



Screaming through the skies

It won't be long until swifts return and they really do need our help. Clair Amos of Swift Friends Wyre Forest helps us discover how we can all play a part in their survival...

Most people equate the sound of swifts with summer arriving but how sad would it be if we lost them?

Last summer season was a poor one for swifts visiting the UK and this was discussed in the many swift conservation groups across the country. It may have been due to the poor weather.

Problems that swifts face are a loss of nest sites and the decline of insect populations (a swift's diet). Swifts are now a red listed bird of conservation; their numbers have declined by more than 50% in the last 20 years. **They need our help.**

A few brief facts about swifts:

- Swifts spend almost all their time in the air – they eat, drink, sleep and mate on the wing.
- They are here for about 12 weeks each summer to raise one or two chicks, returning to Africa at the end of July. That's a round-trip of 14,000 miles!
- Swifts mate for life and meet each other at the same nest site each year.
- They are insectivorous birds, catching vast numbers of small insects for themselves and their chicks.

Ways you can help:

- Preserve existing nests
- Be considerate if undertaking building works
- Put up swift boxes (with screaming swift calls to help them find the boxes)
- Comment on local planning applications to ask for swift provision (eg swift bricks)
- Garden with wildlife (and insects, in particular) in mind
- Don't use pesticides
- Join swift groups to raise awareness and encourage swift-friendly practices (or set up your own group in your local area)

What to do if you find a grounded swift:

- Put the swift in a closed, ventilated, box and contact a specialist swift carer. You can seek advice from actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/grounded-swift.html or the Swift and Swallow SOS group on Facebook.

Also take a look at:

- actionforswifts.blogspot.com
- swift-conservation.org
- www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/wild-about-swifts-swallows-and-martins



If you would like to join Swift Friends Wyre Forest, look for us on Facebook. Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope you see many swifts this year!

Clair

Indoor Meetings

Everyone is welcome.

Join us at Holy Innocents Community Hall, Foley Park, Kidderminster. 7.30p.m. Admission £2.50

Thursday 4th April 2024 **Rosemary Winnall - Between the Tides**

A lovely talk to have at the beginning of the summer. We look forward to hearing another of Rosemary's interesting talks.



Rock pool by Wendy Carter

Walks to enjoy this summer

All start 10.a.m. Donations to the Trust. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday 14th April

Enjoying the bluebells of Shrawley Wood with Richard Jeynes and Joan Kearton-Jones

A circular walk to admire the bluebells in this lovely wood. A leisurely, level walk of about three miles with no stiles.

Meet: The Hampstall Inn car park
Grid ref: SO 813678 Postcode: DY13 0RY

Sunday 12th May

Up and down the other side of Walton Hill with Jean Maffei

This is a steady walk around the beautiful Clent and Walton hills with superb views all around. Approximately four miles with four stiles.

Meet: Clent village car park
Grid ref: SO 925797 Postcode: DY9 9PB

Sunday 9th June

Rambling round Rushock with Mervyn Needham

A walk around some of the undulating countryside around Chaddesley Corbett with sweeping views and some of Mervyn's fascinating insight to our local area.

Meet: lane leading to Chaddesley Village Hall (off A448)
Grid ref: SO 888737 Postcode: DY10 4QA

Sunday 14th July

Looking at the varied habitat of Highgate Common with Roma Bubb and Chris Morris

A lovely walk through heathland, flower meadows and woodland. Approximately three miles with no stiles.

Meet: Cory Community Centre. Highgate Rd, Stourbridge
Grid ref: SO 831899 Postcode: DY7 5BH

3rd Friday of every month - 10:30am until 3pm

Volunteering at Dropping Well Farm, The Devil's Spittleful and Blackstone Farm Fields

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is looking for volunteers to help manage our beautiful heathlands in the Wyre Forest where we have several sites in different stages of restoration. If discovering more about conservation is your thing, volunteers have the very rare opportunity to be involved in pioneering techniques for restoring scarce heathland habitats. You'll learn more about the wildlife in this complex set of habitats that includes farmland, ancient heath, grassland and woodland as well as features like ancient sand dunes, droveways and a rocky mound named after the Devil that is even referenced in the Domesday Book.

Volunteers get to try their hands with new tools, such as tree poppers and weed whackers (yes, they're as fun as they sound). One day, you may find yourself on training courses to use power-tools like chainsaws. It's a great opportunity to make new friends and improve your wellbeing by spending some active time outdoors.

If you'd like to know more about what it's like to volunteer on our heathlands, have a read of our Saving Worcestershire's Heathlands blog...

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/blog/heathland-heroes/could-you-be-mini-mammoth

If this sounds like your cup of tea, we'd love you to join us! You don't need to come to every work party, just come when it fits with your diary. If you're interested please email us at volunteer@worcestershirewildlifetrust.org or call 01905 754919.



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Your newsletter editor
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Would you like to suggest a walk or lead one that is special to you? If so please contact
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