

# Swallow

Hirundo rustica



## What to look for

Swooping graceful flight on long wings with long, forked tail

Autumn juveniles have shorter tail streamers

At rest look for cream underside and dark red throat and forehead (more of a rusty-buff colour in juveniles)



Call is a cheerful 'vit vit' in flight and a rapid twittering song

## Where found

Open country, usually near water and houses

It builds its nest on ledges, beams and joists in sheds and outbuildings

Gathers in restless flocks in autumn on telephone wires and with martins over marshes and reedbeds

## When to look

A summer visitor from April

One of the latest summer visitors to return to Africa

Most depart by late September

### Did you know?

Until the late 19th century, swallows were thought to hibernate under water

Swallows often nested in chimneys before the advent of central heating

They drink by skimming low over lakes or rivers and scooping up water with their open beaks

One swallow was recorded as having flown 12,000 kilometres from Johannesburg to Russia in just 34 days

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