



This specification details how to install and maintain bird boxes for different species. Please refer to your planning consent to determine which parts of this document are relevant to your site and how many boxes are required.

1. Swift Bricks

Swift bricks are hollow blocks which can hold a nest inside and are built into the outer wall of a building. Swifts are solely reliant on buildings for nesting, so the installation of swift bricks into new buildings can really help to bolster local populations.

Swift bricks can be used by other species, including house sparrows and starlings, which are Species of Principal Importance for Biodiversity Conservation (aka "priority species"), so they are being recognised as a 'universal' brick.

Location

- At least 5 metres above the ground.
- On North or East-facing elevations. Bricks on other elevations must be placed under overhangs or eaves to provide shelter from the sun.
- At least 0.5m away from doors, windows, vents, downpipes or vegetation which could be used by predators (domestic cats, rats etc).
- In clusters of at least 2 bricks, with a minimum of 1m between bricks.
- In locations where obstacles such as overhead cabling, aerials or vegetation will not obstruct high-speed access.

Design

A range of swift bricks are available, select a product specifically designed for swifts with an access hole of 30mm.

Installation

Install in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. If bricks are being installed on South or East-facing elevations they must be installed under the eaves in the top row of blockwork.

Maintenance

None required.



2. House Sparrow Terraces & Starling Boxes

House sparrows and starlings are priority species and breed in colonies. There are various types of "house sparrow terrace" boxes available that can either be integrated into walls or externally mounted onto buildings. Both species will also readily use boxes attached to mature trees.

Location

- At least 3 metres above the ground.
- On North or East-facing elevations on buildings (either integrated or externally mounted) or trees.
- At least 0.5m away from doors, windows, vents, downpipes or vegetation which could be used by predators (domestic cats, rats etc).
- Starling boxes must be installed in groups of at least two boxes placed a minimum of 1m apart.

Design

External boxes must be constructed from WoodStone, Woodcrete or a similar blend to ensure durability - wooden boxes are not appropriate.

Sparrow terraces must have a minimum of two nest chambers or be installed in pairs.

Installation

Install in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. Boxes installed on trees must be attached using aluminium nails or screws.

Maintenance

Remove old nest material annually between October and January.



3. House Martin Nest Cups

House martins usually build mud nests on cliff faces, but they will readily use buildings where they build nests under the eaves. They are also colonial breeders with an average group of 4-5 nests.

Location

- At least 2 metres above the ground, preferably at the roof apex.
- On North or East-facing elevations of buildings.
- At least 0.5m away from doors, windows, vents, downpipes or vegetation which could be used by predators (domestic cats, rats etc).
- In groups of at least four nest cups.

Design

Select a commercially available nest cup constructed from WoodStone, Woodcrete or a similar blend to ensure durability.

Installation

Install in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance, ensuring that the top board sits snugly with the eaves or soffit.

If you wish to install a droppings board, this must be placed no less than 2m below the nest cups.

Maintenance

None required.

Further Resources:

Swift

<https://www.swift-conservation.org/>

House Sparrow

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/house-sparrow/breeding/>

Starling

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/starling/breeding-nesting-habits/>

House Martin

<https://housemartinconservation.com/artificial-nests>

Swallow

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/swallow/>

4. Swallow Nest Cups

Swallows prefer to nest inside buildings with dark ledges, nooks and crannies. They require flying access to the roof, often being found in cold roof voids and open-fronted structures.

Location

- Within an open-fronted structure (i.e. stable, car port or log store) or dark structure with a permanent open access measuring at least 50mm high by 200mm wide.
- At least 2 metres above the ground, in the rafters.

Design

Select a commercially available nest cup constructed from WoodStone, Woodcrete or a similar blend to ensure durability.

Installation

Install in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance, allowing at least 6cm free above the cup. Individual cups must be placed a minimum of 1m apart.

A ledge can be provided beneath the nest to prevent droppings from building up if desired.

Maintenance

None required.

