

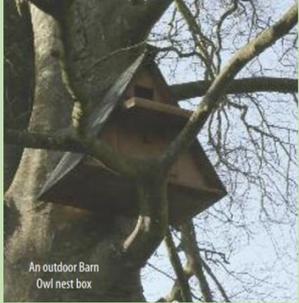
## Appendix IX: Actions to help birds

### Bird Nest Boxes:

Ideally have a range of nest boxes to suit different species of birds. Bird boxes can have different sized openings to suit different birds e.g. Blackbirds like open fronted boxes, Finches like small openings etc.

Bird Boxes should be made following best practice design:

[Build a Nest Box for Birds and Biodiversity in Your Garden This Spring - BirdWatch Ireland](#)

Bird Boxes:	Specialist boxes:
	 <p>An outdoor Barn Owl nest box</p>
	
Swift nest box	GMIT Swift nest box

Different sized openings for different species of bird.

Holes: Bluetit, Coalitit, Tree Sparrow

Open front: Blackbird, Wren, Robin

Place 2-4m off ground, not higher.

Open fronted lower than 2m but in dense vegetation

Leave for 1-2 years before moving if not used, as often used at night in winter

Never move in breeding season

Extract on bird boxes from presentation given by M. Stack

### Swift Nesting Boxes:

Swifts are 'Birds of Conservation Concern' Red Listed species in Ireland (Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland - BirdWatch Ireland). This means that they have High Conservation Concern. Our Irish bird species are declining at an alarming rate, with a 46% increase in Red listed species (Irish Birds 2008 (birdwatchireland.ie)). Swifts travel from Africa to Ireland in April and remain until September to breed. They hatch their chicks in small recesses of old buildings. They are very nest faithful and often they return to Ireland to find their old building renovated or knocked down and they are without a nest site. They remain on the wing to feed and even sleep! They do not perch on wires as their claws can only perch vertically.

There is a concerted effort to help these declining birds in Ireland by putting in Swift nest boxes on buildings. These can either be added outside an existing building or 'swift bricks' can be incorporated into the building (<https://birdwatchireland.ie/publications/saving-swifts-guide/>)

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It is advisable to put up about 6 nests at a time (BirdWatch Ireland, *pers. comm.*). Ideally use woodcrete or plastic designs as wooden boxes deteriorate and these are very nest faithful birds thus may not adapt to a replacement box. T

Groups can participate in the All Ireland Swift Survey and submit records:

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/swift-surveys/>

<http://www.swiftconservation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Survey-Guidelines-2019.pdf>



*Swift nest box placed on outside of building under eaves*



*An integrated Swift nesting box in a building*



*Integrating a Swift nest box into a building*

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### House Martin Nests:

The House Martin constructs a nest out of mud under the eaves of buildings. It catches insects in flight. It raises 2 to 3 broods of chicks a year, sometimes as late as October. It arrives from Africa in mid-March and departs again in late September. The House Martin returns to the same nest every year therefore it is advisable that they are made from a durable design. The House Martin is Amber listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland list, that means it has medium conservation concern.



*House martin nests under eaves of house.*

It is very difficult to make house martin nests that do not disintegrate therefore it is advisable that these are bought from a reputable source e.g. <https://birdwatchireland.ie/product/house-martin-double-nestbox/>

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### Bird Feeders:

Erect bird feeders using different kinds of food to attract different kinds of birds e.g. Niger Seed attracts Goldfinches, Sunflower Hearts attract finches and Bluetits, Peanuts are good for all, Fat is enjoyed by Wood Dove.



*Extract from presentation on Actions for Birds by M. Stack*

### Ground nesting birds:

You can try to create habitat for ground nesting birds e.g. Ringed Plover, Arctic or Common Tern. Dublin Bay historically had ground nesting birds nesting on its beaches but due to increased disturbance, these are now mostly restricted to protected reserves of protected nest sites.



a

*a: Ringed Plover eggs on beach, May. 2021. Photo V. Synnot.*



b

*b: Newly hatched Tern chick on gravel substrate on Dublin Port platform (Photo H. Boland, 2019)*

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Due to possibilities of disturbance by dogs, humans, rats and foxes, it is best to recreate this shingle ground nesting habitat up high.

Creating a Biodiverse Brown Roofs offer one possibility for this.

This is a flat roof with a thin layer of gravel. It could attract ground nesting Tern bird species to the roof which would fit in well with Dublin Bay Biosphere objectives (<https://www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie/>). Common Terns and Arctic Terns are ground nesting and Dublin Port has built special platforms in Dublin Bay for these birds to nest. In 2018, Tern nests were recorded at these sites.

The Dublin Port tern nesting platform uses wooden structures that allow cover for chicks from both predators and inclement weather. The same could be installed on a flat roof.

Common Terns come from Africa every year and Arctic Terns from Antarctica. The enhancements to the flat floating platforms in Dublin Port would be the same as used on any Biodiverse Brown Roof; that is; gravel or shingle substrate, barriers around the edge to prevent chicks from falling over and the flat surface divided into wooden compartments.

Small plastic tubes nailed to the dividing boards can also provide protection to the chicks.



*Wooden edging and wooden 'roofs' and plastic tubes for shelter for Terns and their chicks at Dublin Port*