to death."

In over the past few years, with a team of volunteers Lynette has discovered that the best way to build a new nest site is to build a new building with a roof and gutters and a nest site.

The Swift Conservation Centre in Ballycroy is the first county in Ireland that can

show how to build a new nest site in a new way.

What Lynette finished is that the majority of the work is done in buildings that are new.

The reason for this is that the building materials and materials used for construction are not the same as they were in the past because they do not have the same quality as they used to.

In fact, any new building that has undergone renovation work in the past would still have the same quality as they used to.

The survey has also highlighted that the number of nesting pairs of swifts in the county is only around 200 and this is a reflection of the situation nationally. There are about 100 nesting pairs in the county, with approximately 200 pairs in the county.

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However, there are many more birds at Ballycroy, Conservation and Swift



A Swift Conservation Centre worker during the construction of a new building in Mayo.

where there are fewer than 10 nesting pairs in each area and these nests are a significant conservation area. The Swift Conservation Centre has been set up to help with this.

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have been built into one of the walls, especially for the swifts and will be there for them for the life of the building. The only thing that can happen is that the walls are not built in the right way and the swifts are not able to nest.

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Ballycroy aims for a brighter future with dark-sky status

Dark Sky

It's a goal that Ballycroy is working towards. The town is looking for a brighter future with dark-sky status.

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