

BALLA NEST SITE REPORT

SITE No.	Address	Building Type	Occupied Natural Nests	Nest Box Project
1	Secondary School	School	1 (0)	Built-in boxes
2	Town Centre	Community Centre	0	External (1 occupied)

Site No. 1 : Secondary School

Town	Balla
Address	
Use of Building	Secondary School
Spatial Reference	53.80639439,-9.13855433
Protected Structure Reg. No.	Not applicable
Year of Construction	1880s
Natural Nest Sites	1
Aspect of Natural Nests	NNE
Nest Boxes	16 Vivara GZ03 nest boxes built into new school extension 2022
Aspect of Nest Boxes	NE
Total Occupied Nests	1 natural, 0 nest boxes
Swifts seen flying	8

Just one natural Swift nest site at the school in a pipe hole in the end wall of the school gym. This gym is a relatively new building but the school itself was built in the 1880s. The school guttering and fascia/soffit has been replaced in recent with plastic guttering, fascia and soffit and this may have led to loss of some natural Swift nest sites in the main school building. A total of 8 swifts were seen flying above the school.



Nest Box Project :

A nest box project was funded through a Heritage Council grant in 2021. This has provided 16 built-in Woodstone Swift Nest Box Deep. The project was completed in 2022 and the attraction calls playing for the 2023 season but no activity was seen at the nest boxes in this first season.



Site No 2 : Community Centre

Address	Town centre
Spatial Reference	53.80508, -9.13108
Protected Structure Reg. No.	Not applicable
Year of Construction	Not known
Natural Nest Sites	n/a
Aspect of Natural Nests	n/a
Nest Boxes	3 (1 triple entrance)
Aspect of Nest Boxes	NE
Total Occupied Nests	1
Swifts seen flying	3

Nest Box Project

This nest box project was established in September 2017 with donation provided to Swift Conservation Mayo. Attraction calls played for first time in 2018. The nest box is a Genesis triple cavity.

In 2021, 2022 and 2023 swifts were seen entering and leaving Box 1 (left hand box) throughout the breeding season.



THE AMAZING SWIFT
Common Swift Ghabhán gaoinne Apus apus

BALLA NESTBOX PROJECT

TRAVEL ROUTES

The round trip to Africa is 14,000 miles!

LIFE ON THE WING

They drink, sleep, eat on the wing.

FINDING HOME

They use the same site for the rest of their lives.

NEST WITH EGGS

They lay 2 or 3 eggs each year.

FAMILY LIFE

Chicks open their eyes 6 days after hatching.

SWIFT FACTS

- ➔ They come to Europe each Summer
- ➔ They make their way back to Africa in late August
- ➔ They return to their nest sites in early May, a round trip of 14,000 miles!

WHY SWIFTS?

The Swift is a bird of conservation concern due to a population decrease of close to 50% in the past 20 years. County Mayo has approximately 250 breeding pairs of swifts on "natural" nest sites but this has now been increased by 10% in the last few years by the provision of nest box projects in almost every town in the county. The Balla nest box project was set up with a generous private donation and is a collaboration between Swift Conservation Mayo and Balla Trip Town. The box was erected in 2018 and has entrances to three separate compartments. Attraction calls will be played each year from May to end of August. Swifts have to find their nest sites whilst flying around at high speed so the calls will help them locate our nest boxes. There is at least one "natural" swift nest site in Balla in a hole in the end wall of the gym at Balla Secondary School. By providing nest boxes in the town we aim to help grow the numbers of this amazing bird. This is an exciting project to enhance the urban biodiversity of our towns. You can find out more about this bird and where it breeds in the county by visiting the Swift Conservation Ireland website www.swiftconservation.ie

AMAZING - MYSTERIOUS - VERY FAST - EATS MILLIONS OF INSECTS.

Ballinafad
Tidy Towns

The DMG Swifts 1000 between the project support at
swiftconservation.ie/gmit-swiftcams