

# URBAN WILDLIFE in West Norfolk

Presentation by  
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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**

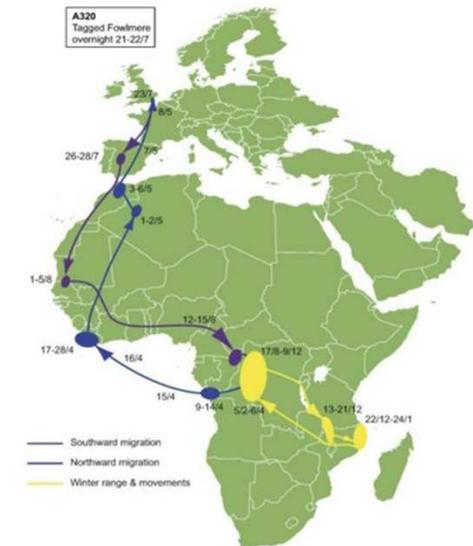
When a young swift leaves it's nest it **will not land again** until it returns to breed two years later

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”?**

