

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Malvern Group

Thursday May 2nd

Peta Sams: All About Swifts

Have you seen a swift yet this year? The first ones – the 4 year old breeding birds - have arrived and the younger birds will continue to come throughout May, forming screaming parties around our towns. They come all the way from Africa to breed here and they only stay 12 weeks, departing in July for the long journey back again. Sadly there has been a 53% decline in their numbers since 1995, the main reasons being loss of nest sites and lack of insects to eat, because of our overuse of pesticides. They like to nest in small holes in buildings, and unfortunately most new buildings don't have any suitable holes. Older buildings these days tend to be much repaired, and returning swifts may find that their habitual nest sites have vanished.

In her informative talk, Peta Sams (from the Shropshire Swift Group) suggested many ways of helping swifts, including recording existing nest sites, putting up swift boxes, and including swift bricks in new buildings (hollow bricks with holes in the front). Town councils can be encouraged to consider the needs of swifts and indeed all birds when planning. We are behind other European countries in these considerations and need to become more aware and active in our conservation efforts.

The next meeting of the Malvern Group will be on September 5th at 7.30pm. Please note the change of venue: it will be at the Eden Centre, Grovewood Road, Malvern WR141GD. Lucy Grove will talk about "Finding Rare Species on the Malverns".

Alison Uren