



Swifts in a Manor – a case study of bird and building conservation

Simon Barker MCIEEM CEnv, Peter Carty and
Rachael Freemantle

National Trust, Midlands Region



With acknowledgements to:

Dr Ross Jones MCIEEM, Star Ecology

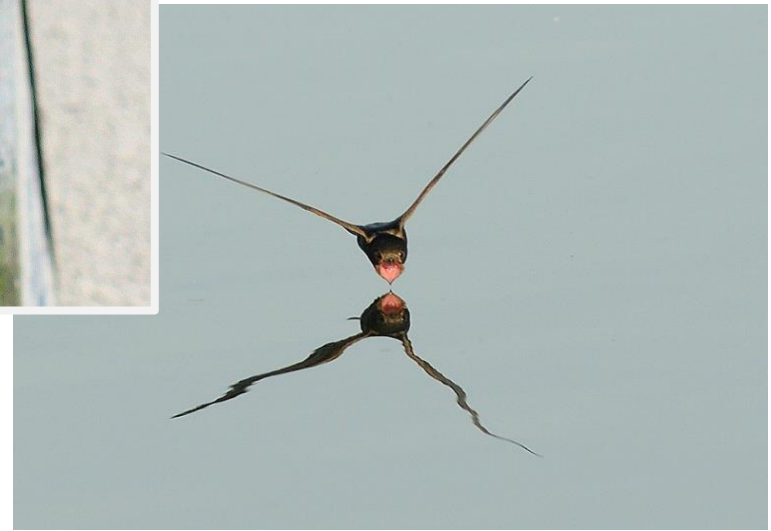
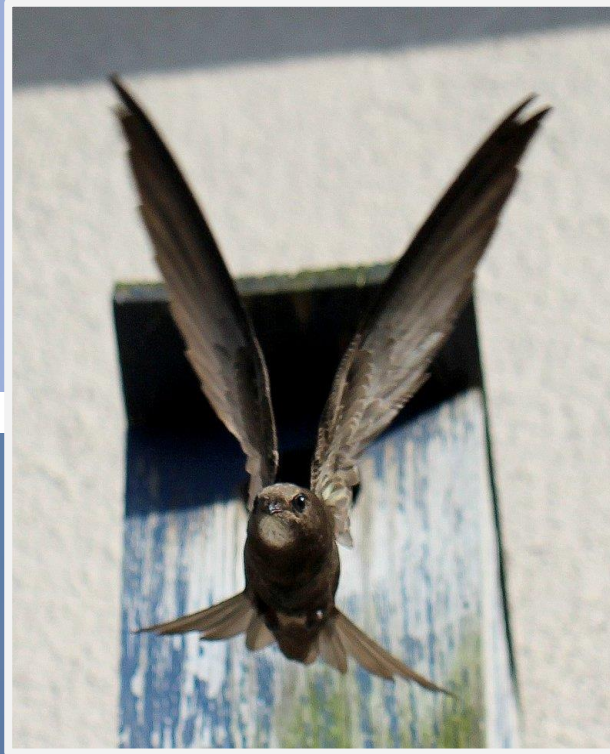
Edward Mayer, Swift Conservation

Shropshire Swift Group

Andrew Perry MCIEEM, National Trust

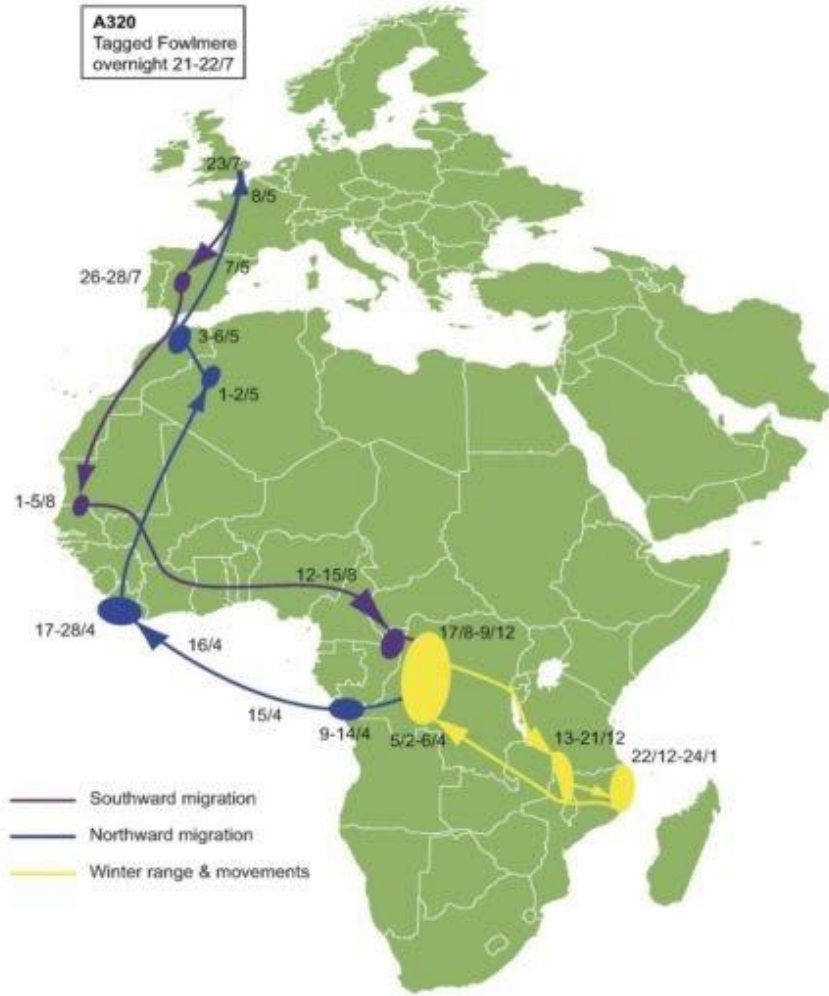
BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey

Amazing birds!



Superbly skilful flyers, Swifts drink, feed and mate in flight

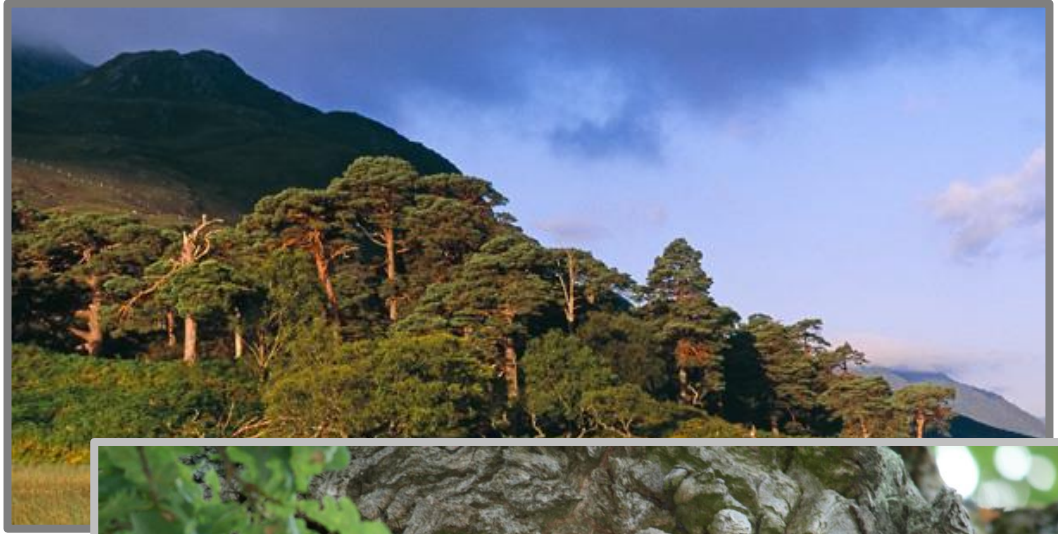
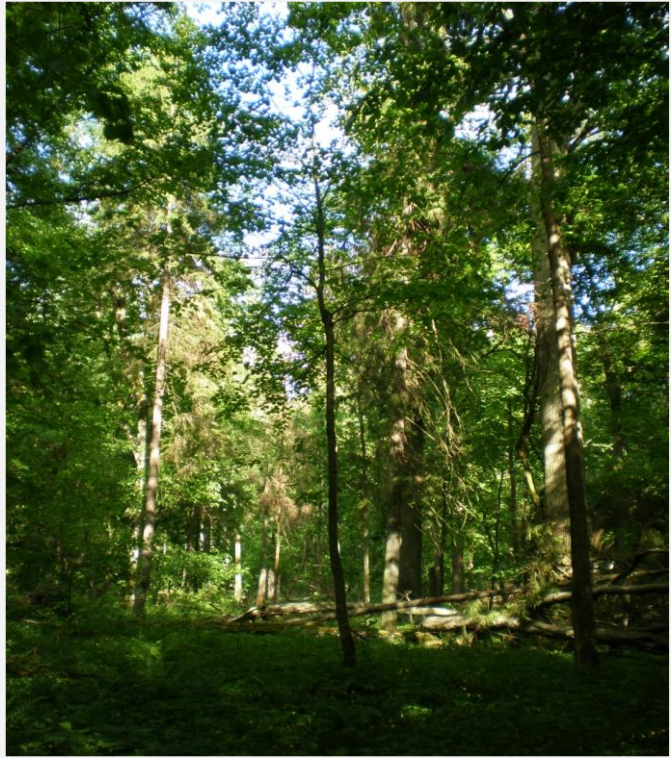
Living an incredible life



**always flying, except when nesting
winter in Africa
summer in Europe & Asia
faithful to their mates and nests
slow breeders – have long lives
suffer little predation but in decline
famous for their “screaming parties”
respond to other Swifts’ calls**

**Only in the past few years have we
discovered Swifts’ migration routes
by using data loggers**

They used to nest in holes in trees ...



Poland, Scotland, Sweden – where a very few Swifts still nest in woodpecker holes in very old trees but all the rest are in our houses



Now they share our dwellings

Swifts depend on gaps in our older buildings for nest places



A house in London NW6



The Old Chantry House – Henley on Thames

The main problem - Exclusion

**10% of pre-1919
houses can provide
nesting space**

**7% of 1919-1944
houses can provide
nesting space**

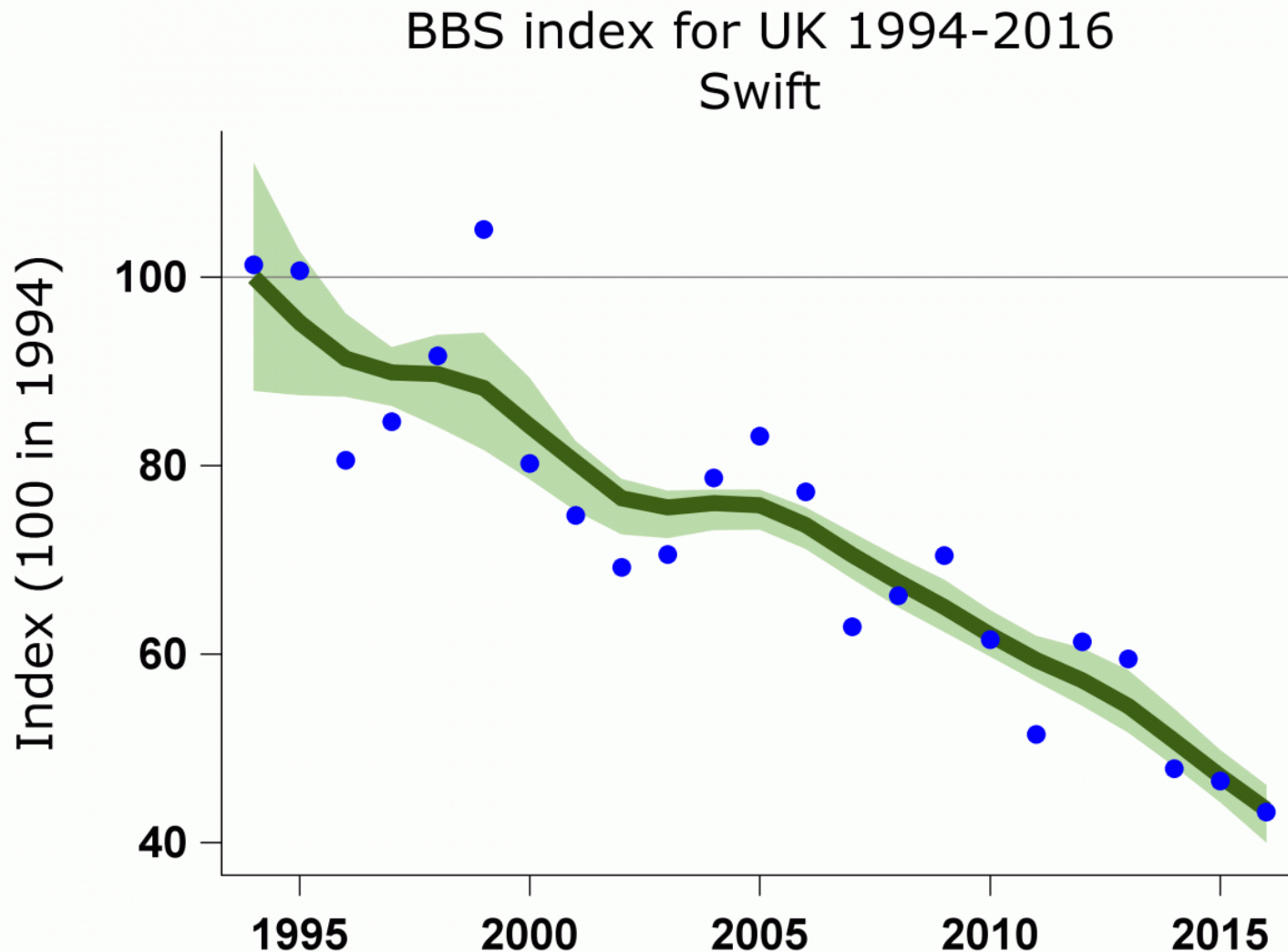
**1.4% of post-1944
houses can provide
nesting space***

**0.0% of post-2000
houses can provide
nesting space?**

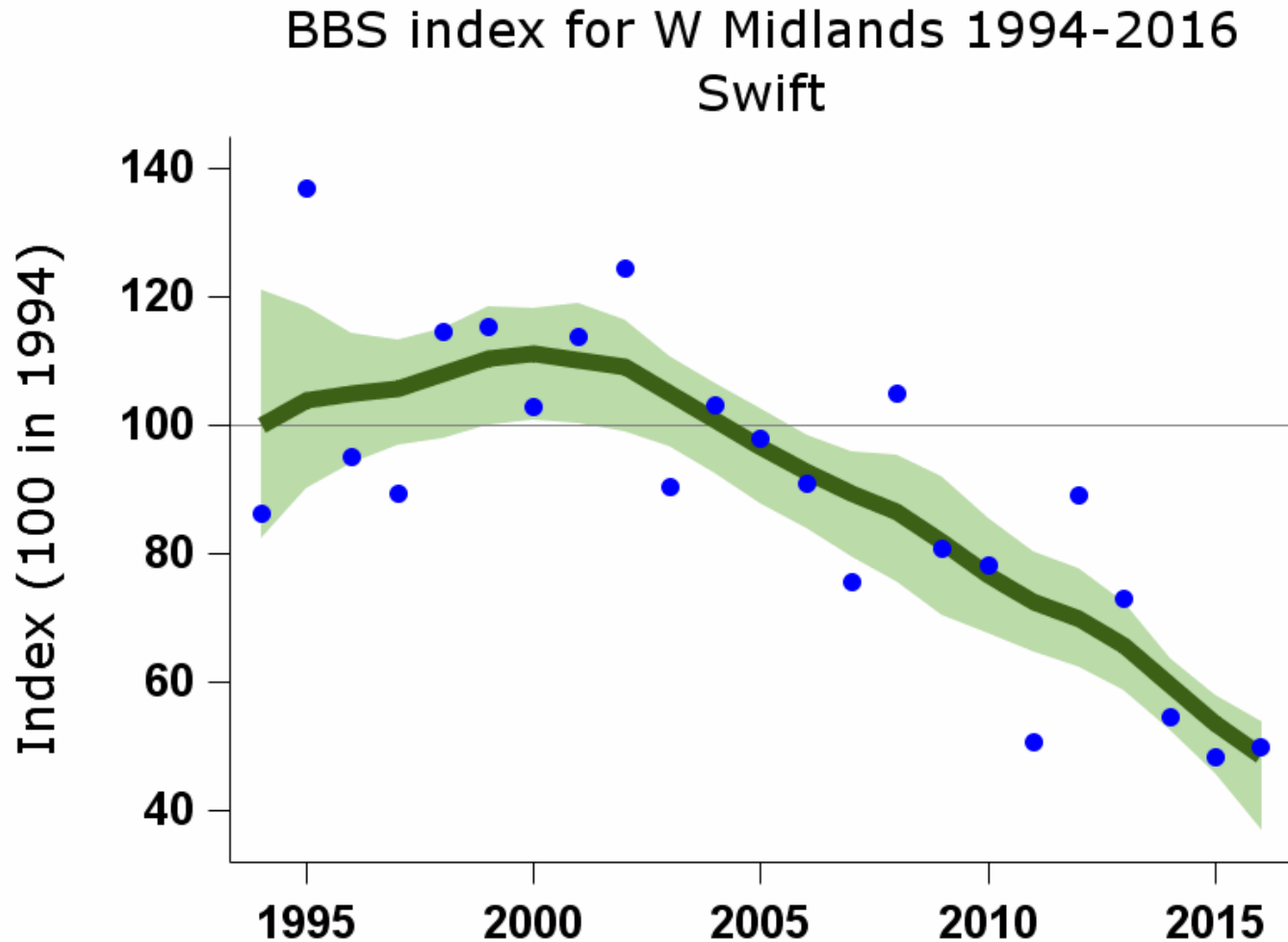


* "Homes for Birds" British Birds November 2002

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/latest-results/trend-graphs>



<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/latest-results/trend-graphs>



Trends 1995-2015 as measured by BBS

- UK -51%
- England -50%
- Scotland -57%
- Wales -59%
- **hence Swifts are an amber listed species of conservation concern**

New Build Housing Association



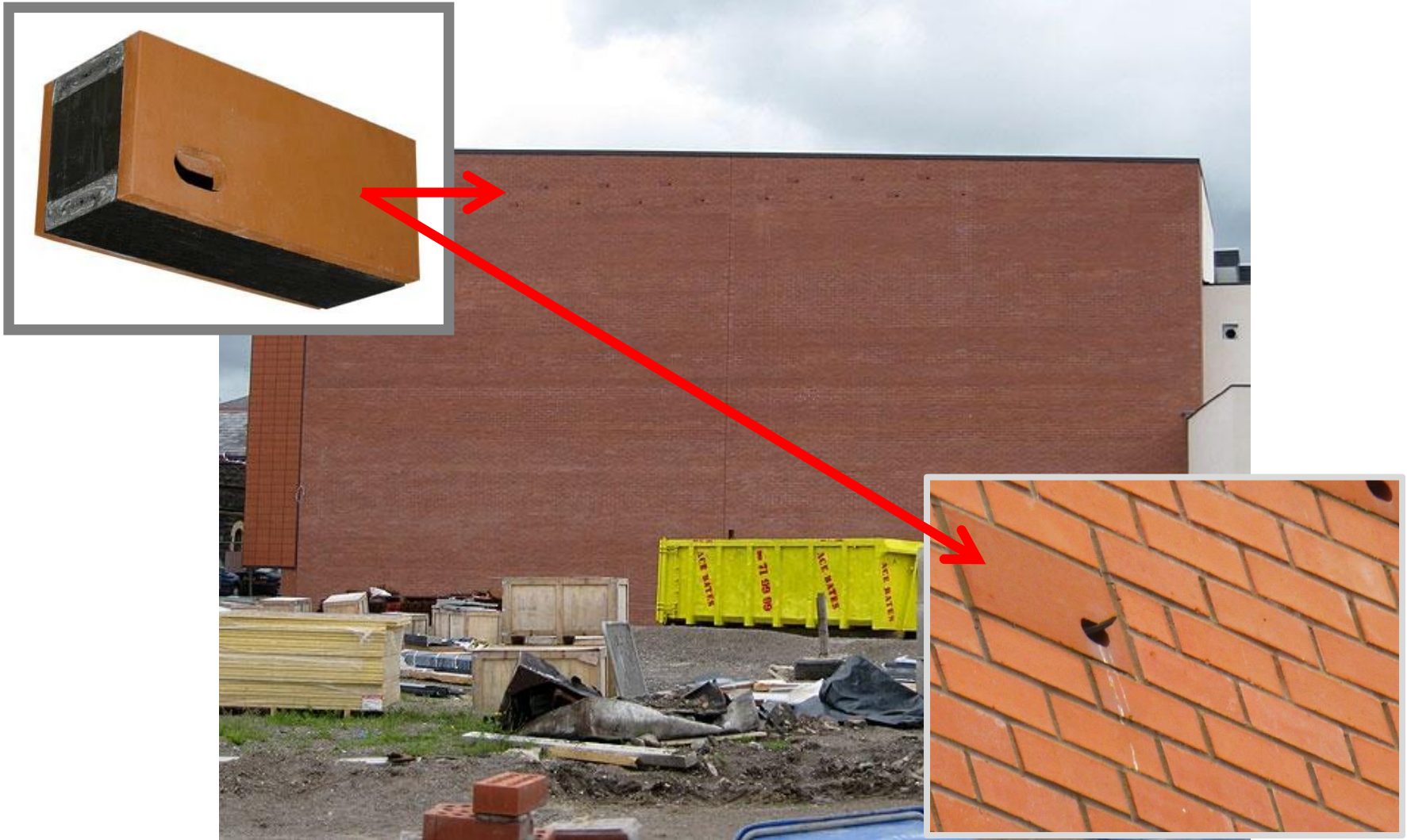
**Commercial
“Swift Bricks”
are the long-
term solution**

**Just insert
into suitable
walls**

**No
maintenance
needed**

Schwegler lightweight “Swift Bricks” installed in new housing by Derby Homes

New Build Public Library



Ibstock Swift Bricks successfully installed in Antrim Public Library

Liverpool's Everyman Theatre

Winner of the Stirling Prize 2014





The National Trust Act 1907

- **The National Trust shall be established for the purpose of promoting the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest and as regards lands for the preservation ... of their natural aspect, features and animal and plant life**



Wilderhope Manor front elevation showing location of Swift nests; photo by Dr Ross Jones, Star Ecology







Wilderhope Manor Phase 2 roof repairs 2014/15







HSE

Health and Safety Executive

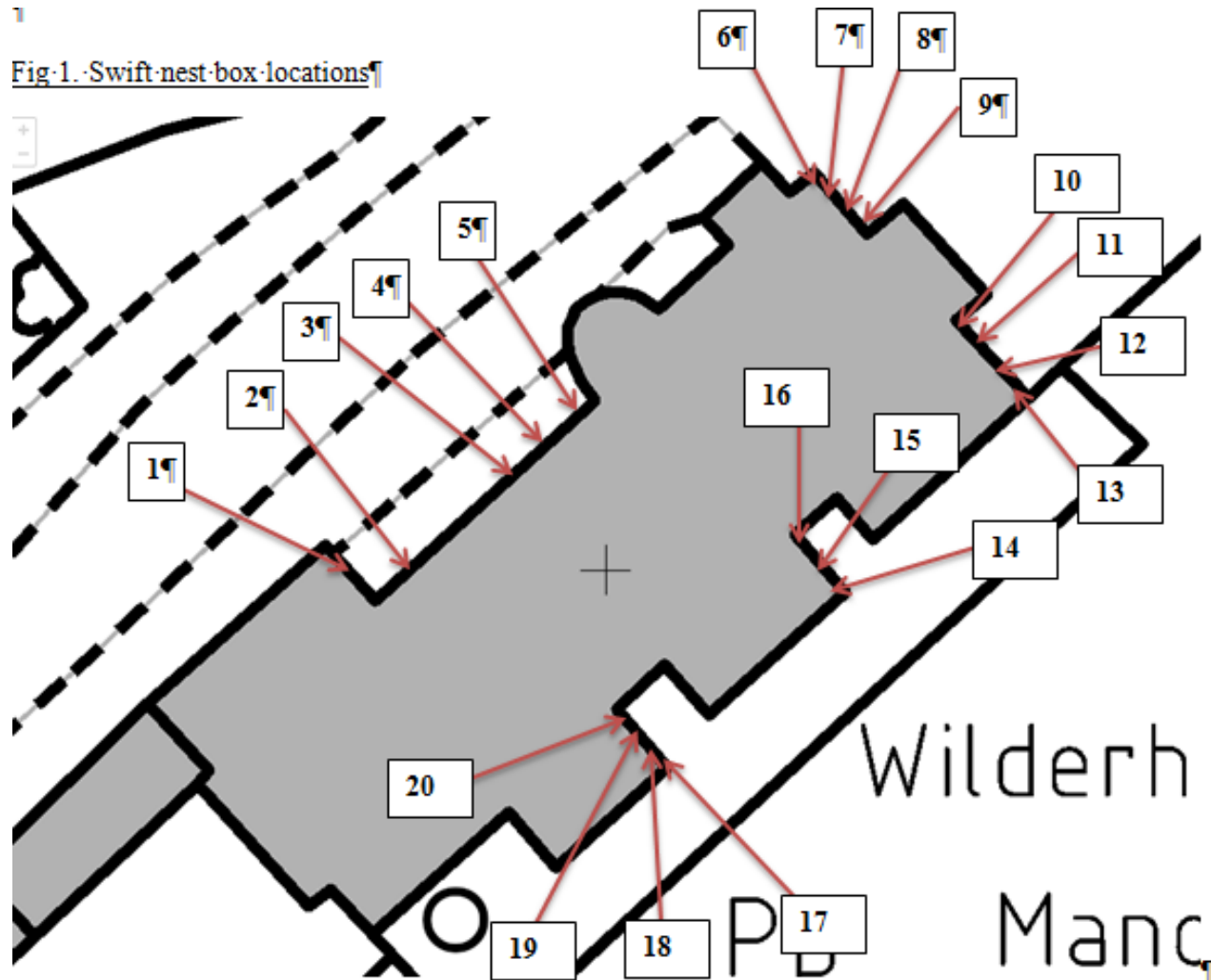








Nest box locations



Wilderhope Manor NE elevation showing Swift nest sites pre and post re- roofing works; photos by Dr Ross Jones, Star Ecology



2012



2015



Please Help Swifts!



For advice, information, designs & supplies - see

www.swift-conservation.org