

URBAN WILDLIFE in West Norfolk

Presentation by
Cllr Andy Bullen

To the Environment and Communities Panel
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URBAN WILDLIFE

What do I mean by “Urban Wildlife”?

Animals, birds etc which **live with and rely on us** to survive:

Swifts, bats, bees, hedgehogs, house martins etc*

The problems:

The UK Swift population is **declining 5% year on year** and is down from 133,00 pairs in 1994 to 52,00 pairs in 2019

Hedgehogs are now on the **UK Red List of “Vulnerable” mammals** with a population decline of 30% since 2000

Environment & Communities Panel is **well named** as the link between the two is vital

Benefits of engagement and awareness of wildlife are widely acknowledged and have been highlighted during lockdown by Central Government: *“Nature has supported people’s well-being during lockdowns”* (ONS 26 April 2021)

* and swans



THE SWIFT

Swifts have arrived in Norfolk in the past month from **wintering in the Congo**. Swifts have one of the longest migrations of any bird of 14,000 miles and they can fly up to 500 miles per day

Swifts nest almost **exclusively** in/on buildings

Swifts typically pair for life and **return to the same nest site every year**

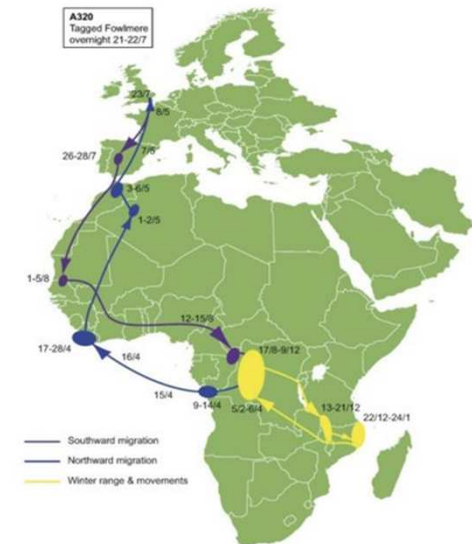
When a young swift leaves it's nest it **will not land again** until it returns to breed two years later

Swifts feed, sleep and mate **on the wing**



THE HOUSE MARTIN

We still **don't know** where House Martins overwinter in Africa



HOW WE ENGAGE WITH WILDLIFE

We are fortunate to live in one of the most diverse and wildlife rich areas of the country but we cannot afford to **neglect** the wildlife which lives amongst us

Many **visitors** come to West Norfolk for the wildlife (including BBC's Springwatch)

The Borough Council can take a lead and demonstrate our commitment to protecting our wildlife and promoting biodiversity

We cannot be complacent and rely on nature reserves

Action by others includes:

South Cambs District Council **£5000 grant** for 120 swift nest boxes

Breckland District Council 16 06 2020 **"Advice for building developers"**



ACTION & INITIATIVES

BCKLWN are our **largest developer** (The number of residential properties planned by the Borough is 12,057 including completions since 2016/17 (1,802) and commitments)

Every new building is a potential **new home for wildlife**, every renovated building is a **potential lost nest site**

Awareness and attitudes are changing, we are losing our urban wildlife at an alarming rate and the Borough Council can take a lead and have a **positive impact**.

I propose BCKLWN adopt a formal policy of encouraging and supporting Urban Wildlife for the benefit of residents and wildlife.

As the lead developer can we take the initiative to install swift, bee bricks and bat boxes in Borough Council property and developments and install “hedgehog highways”?

