

# Tipperary Swift Survey 2018



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## 1 Introduction

The Common Swift (*Apus apus*) is perhaps the most iconic and intriguing of our urban bird species. It is a summer migrant that breeds throughout Europe and much of Asia, and winters in southern Africa. In recent decades, Swift numbers have been in decline throughout many parts of their range, giving much cause for concern. In Ireland, the recent Bird Atlas 2007-11 shows there has been a 26% loss in range since 1970 and a severe decline in abundance since 1990 (Balmer et al. 2013), while the latest Countryside Bird Survey data show an alarming 39% decline between 2008 and 2013 (Crowe et al. 2014). As a result, Swift is now of conservation concern in Ireland and is Amber-listed (Colhoun et al. 2013).



**Figure 1:** Swift leaving nest situated behind the guttering of this house on the River Suir in Cahir (Swift in between two second story windows with blue shutters).

Throughout most of its breeding range, the Swift nests in cavities in walls or under eaves of houses and old buildings. Because of this, they are a well-known bird species in urban centres, particularly cities and towns. Based on data from existing surveys, it is known that Swifts nest in several Co. Tipperary towns, including Clonmel, Tipperary Town and Cahir. However, anecdotally it is thought that numbers locally are in decline, mirroring the national and international trends. Reasons for the decline of Swifts are not fully understood, but it is thought the loss of available nest sites due to renovations of old buildings and modern building techniques restrict the availability of nesting cavities is a significant factor (Concern for Swifts 2013)

It has been documented that Swifts will nest in artificial nest boxes, thus allowing for populations to be maintained, notably where renovations to buildings have reduced nest site availability. Swifts are long-lived and faithful to their nest sites from year to year, and it is known that individual pair will not readily move to a newly provided colony. Newly available sites are most likely to be occupied by new pairs if they are attracted to the area by other birds. Therefore, it is essential that any provision and placement of alternative nest sites must be guided by information on where Swifts are currently nesting.

The Tipperary Swift Survey acts to quantify the level of Swift nesting activity across the county. The survey work will highlight areas where nesting Swift populations are found and in need of direct and immediate help. The survey will identify to site level the largest and most important Swift nesting sites that act as source populations within the county and further afield. These sites once identified need to be treated with the upmost sensitivity during any renovation or redevelopment to ensure existing Swift nest sites are retained. The survey team will make special effort to include local community groups and residents in the project, so they become knowledgeable about Swifts in their respective localities and in turn take increased responsibility in the future conservation and protection of Swifts in their county.

## 2 Project Objectives

### Aim:

To undertake a detailed survey of Swifts in towns and villages across Co. Tipperary to establish a picture of the distribution of nesting Swifts in the county. The data collected will allow planners and decision makers to effectively manage Swifts at site level, helping to conserve this important part of Tipperary's urban heritage.

### Objectives:

- Carry out a survey of Swifts in Co. Tipperary towns and villages to locate nesting colonies.
- Engage volunteers, community groups and local people to take part in Swift survey work.
- Encourage the development of Swift projects in towns and villages and provide training and advice to local groups and communities for the implementation of conservation projects.



**Figure 2:** Cashel Tidy Towns Group and residents pictured during an evening Swift Survey with Will Hayes of BirdWatch Ireland.

### 3 Methodology

A total of 86 towns and villages in Co. Tipperary were identified for Swift survey work. Of this number, 16 towns were ranked as 'High Priority' for survey work. The remaining 70 towns ranged as 'Lower Priority'. The 'High Priority' towns were selected based on several criteria including known presence of nesting Swifts, the town size and the suitability of buildings for nesting Swifts in the town. 'Lower Priority' towns were those where there are no records of Swifts and smaller town size. Town size was estimated based on satellite imagery analysis.



**Figure 3:** Towns and villages (blue icons) selected for the 2018 Co. Tipperary (highlighted in pink) Swift Survey (Google Maps 2018).

A total of 45 survey days were scheduled to adequately survey all the towns and villages in Co. Tipperary. Based on our knowledge of Swift distributions in the county and the known presence of nesting pairs in specific towns, it was possible to calculate that 25 days were required to survey the 'High Priority' towns and 20 days for the 'Lower Priority' towns. The number of survey days is weighted toward the larger towns, where more time was needed to identify the location of colonies and where possible, the specific buildings used by the Swifts. For the 'Lower Priority' towns/villages, three to four towns/villages were surveyed per day, allowing for all 70 towns/villages to be surveyed in 20 days.

The survey work took place from early May to early August 2018. Survey visits were carried out during fine weather to increase chances of encountering Swifts. Survey visits were carried out before 11am and after 6pm where possible to maximise encountering peak Swift activity. A standardised survey form was designed to capture survey location, date, time, weather conditions and Swift activity. (See Appendix 2) Details of Swift nest locations were also recorded, information on location, building type, site of nest entrance, number of nests present, and photos of each site were taken.

This project also aimed to engage volunteers and local community groups to take part in the survey work, developing a local network of Swift volunteers and encouraging the development of local Swift projects in towns and villages across the county. At the beginning and throughout the project, contact was made with local groups (particularly Tidy Towns Groups) and volunteers. They were invited to take part in the Swift survey of their local town/village. This provided them with the opportunity to avail of survey training and advice, while also helping to reduce the overall cost of this project.

Survey data from all locations was entered to Microsoft Excel and mapped in ArcGIS Online. All confirmed nest sites are photographed and included in the [Site Based Results](#) section of this report. Yellow arrows or circles were added to each nest site image to illustrate the exact location of the Swift nests.



## 5 Citizen Science

A network of volunteers was established to help with survey work and links were developed with Tidy Towns Groups across the county.

Input from local volunteers was collected through the ArcGIS Online Mapping Application and bulk records were accepted in Excel format and integrated online. Records of Swift sightings/nests were also sent by email to BirdWatch Ireland and details of the records entered to the online platform.

Regular contact and liaison with local groups was made throughout the project to support on the ground citizen science efforts and to promote the survey and follow up actions locally.

Active effort was made to meet with local groups to recruit new citizen science contributions, this was supported by awareness raising through social media platforms and local media coverage (print and broadcast).



**Figure 5:** Cahir Tidy Towns group attending a Swift Walk with Will Hayes of Birdwatch (Photo by Will Hayes).

## 6 Results

Overall the Tipperary Swift Survey 2018 identified 345 Swifts (peak count of all areas combined) and confirmed 275 nests. A total of 86 towns/villages in Co. Tipperary were surveyed for this project. Of the 86 towns/villages Swifts were identified in 31, with nesting sites confirmed in 24 of these. These results provide a baseline figure from which we can measure future changes of Swift distribution and densities in the county. These findings are concentrated around 122 buildings/structures which are documented with photographs and plotted in ArcGIS Online. In total BirdWatch Ireland has conducted 45 field survey days and 26 days of office work to complete and coordinate the survey work and to collate the results. During this time, 12 Tidy Town Groups/local groups took part in this project. Overall results of the Tipperary Swift Survey 2018 are presented in Table 1. Towns are presented from the town with the highest number of confirmed nests to the lowest in the site-based results section.



**Figure 6** : Swifts entering and exiting nests in Cahir (Photo by Kevin Collins).

## 6.1 Survey Visits

An initial visit to each of the 86 Tipperary towns and villages was completed to survey for the presence of Swifts. In towns or villages where Swifts were recorded as present (in flight or at nest sites) on first visits, subsequent surveys were completed to confirm breeding and identify exact nest site locations.

The highest number of Swift nests were recorded in Clonmel, where 76 nests were found (**Table 1**). This was followed by 27 nests in Cashel and Tipperary Town, 26 in Nenagh and the remaining 20 towns reporting between 1 and 17 nests. The largest peak count (maximum number of birds observed during a single visit) of Swifts was recorded in Clonmel – 48 Swifts.

**Table 1:** List and important information for all towns surveyed during the 2018 Tipperary Swift Survey

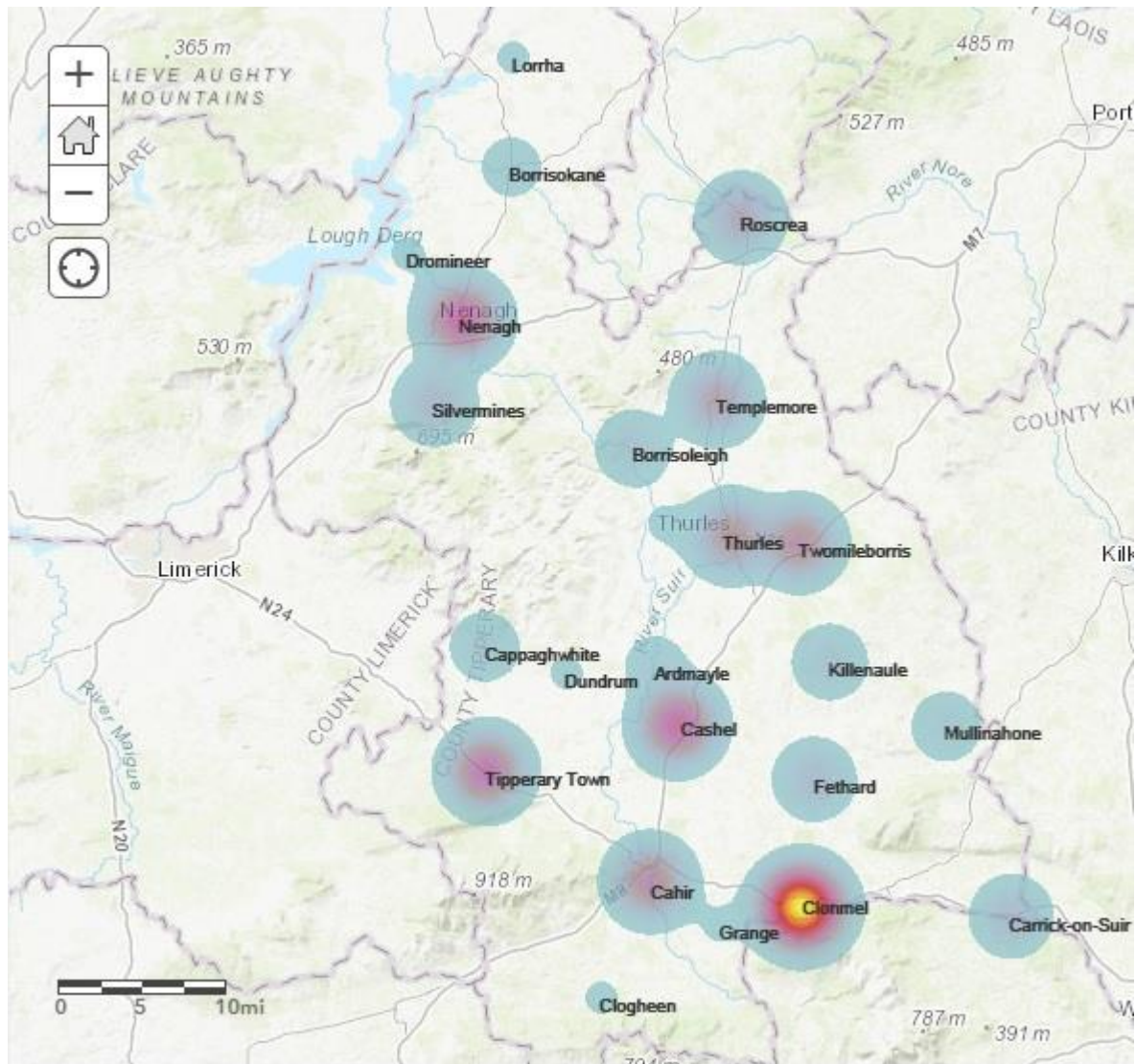
Town	No. of times surveyed	Swifts present	Peak number of Swifts	Nests present	Number of nests
Clonmel	3	Yes	48	Yes	76
Tipperary	3	Yes	20	Yes	29
Cashel	1	Yes	26	Yes	27
Nenagh	2	Yes	32	Yes	27
Cahir	2	Yes	26	Yes	18
Twomileborris	1	Yes	22	Yes	17
Thurles	2	Yes	13	Yes	15
Templemore	2	Yes	26	Yes	12
Roscrea	1	Yes	9	Yes	11
Silvermines	2	Yes	14	Yes	7
Carrick-on-Suir	1	Yes	11	Yes	6
Fethard	1	Yes	9	Yes	6
Killenaule	1	Yes	12	Yes	4
Borrisoleigh	2	Yes	10	Yes	4
Mullinahone	1	Yes	8	Yes	3
Cappawhite	2	Yes	7	Yes	3
Borrisokane	2	Yes	8	Yes	2
Ardmayle	1	Yes	5	Yes	2
Lorrha	1	Yes	7	Yes	1
Dromineer	1	Yes	4	Yes	1
Ballycahill	1	Yes	3	Yes	1
Dundrum	2	Yes	2	Yes	1
Grange	1	Yes	2	Yes	1
Clogheen	2	Yes	4	Yes	1
Holycross	1	Yes	3	Not found	
Loughmore	1	Yes	3	Not found	
Toomevara	1	Yes	3	Not found	
Puckaun	2	Yes	2	Not found	
Ballyporeen	1	Yes	2	Not found	
Ballyclerahan	1	Yes	2	Not found	
Ballycommon	1	Yes	1	Not found	

Cloughjordan	1	Yes	1	Not found	
Ardcroney	1	No		No	
Ballylooby	1	No		No	
Birdhill	2	No		No	
Bouladuff	1	No		No	
Burncourt	1	No		No	
Castleiney	1	No		No	
Clonmore	1	No		No	
Clonoulty	1	No		No	
Cullen	1	No		No	
Dolla	2	No		No	
Garrykennedy	1	No		No	
Horse and Jockey	1	No		No	
Killea	1	No		No	
Milestone	1	No		No	
Newport	2	No		No	
Newtown	1	No		No	
Portroe	1	No		No	
Rathcabbin	1	No		No	
Rossmore	1	No		No	
Templederry	1	No		No	
Upperchurch	1	No		No	
Donohill	1	No		No	
Drom	1	No		No	
Moycarkey	1	No		No	
Lisronagh	1	No		No	
New Birmingham	1	No		No	
Ahenny	1	No		No	
Grangemoekler	1	No		No	
Ninemilehouse	1	No		No	
Ballina	2	No		No	
Bansha	1	No		No	
Littleton	1	No		No	
Ardfinnan	1	No		No	
Ileigh	1	No		No	
Marlfield, Clonmel	1	No		No	
Emly	1	No		No	
Templetuohy	1	No		No	
Kilsheelan	1	No		No	
Aglish	1	No		No	
Ballinderry	1	No		No	
Ballingarry	1	No		No	
Coalbrook	1	No		No	
Dualla	1	No		No	

Golden	1	No		No	
New Inn	1	No		No	
Riverstown (near Birr)	1	No		No	
Rosegreen	1	No		No	
Terryglass	1	No		No	
Ballysheehan	1	No		No	
Bohernacrusha	1	No		No	
Gortnahoo	1	No		No	
Hollyford	1	No		No	
Rearcross	1	No		No	
<b>Total</b>			<u>345 Swifts</u>		<u>275 nests</u>

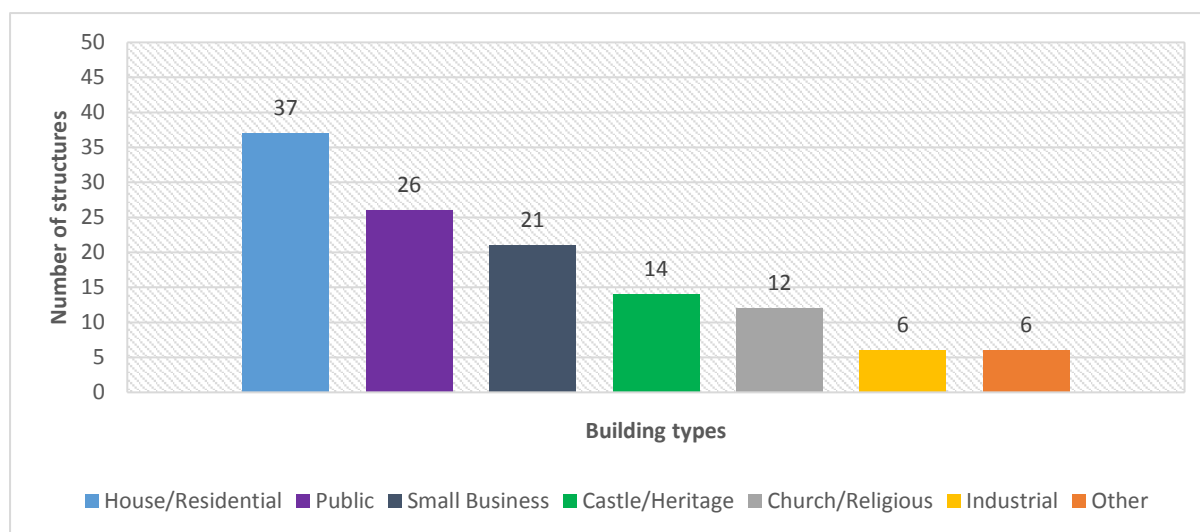
## 6.2 Swift Nests

Figure 7 shows the density of Swift nest sites across the towns/village of Co. Tipperary, low density (blue), average (red) and high density (yellow). Clonmel shows the highest density of Swift nests. Tipperary Town, Cashel, Nenagh and Cahir show medium to high densities of Swift nests.



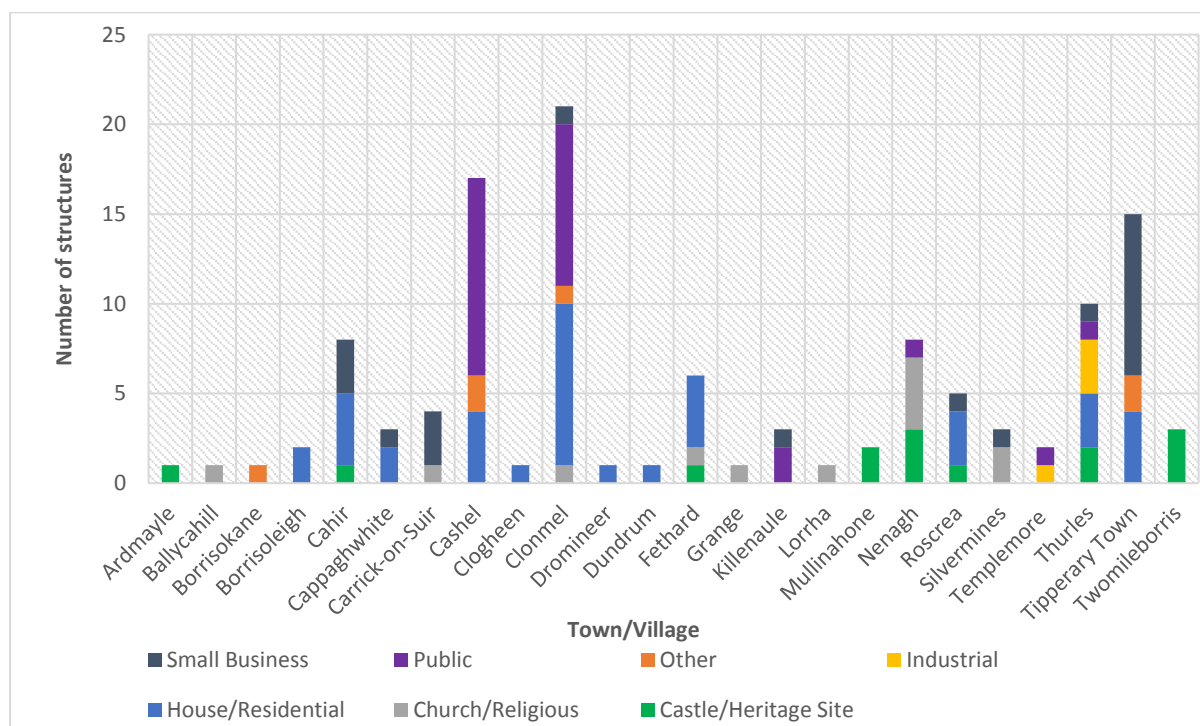
**Figure 7:** Heat map showing the densities of Swift nests across county Tipperary (ArcGIS (Online) ESRI, 2018)

The survey has identified a total of 275 Swift nest sites across the county.



**Figure 8:** Number of overall buildings/structures which are used by Swifts in Co. Tipperary.

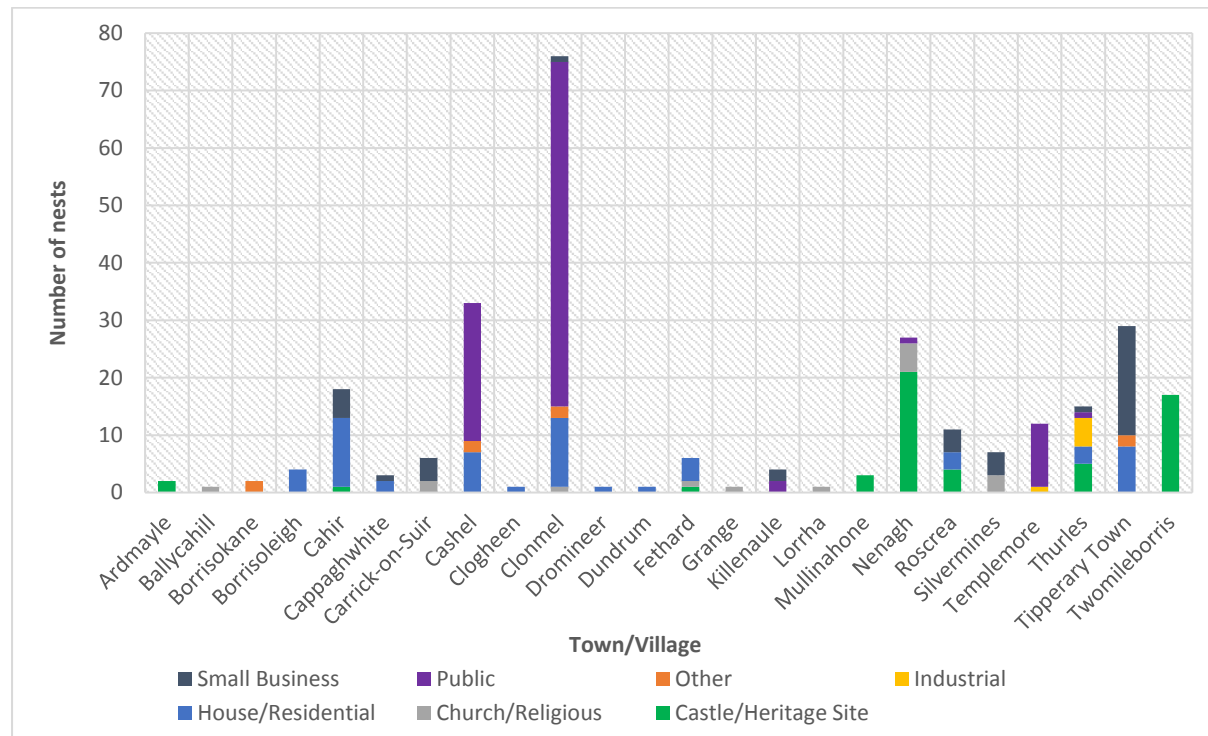
Swift colonies have been recorded in a total of 122 different buildings and structures across Co. Tipperary. A further breakdown of this figure is shown in **(Figure 8)**, with 37 houses, 26 public buildings, 21 small businesses, 14 castles/heritage sites, 12 churches, 6 industrial buildings and 6 other buildings/structures - consisting of abandoned buildings and ruins of houses. Public buildings consisted mainly of hospitals while small businesses included pubs, solicitors and funeral homes.



**Figure 9:** The number of structures that contained Swift nests in each town and village.

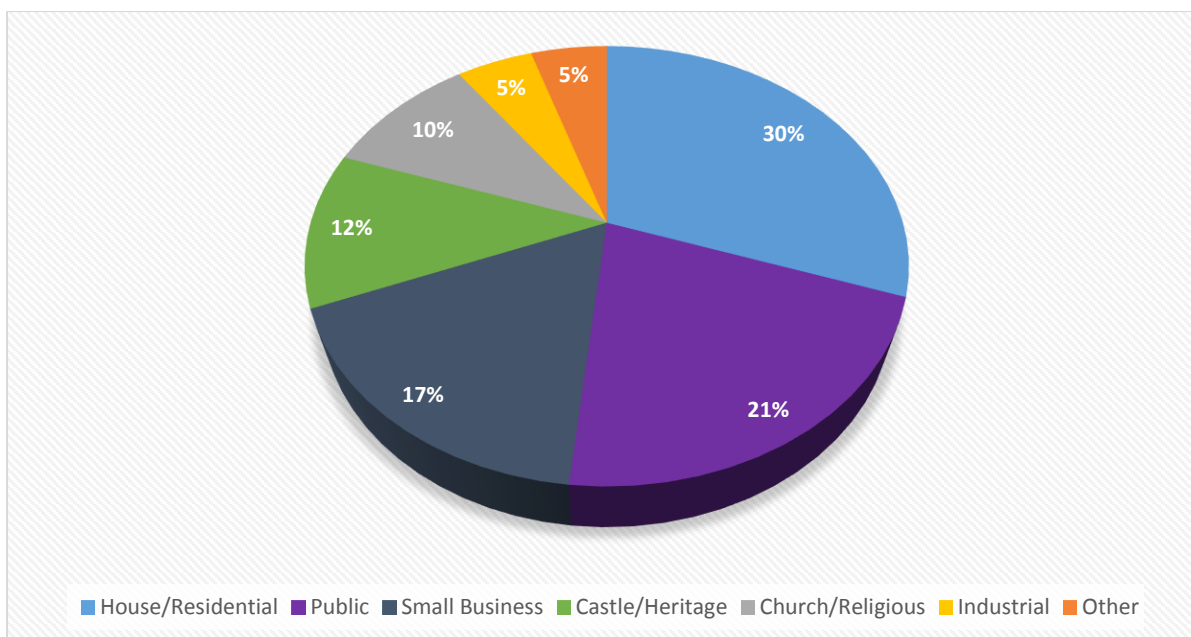
The types of buildings and structures that accommodate Swift colonies varied across the towns and villages of Tipperary **(Figure 9)**. The Clonmel and Cashel Swift colonies primarily occupied public and

residential buildings. The largest Swift colonies in both towns were found on the grounds of South Tipperary General Hospital (Clonmel) and St Patricks Hospital (Cashel). Tipperary Town had the highest number of small business that accommodates Swift colonies followed by Cahir and Carrick-On-Suir. Churches and heritage sites were the main locations for Swift colonies in Nenagh, and Twomileborris, while Thurles had the highest incidence of Swift colonies in industrial buildings.



**Figure 10:** Number of confirmed Swift nests in each town/village according to building type.

The number confirmed Swift nests in each town/village categorised by type of buildings occupied (**Figure 10**). In Clonmel 60 nests were identified in public buildings (South Tipperary General Hospital), comparable to the 24 nests found in public buildings in Cashel (St Patricks Hospital). In Nenagh 21 nests were found in the walls of Nenagh Castle, similar to the 17 nests that were found in the walls of a castle in Twomileborris. One-third of towns and villages had nests occurring in heritage sites/castles. Similarly, one-third of towns/villages also had nests occurring in churches or religious buildings.



**Figure 11:** Percentage of Swift nests per structure/building in Tipperary.

Overall 30% of Swift nests were found in houses/residential buildings, 21% in public buildings, 17% in small businesses, 12% in castles/heritage sites, 10% in churches/religious buildings, 5% in industrial buildings and 5% in other types of buildings (**Figure 11**).

The table below (**Table 2**) shows the total county percentage of the proportion of Swift nests found per town/village. Clonmel contains 21% of Tipperary's Swift nests, more than double any other town. The proportion of Swift nests in 13 towns ranges from 1-8%, while 10 towns have a less than 1% of Tipperary's overall nest count (275 nests).

**Table 2:** Percentage of the total confirmed Swift nests by town/village

Town/Village	% of county Swift nests	Town/Village	% of county Swift nests
Clonmel	21%	Killenaule	1%
Tipperary Town	8%	Borrisoleigh	1%
Cashel	7.5%	Mullinahone	<1%
Nenagh	7.5%	Cappawhite	<1%
Cahir	5%	Borrisokane	<1%
Twomileborris	4.5%	Ardmayle	<1%
Thurles	4%	Lorrha	<1%
Templemore	3.5%	Dromineer	<1%
Roscrea	3%	Ballycahill	<1%
Silvermines	2%	Dundrum	<1%
Carrick-On-Suir	1.5%	Grange	<1%
Fethard	1.5%	Clogheen	<1%

## 7 Site Based Results

A total of 86 towns/villages in Co. Tipperary were surveyed for this project. Of the 86 locations, Swift nest sites were confirmed in 24.

Results of the Swift survey are represented below for individual towns and villages. Each location where Swifts were found is documented with photographs of the nest sites, with the approximate location of the nest entrance marked on each photo (yellow circles/arrows). Peak numbers of Swifts observed flying at each location is also given. Peak number of Swifts observed relates to the highest number of Swifts counted in a town or village at any one time during survey work.

To view the online map and nest site locations of Swifts for each town/village surveyed use the following link:

<https://bwi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=81ddc38cfcde40ffab699be638ee5b20>

## 7.1 Clonmel



Clonmel is Tipperary's largest town. It had a population of 17,140 people according to the 2016 census. Ten Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following three survey visits, a total of 76 nesting sites were confirmed in Clonmel, with a peak count of 48 Swifts recorded. This is the largest number of nests found in a town during the 2018 survey. Over half of these nests were located on the grounds of the South Tipperary General Hospital. One colony, at the Community Care Centre, is one of the largest known Swift colonies in Ireland. This site may prove to be very important for protecting Swift populations in Clonmel for years to come if appropriately managed.



**Figure 12:** Confirmed nests in Clonmel represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 3:** List of all confirmed nests in Clonmel.

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b, 1c, 1d	Cardiac Rehab Unit, South Tipperary General Hospital	21	20	Public
2a, 2b, 2c	Community Care Centre, South Tipperary General Hospital	48	40	Public
3	1 Anne Street	6	1	House
4	24 Anne Street	6	2	House
5	4 Ard Fatima	2	1	House
6	38 Ard Fatima	6	2	House
7	40 & 41 Ard Fatima	6	2	House
8	7 Queen Street	4	1	House
9	31 Irish Street	11	1	House
10	St Marys Catholic Church	10	1	Church
11	Clonmel Army Barracks	12	2	Other
12	Irishtown – Aside Noreen’s Salon	11	1	House
13	Paddy Power – O’Connell Street	2	1	Business
14	45 O’Connell Street	3	1	House









### Community engagement

- On May 21st a Swift Conservation Project 2018 information night was held at the Hayes' Hotel in Thurles. Various community groups from Thurles, Nenagh, Templemore, Cashel and Clonmel were in attendance. This was followed by a Swift walk around the town.
- Provided an information session on Swift conservation and a demonstration on Swift survey techniques.
- Conducted Swift Surveys with Kevin Collins, a local resident and member of BirdWatch Ireland Tipperary Branch.
- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.



**Figure 13:** Kevin Collins of BirdWatch Ireland Tipperary Branch taking part in the Swift Survey 2018 in Clonmel.  
(Photo by Will Hayes).

## 7.2 Tipperary Town



Tipperary town is located in south-west Tipperary. It had a population of 4,979 according to the 2016 census. Three Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following three survey visits, it was confirmed Tipperary Town had the second highest number of identified Swift nesting sites in Tipperary at 29, with a peak count of 20 Swifts recorded. O'Brien Street and Church Street were areas of high swift activity with many of the nesting sites found in this area.



**Figure 14:** Confirmed nests in Tipperary Town represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 4:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Tipperary Town

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Station Road – Abandoned School	2	1	Other
2	O'Brien St – Devlin Solicitors	7	2	Business
3	Main St – Cross Pharmacy	11	2	Business
4	12 Church t	8	1	House
5	4 & 6 O'Connell Road	9	3	House
6	38 Bank Place	7	1	Business
7	Times Hotel	7	2	Business
8	Back of 3 & 4 Church St	12	2	House
9	18 Church St	12	3	Business
10	1 John St	12	1	Other
11	3 & 4 Church St	9	2	House
12	O'Brien St – Whelans Funeral Home	20	1	Business
13	O'Brien St – Blackburns Hardware	20	1	Business
14	O'Brien St – Carew & Co	20	5	Business
15	O'Brien St – Beside Vaughans Bar	16	2	House







#### Community engagement:

- Contacted local groups to provide inform on the survey and encouraged their participation.
- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.

### 7.3 Cashel



Cashel is an ancient town and was recorded to have a population of over 4,422 in the 2011 census. Previous to the survey, BirdWatch Ireland had some knowledge of Swift activity in Cashel due to work conducted for the OPW in recent years. One Swift sighting had also been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 27 nesting sites were identified in Cashel, with a peak count of 26 Swifts recorded. Two thirds of the identified nests were found on the grounds of St. Patricks Hospital. This site may prove to be very important for protecting Swift populations in Cashel for years to come if managed properly.



**Figure 15:** Confirmed nests in Cashel represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 5:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Cashel

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h, 1i,	St Patricks Hospital	26	18	Public
2	Dublin Road – Old School House	8	3	Other
3	6 Dean Ryan Terrace	6	1	House
4	8 Dean Ryan Terrace	6	1	House
5	Camas Road	5	2	House
6	Dublin Road – Old School House	10	1	Other
7	Friar Street Car Park	2	1	Other







### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Provided an information session on Swift conservation and a demonstration on Swift survey techniques, in collaboration with the Tidy Towns Group.
- Following the Swift Walk and nest identification training, members of the Cashel Tidy Towns confirmed 10 nesting sites across the town.

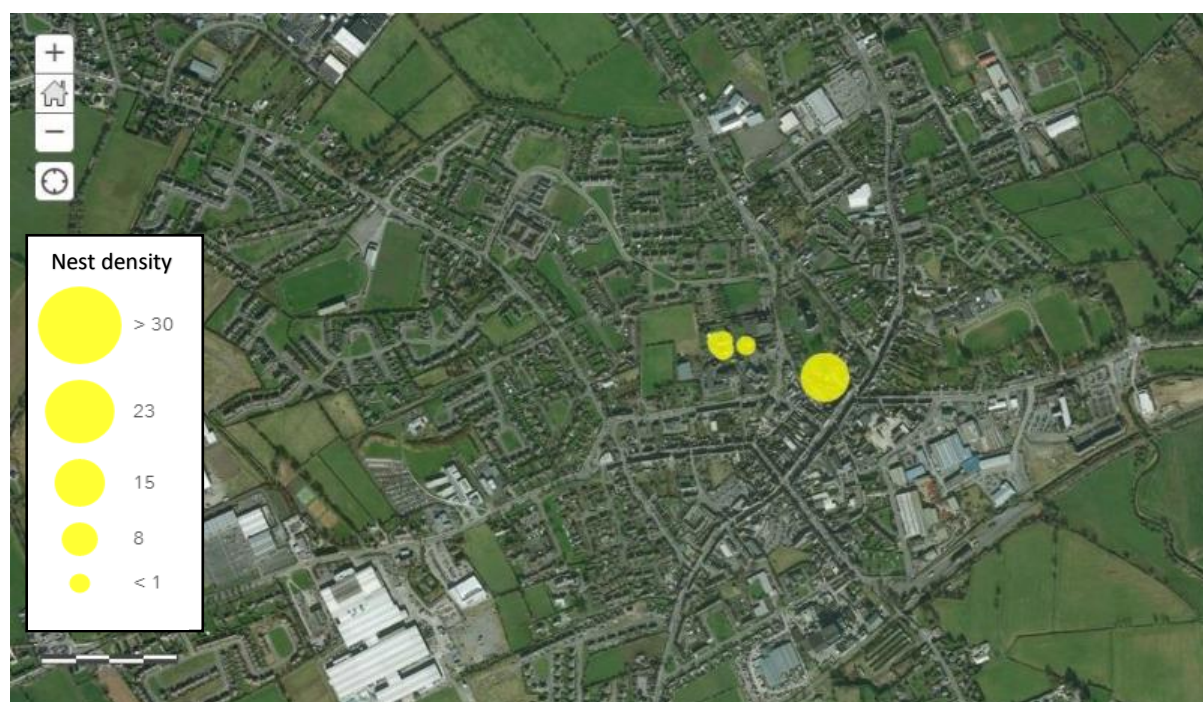


**Figure 16:** Cashel Tidy Towns taking part in the Swift Survey 2018(Photo by Will Hayes).

## 7.4 Nenagh



Nenagh is Tipperary's second largest town with a population of 8,968 according to the 2016 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits, 27 nesting sites were recorded in Nenagh, with a peak count of 32 Swifts recorded. The majority of identified nests occurring within gaps on the Nenagh Castles masonry. This site may prove to be very important for protecting Swift populations in Nenagh for years to come if managed properly.

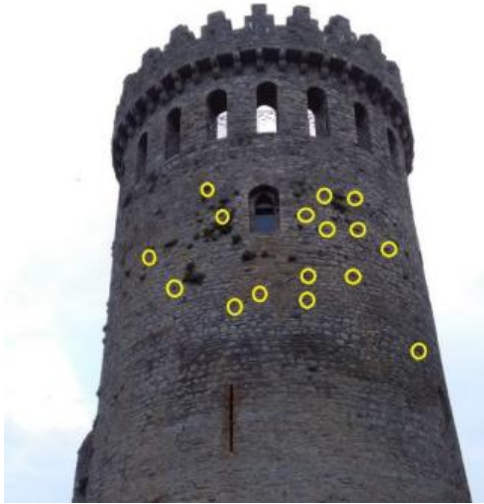


**Figure 17:** Confirmed nests in Nenagh represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 6:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Nenagh

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b, 1c	Nenagh Castle	32	22	Castle
2	Nenagh Heritage Centre	12	1	Public
3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	Sisters of Mercy Convent	14	4	Religious

1a



1b



1c



2





### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Delivered a talk on the project talk in collaboration with the Tidy Towns Group.
- Provided an information session on Swift conservation and a demonstration on Swift survey techniques, in collaboration with the Tidy Towns Group. The walk was focused around the Swift hotspots of Nenagh Castle and Sisters of Mercy Convent.
- A basic Swift Survey for visitors to Nenagh Castle this summer in collaboration with Tipperary County Council. Local nature enthusiast Jim McGuire made the survey sheet and compiled the results at the end of the season (see Appendices 3 & 4). This will be coordinated on an ongoing basis with Jim hoping to make a poster for the castle next year. The poster will hopefully encourage visitors to the castle identify any nests we may have missed on this year's survey.



**Figure 18:** *Nenagh locals and Tidy Towns Group taking part in the Swift Survey 2018 outside Nenagh Castle (Photo by Will Hayes).*

## 7.5 Cahir



Cahir is a large town situated in wouth west Tipperary. It has a population of 3, 593 according to the 2016 census. Six Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits to Cahir, 18 nest sites were identified, with a peak count of 26 Swifts recorded. The majority of nests found were in the area of Abbey Street.



**Figure 19:** Confirmed nests in Cahir represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 7:** List of all confirmed nests in Cahir

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Cahir Castle	3	1	Castle
2	Abbey Street – On the river	7	1	House
3	Abbey Street – Behind butchers	7	3	Business
4a, 4b, 4c	Lower Abbey Street	22	11	House
5	Castle Street – Back of Pubs	11	2	Business





#### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Provided an information session on Swift conservation and a demonstration on Swift survey techniques, in collaboration with Cahir Tidy Towns Group. The Swift walk focused around the Swift hotspot of Abbey Street.



**Figure 20:** Cahir Tidy Towns taking part in the Tipperary Swift Survey 2018 (Photo by Will Hayes).

## 7.6 Twomileborris



Twomileborris is a small village situated in east Tipperary. It had a population of 550 according to the 2006 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland before the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit to Twomileborris, 17 nest sites were identified, with a peak count of 22 Swifts recorded. All nests were located in the walls of the castle behind The Castle Country House B&B. This site may prove to be very important for protecting Swift populations in Templemore for years to come in managed properly.



**Figure 21:** Confirmed nests in Twomileborris represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 8:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Twomileborris

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b, 1c	The Castle Country House B&B.	22	17	Castle



#### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses
- Contacted The Castle Country House B&B to inform them on the many Swift nesting sites that are in the walls of the castle on their property.

## 7.7 Thurles



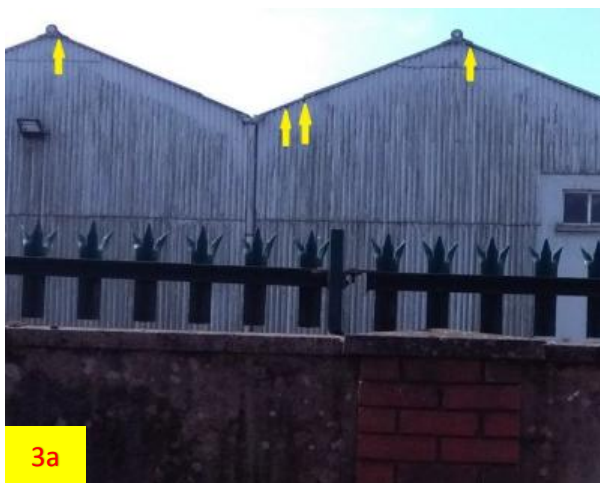
Thurles is a large town in east Tipperary. Thurles had a population of 7,933 according to the 2011 census. One Swift sighting in Thurles had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey visits. Following two survey visits, a total of 15 nesting sites were confirmed in Thurles, with a peak count of 13 Swifts recorded. Nests were found in various locations across the town.



**Figure 22:** Confirmed nests in Thurles represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 9:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Thurles

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b	Train Station – Iarnród Éireann	9	2	Business
2a, 2b	Black Castle	9	5	Castle
3a, 3b	Knorr Factory	11	5	Industrial
4	Sean Tracey Avenue	7	2	House
5	1 Park View Drive	4	1	House





#### Community Engagement:

- On May 9<sup>th</sup> a Tipperary Swift Survey 2018 information night was held at the Hayes' Hotel in Thurles. Various community groups from Templemore, Cashel and Thurles were in attendance. This was followed by a Swift walk around the town.
- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses



**Figure 23:** Ciarán O'Sullivan of Thurles Tidy Towns taking part in the Swift Survey 2018 (Photo by Will Hayes).

## 7.8 Templemore



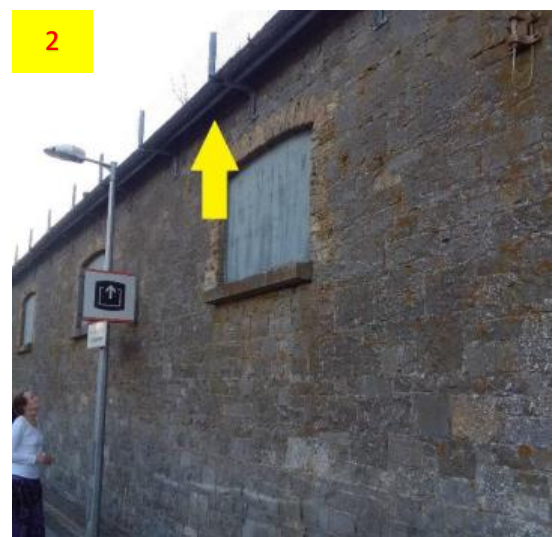
Templemore is a medium sized town in east Tipperary. It had a population of 1,943 according to the 2011 census. Five previous Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits, a total of 12 nesting sites were confirmed in Templemore, with a peak count of 26 Swifts recorded. The majority of these nesting sites were located on the Town Hall in the centre of Templemore. This site may prove to be very important for protecting Swift populations in Templemore for years to come if managed properly.



**Figure 24:** Confirmed nests in Templemore represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 10:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Templemore

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b	Templemore Town Hall	26	11	Public
2	Templemore Train Station	5	1	Public



#### Community engagement:

- Distributed Swift information leaflets to many small businesses across the town.
- In collaboration with a local zoologist, we conducted a Swift survey across the town of Templemore. Swift survey and nest identification techniques were taught throughout this survey.



**Figure 25:** Local zoologist Lela Tierney taking part in the Swift Survey 2018 in Templemore

*(Photo by Will Hayes).*

## 7.9 Roscrea



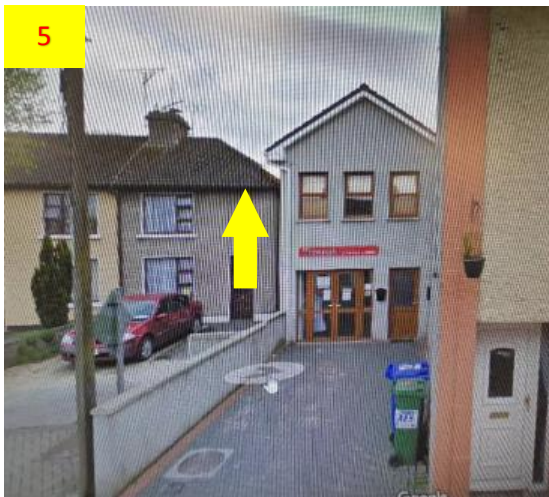
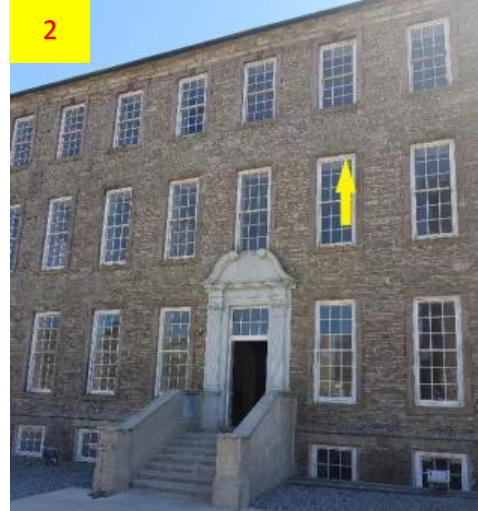
Roscrea is a large town located in North Tipperary. It had a population of 5,403 according to the 2011 census. Three previous Swift sightings in Roscrea had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits, a total of 11 Swift nesting sites were confirmed in Roscrea, with a peak count of 9 Swifts recorded. The nesting sites were distributed in various locations.



**Figure 26:** Confirmed nests in Roscrea represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 11:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Roscrea

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	21 Limerick Street	3	1	House
2	Damer House	3	4	Heritage Site
3	Limerick Street – Opposite no. 8	5	1	House
4	Oliver Douglas Hardware	6	4	Business
5	Limerick St. – Next to Threasa's	1	1	House



**Community Engagement:**

- Contacted local groups to inform them the survey was taking place and encouraged their participation

## 7.10 Silvermines



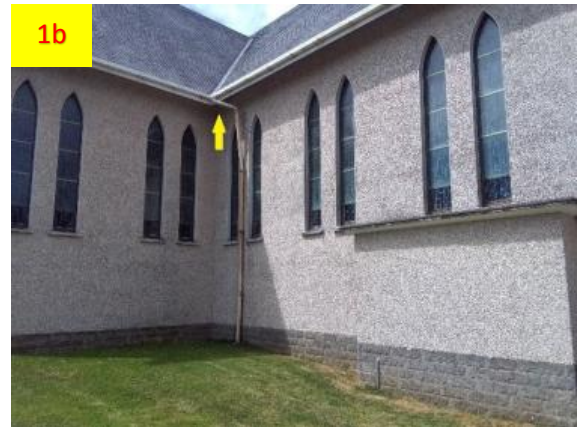
Silvermines is a village in northwest Tipperary. It had a population of 310 people according to the 2016 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits a total of 7 nesting sites were confirmed in the village of Silvermines, with a peak count of 14. Nests were recorded at two different locations.



**Figure 27:** Confirmed nests in Silvermines represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 12:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Silvermines

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b	Our Lady of Lourdes Church	8	3	Church
2	Silvermines Self-Catering Complex	14	4	Business



### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses
- Delivered a talk for Silvermines Tidy Towns Group to promote the project.
- Provided an information session on Swift conservation and a demonstration on Swift survey techniques, in collaboration with Silvermines Tidy Towns Group.



**Figure 28:** Mary Moroney of Silvermines Tidy Towns taking part in the Swift Survey 2018 (Photo by Will Hayes).

## 7.11 Fethard



Fethard is a medium sized town in southeast Tipperary. It had a population of 1,545 people according to the 2016 census. One Swift sighting had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 6 nest sites were confirmed in Fethard, with a peak count of 9 Swifts recorded. The nest sites were distributed in various locations across the town.



**Figure 29:** Confirmed nests in Fethard represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 13:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Fethard

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Barrack Street – Former Wholesale Shop	7	1	House
2	Spitalfield – Large Grey house on the corner	4	1	House
3	Castle ruins on Watergate Street	2	1	Castle
4	Holy Trinity Church of Ireland	2	1	Church
5	Burke Street – Abbey Grove	3	1	House
6	Main Street – House covered in ivy	5	1	House



### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.

## 7.12 Carrick-on-Suir



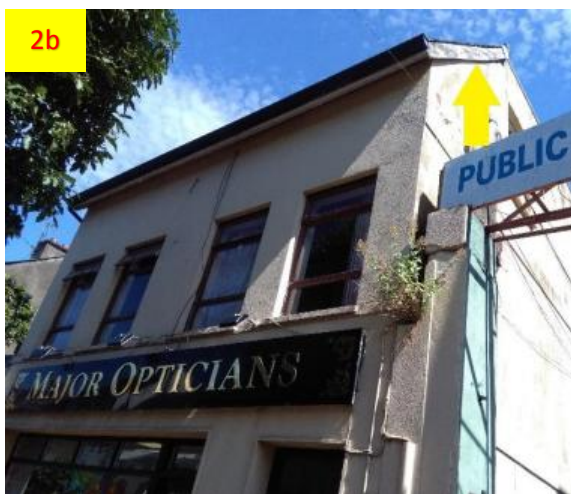
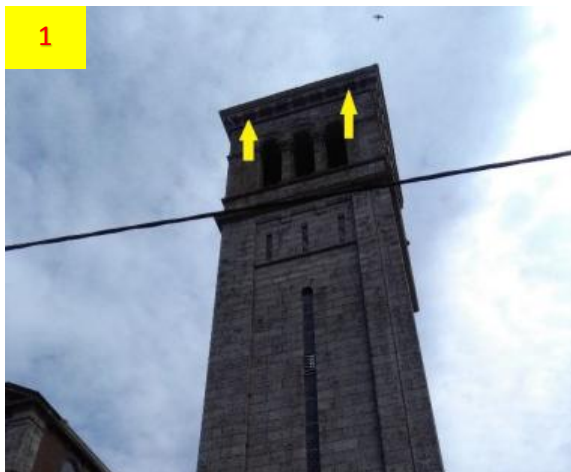
Carrick-on-Suir is a large town situated in southeast Tipperary. It had a population of 5,771 according to the 2016 census. Six Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 6 Swift nesting sites were confirmed in the town, with a peak count of 14 Swifts recorded. The nest sites were distributed in various locations across the town.



**Figure 30:** Confirmed nests in Carrick-On-Suir presented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 14:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Carrick-On-Suir

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	St Nicholas Church	7	2	Church
2a, 2b	Major Opticians – Main Street	6	2	Business
3	Strand Bar – Bridge Street	4	2	Business



#### Community engagemnt:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Contacted local groups to inform them the survey was taking place Encouraged their participation

### 7.13 Killenaule



Killenaule is a small town in east Tipperary. It had a population of 652 according to the 2016 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland previous to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 4 nesting sites were confirmed in the Killenaule, with a peak count of 12 Swifts recorded. The nests sites were evenly distributed across two locations.



**Figure 31:** Confirmed nests in Killenaule represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 15:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Killenaule

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b	Slieveardagh Rural Development Centre	4	2	Public
2	Taras Dog Grooming – Main Street	7	2	Business



### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Delivered a talk on the project to local community group.
- Liaised with Slieveardagh Rural Development Centre to post a paragraph in their weekly newsletter informing the public of the Swift Survey taking place in Tipperary this summer.

## 7.14 Borrisoleigh



Borrisoleigh is a small town situated in the centre of Tipperary. It had a population of 708 people according to the 2011 census. One Swift sighting had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits, a total of 4 Swift nesting sites were confirmed in the Borrisoleigh, with a peak count of 10 Swifts recorded. All confirmed nests were recorded in residential buildings on Chapel Street.



**Figure 32:** Confirmed nests in Borrisoleigh represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 16:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Borrisoleigh

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	4 Chapel Street	10	2	House
2	10/12 Chapel Street (number unknown)	10	2	House



### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses. Spoke with interested locals to promote the project and encourage individuals to take part in the survey.

## 7.15 Mullinahone



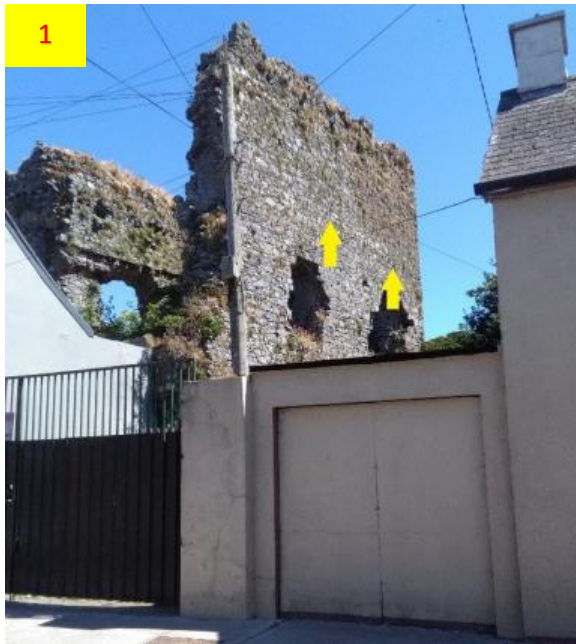
Mullinahone is a small town situated in southeast Tipperary. It had a population of 499 according to the 2016 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 3 nesting sites were confirmed in the Mullinahone, with a peak count of 8 Swifts recorded. The nests were recorded at two locations.



**Figure 33:** Confirmed nests in Mullinahone represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 17:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Mullinahone

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	St Johns Castle	6	2	Castle
2	Old Courthouse	4	1	Heritage site



**Community Engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Spoke with interested locals to promote the project and encourage individuals to take part in the survey.

## 7.16 Cappawhite



Cappawhite is a village situated in west Tipperary. It had a population of 343 people according to the 2016 census. No Swift sightings were reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 3 nesting sites were recorded in Cappawhite, with a peak count of 7 Swifts recorded. The nest sites were recorded in two different locations.



**Figure 34:** Confirmed nests in Cappawhite represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 18:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Cappawhite

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1a, 1b	Yellow and Blue Houses on Main Street	2	2	House
2	Centra – Main Street	7	1	Business



### Community Engagement:

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Delivered a project talk in collaboration with Cappawhite Tidy Towns Group to promote the project and encourage individuals to take part in the survey.

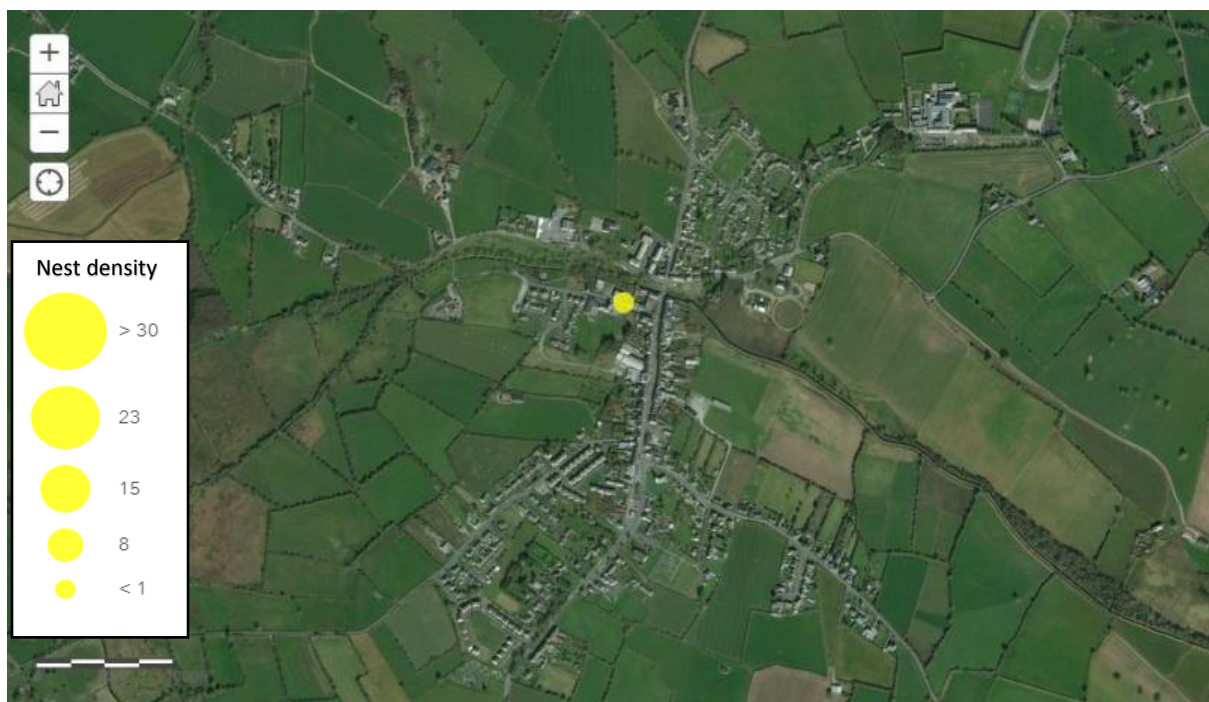


**Figure 35:** Cappawhite Tidy Towns taking part in the Tipperary Swift Survey 2018 (Photo by Will Hayes).

## 7.17 Borrisokane



Borrisokane is a small town situated in north Tipperary. It had a population of 1,294 according to the 2011 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 study. Following two survey visits, a total of 2 Swift nesting sites were confirmed in the Borrisokane, with a peak count of 8 Swifts recorded. Both nests were found on the one building.



**Figure 36:** Confirmed nests in Borrisokane represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 19:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Borrisokane

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Convent Lane – Abandoned stone building	8	2	Other



**Community engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Spoke with interested locals to promote the project and encourage individuals to take part in the survey.

### 7.18 Ardmayle

Ardmayle is a village situated in the centre of Tipperary. Ardmayle had a population of 635 people according to the 2011 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 2 nesting sites were confirmed in the Ardmayle, with a peak count of 5 Swifts recorded. Both nests were found on the one building.



**Figure 37:** Confirmed nests in Ardmayle represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 20:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Ardmayle

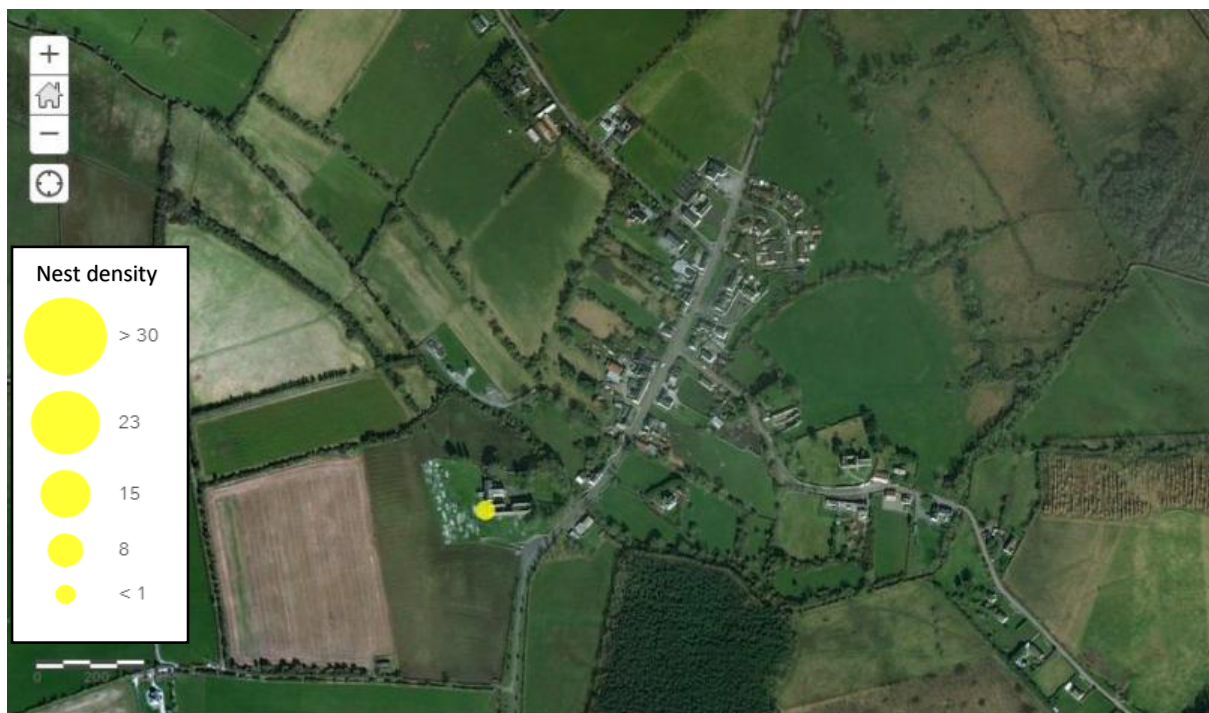
Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Old Mill on the bridge	5	2	Heritage site



## 7.19 Lorrha



Lorrha is a small monastic village in north Tipperary. Lorrha had a population of 685 according to the 2006 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 1 nest was confirmed in Lorrha, with a peak count of 7 Swifts recorded.



**Figure 38:** Confirmed nests in Lorrha represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 21:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Lorrha

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Church of Saint Thomas Aquino (ruin)	7	1	Heritage site



**Community engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to the local Lorrha Tidy Towns Group.

## 7.20 Grange



Grange is a small village situated in south Tipperary. No Swift sightings were reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 1 nest was confirmed in Grange, with a peak count of 2 Swifts recorded.



**Figure 39:** Confirmed nests in Grange represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 22:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Grange

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Grange Church	2	1	Church



**Community Engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to the local Grange Tidy Towns Group.
- Spoke with interested locals to promote the project and encourage individuals to take part in the survey.

## 7.21 Dundrum



Dundrum is a village in west Tipperary. It had a population of 220 according to the 2011 census. No Swift sightings were reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following on survey visit, a total of 1 nest was confirmed in Dundrum, with a peak count of 2 Swifts recorded.



**Figure 40:** Confirmed nests in Dundrum represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 23:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Dundrum

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	House opposite the Vale Pub	2	1	House



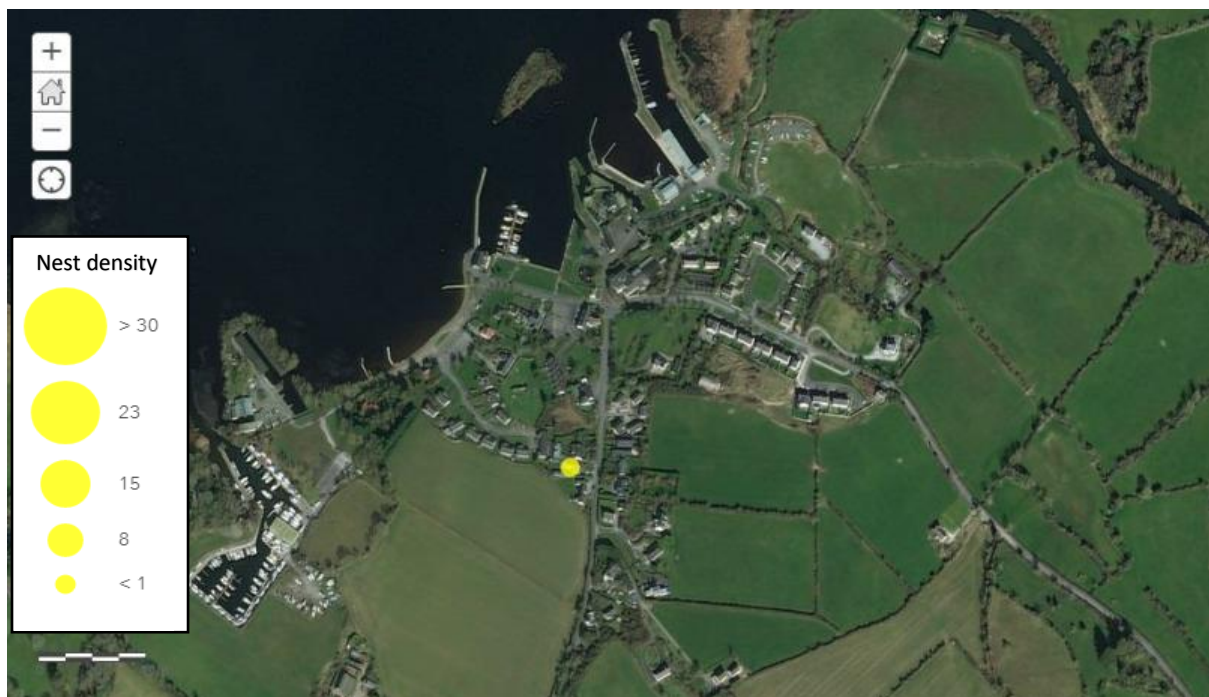
### **Community Engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.

## 7.22 Dromineer



Dromineer is small village situated in north west Tipperary. It had a population of 102 people according to the 2016 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following one survey visit, a total of 1 nest was confirmed in Dromineer, with a peak count of 4 Swifts recorded.



**Figure 41:** Confirmed nests in Dromineer represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 24:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Dromineer

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Dromineer Chalets, House 2	4	1	House



**Community Engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.
- Spoke with local Tidy Towns Group to inform them the survey was taking place and encourage their participation.

## 7.23 Clogheen



Clogheen is a village situated in south Tipperary. It had a population of 509 people according to the 2006 census. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits, a total of 1 nest was confirmed in Clogheen, with a peak count of 5 Swifts recorded.



**Figure 42:** Confirmed nests in Clogheen represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 25:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Clogheen

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Lios Mhuire	5	1	House



**Community Engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.

## 7.24 Ballycahill

Ballycahill is a small village in east Tipperary. No Swift sightings had been reported to BirdWatch Ireland prior to the 2018 survey. Following two survey visits, a total of 1 nest was confirmed in Ballycahill, with a peak count of 3 Swifts recorded.



**Figure 43:** Confirmed nests in Ballycahill represented with graduated scale symbols (ArcGIS ESRI Online 2018).

**Table 26:** List of all confirmed nest sites in Ballycahill

Photo No.	Address	Peak swift count	Confirmed nest count	Building type
1	Ballycahill Church	3	1	Church



**Community Engagement:**

- Distributed Swift Information leaflets (Tipperary version) to local people and businesses.

## 8 Publicity

The Tipperary Swift Survey was publicised using a combination of traditional (newsletters) and new (social) media.





 **Will Hayes**  
22 June · 🌐 · ▼

A little piece I did on the Swifts of Nenagh Castle.



BIRDWATCHIRELANDSWIFTS.BLOGSPOT.COM  
**One Night in Nenagh** ✓  
A blog about Swift Conservation in Ireland by Birdwatch Ireland and commun...

👍 Claire Mulqueen, Breda Hayes and 23 others

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

 Write a comment...    😊 📷 📺 🗨️

 **Will Hayes**  
Just now · 👤 · ▼

It seems South Tipperary General Hospital not only helps human lives!  
A little piece I did for the BirdWatch Ireland Life on the Wing blog.



BIRDWATCHIRELANDSWIFTS.BLOGSPOT.COM  
**A Sanctuary For Humans And Swifts Alike** ✓  
A blog about Swift Conservation in Ireland by Birdwatch Ireland and...

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

 **Will Hayes** shared a link.  
19 June · 🌐 · ▼



BIRDWATCHIRELANDSWIFTS.BLOGSPOT.COM  
**Press Release - Raising awareness for Swift conservation through a week-long schedule of events** ✓

👍 Claire Mulqueen, Margaret Laccos and 11 others    1 Comment

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

 **Rohan Hogan** Will uses swift... it's super effective  
Love · Reply · 6w    📢 📷

 Write a comment...    😊 📷 📺 🗨️



### Nenagh Tidy Towns & Community Group

23 June · G

\*\*\*

A swift response – thanks to Will Hayes of BirdWatch Ireland for his informative talk on swifts on 20th June. It was great to discover that there are many nests in the locality. Swifts are summer migrants to Ireland from Africa. Their numbers have declined in recent years. It is thought that a loss of nesting sites is a significant factor in this decline. They nest in cracks, holes in building, nesting inside the wall. Old buildings like Nenagh Castle are ideal. We have a population nesting at Nenagh Castle for many years. This year we want to try to confirm what these numbers are. That is a challenge because these birds spend almost all their lives on the wing and they fly very fast! We need your help to count the swifts you see around Nenagh Castle and fill in the simple survey sheet. This will help establish baseline data and monitor trends. It will be part of the Tipperary Swift Survey underway in 2018. This is organised by Bird Watch Ireland, and supported by Tipperary County Council, The Heritage Council and Nenagh Tidy Towns. So if you visit Nenagh Castle ask for the swift survey form – it's very simple to complete. Thank you for supporting this work which is part of promoting biodiversity in Nenagh Town.



You, Myra Hayes, Breda Hayes and 26 others

4 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



Write a comment...



### Cahir Tidy Towns

18 July at 22:45 · G

\*\*\*

Out and about this evening with Will Hayes, Birdwatch Ireland, studying The Swift, amazing birds. Did you know That the Swift never lands on ground from the day its born apart from nesting for their young. They even sleep in flight by switching off one side of their brain and then the other. Amazing birds, check them out and Cahir is a prime nesting area for them each year when they return.



Myra Hayes and 20 others

8 Comments · 8 Shares



Like



Comment



Share

Most relevant ▾



Write a comment...



Francis Murray Very interesting talk this evening thanks to Will Hayes and Andy MOLONEY as always organising the event

Like · Reply · 2w

1 Reply



Anna Burke Really informative night.Got the swift bug now!!!

Like · Reply · 2w



Margaret Fahey Will actually look at my feather friends in an new light after tonight what amazing little creatures.

Like · Reply · 2w



Catherine Leamy Very informative talk tonight. Thanks

Like · Reply · 2w · Edited



Catherine Leamy Spotted some tonight around the library heading for church at

Like · Reply · 1w



Francis Murray We learnt something new about the swifts after last night

Like · Reply · 2w



Regina Corbett Really enjoyed it 🙌🙌🙌

Like · Reply · 2w

## Newsletter

[illegible]

## Newspaper

*The Nationalist Newspaper*

There was a great turnout for the Birdwatch Ireland talk and tour of Cahir last Wednesday.



**Will Hayes (wearing cap) of Birdwatch Ireland gave an impressive talk and tour to CahirTidy Towns members last week.**

It was very informative and Cahir Tidy Towns members now have a greater awareness of the Swift and its life since the visit of Will Hayes.

## 9 Community Involvement

A total of 12 different local Tidy Town Groups/individuals took part in the project (**Table 27**). Involvement ranged from attending a Swift informative talk to conducting solo surveys under the guidance of BirdWatch Ireland. The involvement of these groups was a crucial component in engaging the wider public in the protection of Swift nesting sites.

**Table 27:** List of community groups involved in the Swift Survey 2018

Group/Person	Date of Initial Swift Talk/Walk
Silvermines Tidy Towns	18/05/18
Cappawhite Tidy Towns	23/05/18
Dromineer Tidy Towns	22/05/18
Lorrha Tidy Towns	28/05/18
Lela Tierney (Templemore)	30/05/18
Nenagh Tidy Towns	31/05/18
Grange Tidy Towns	21/06/18
Vicky Maher (Mullinahone)	29/06/18
Tom Ryan (Tipperary Town)	04/07/18
Cashel Tidy Towns	05/07/18
Cahir Tidy Towns	18/07/18
Kevin Collins (Clonmel)	25/07/18



**Figure 44:** Mr John Kendrick of Lower Abbey Street (Cahir) and his roof full of Swift nests.

## 10 Discussion

The Tipperary Swift Survey is an innovative step towards safeguarding Swifts in Co. Tipperary. It is very encouraging to see Tipperary County Council recognising the importance of Swifts as an integral part of the urban landscape and the county's heritage, and putting in place proactive measures to help conserve the species. Equally it is funding from the Heritage Council that makes this work possible and shows their continued commitment to biodiversity research and conservation. This project and associated findings provide our first detailed picture of the distribution of nesting Swifts in the Co. Tipperary. Following on from the 2017 Offaly Swift Survey, the Tipperary, Laois and Westmeath Swift Surveys conducted in 2018 give us a far greater understanding of Swift populations dynamics both locally and in a regional context. This information is essential for future Swift conservation, and it will be utilised for the protection of Swift colonies both locally and across the country. These projects are pioneering in many respects and can be used as a case study from which many other local authorities, organisations and communities can learn.

The Swift nest site data, collected through this survey is perhaps the most important element of the project. This key information allows us to take the first steps in protecting each site. Of the 86 towns and villages surveyed in Tipperary in 2018, only 24 had nesting Swifts. This is just over 20% of all surveyed towns and villages. Of these locations, twelve had four nests or less, with many of these nests concentrated on a single building.. This low figure emphasises the vulnerability of Swifts across Tipperary's urban areas. Unintentional losses of localised Swift populations can occur where planning decisions, restoration works and building projects have overlooked the presence of Swift nests.

The survey also identified the most important parts of the county for Swifts, with nine towns/villages holding over ten nesting pairs of Swifts. The most notable of these towns is Clonmel, which had 76 nesting sites overall and one building containing 40 nests, one of the largest known Swift colonies in Ireland. Other towns that had Swift populations numbering over 25 nests include Tipperary Town, Nenagh and Cashel. It should also be noted that there were eight towns/villages where Swifts were observed in flight but no nest site was confirmed either due to the observations being made of transient birds over the town or that nests were missed due to the difficulty of finding the Swift nests at such low densities.

This survey allowed us to investigate the influence of building type on Swift nesting sites. From the results it is clear that residential, public and small businesses were the most popular for Swift nests, accounting for 68% of all nests. This is most likely due to the sheer abundance of these building types in comparison to, for example, castles and churches. Specific buildings of importance to note from this year's survey include STGH Community Care Centre in Clonmel (40 nests), Nenagh Castle (21 nests), STGH Cardiac Care Centre in Clonmel (20 nests), St Patricks Hospital in Cashel (18 nests), Twomileborris Castle Tower (17 nests) and the Town Hall in Templemore (11 nests).

The site-based results and accompanying detailed online maps and photographs in this report, provide an excellent user-friendly account of Swift nest site locations across each of the 24 towns and villages surveyed across Co. Tipperary. It is hoped this will be a valuable resource for both the council and local communities to help safeguard these important colonies into the future. In addition, the collaborative approach taken with this project to secure buy-in from local communities, volunteers and groups has established a strong and energetic countywide network of Swift Champions, a key component to future conservation efforts.

## 11 Conclusions & Recommendations

In conclusion, the Tipperary Swift Survey 2018 has been a tremendous success. We now have, for the first time, a detailed picture of the distribution of Swifts in the county. We have identified and mapped 275 confirmed nest sites throughout towns and villages across the county, a basis on which conservation measures can be based. Other results include new information on the building types used by Swifts for nesting, which will help inform conservation priorities and policy. The engagement with local communities, volunteers and groups has established an extensive network of skilled and knowledgeable of Swift Champions across Tipperary, who will now form the backbone of future Swift conservation efforts in the county.

### 11.1 General Recommendations

1. Ensure the results of this report are made available and utilised for the protection of Swifts in Co. Tipperary.
2. Measures should be taken to protect every colony identified through this project.
3. The map data associated with this report (nest site grid references) should be made available to relevant personnel in the council (e.g. planners/architects) or incorporated into council systems to prevent future loss of Swift nest sites.
4. More work is needed to raise awareness about the status of Swifts and the conservation measures required to avoid their future decline to all members of the county council responsible for heritage, planning, environmental management and administration.
5. Continue a small-scale project to encourage local volunteers and community groups to continue surveying for Swifts each summer and entering records to the online mapping system. This could be a community led Swift Walk to the current known Swift nesting site every summer.
6. Following on from this project work with local community groups to establish Swift conservation projects in town and villages across the county.
7. Incorporate measures for Swifts into the regional county biodiversity action plan which outlines their status, conservation measures and management practices needed - architects and planners should be involved in delivering these results. The local authority should include Swift conservation measures in County Development Plan and insist in the plan to incorporate artificial nest sites for Swifts, e.g. Swift bricks, Swift nest boxes during the planning and building/restoration stages of public buildings. Furthermore, Strategic Environmental Assessments must use existing information about Swifts and consider the scenarios of potential disturbance from new developments or else consider new developments as an option to stabilise Swifts population.
8. Develop a school's programme to engage and educate primary schoolchildren about Swifts, their conservation and to establish school conservation projects.
9. Develop an initiative to work with businesses to protect swifts nesting in small businesses/industrial.

## 11.2 Town Specific Recommendations

<b>Town</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Clonmel	Protect and raise awareness for the colonies at South Tipperary General Hospital. Work with residents in Ard Fatima and Irishtown to protect individual nesting sites. Assess the potential of the former Army Barracks for Swift nest boxes.
Tipperary Town	Work with the many local businesses to protect the nesting sites in their buildings. This will raise awareness of Swift conservation issues to the wider public.
Cashel	Protect and raise awareness for the colonies at St Patricks Hospital. Establish Swift nest boxes in areas with known Swift colonies including St Patricks Hospital and the abandoned schoolhouse on the Dublin Road.
Nenagh	Work with residents of Sisters of Mercy convent to protect current nesting sites and establish Swift nest boxes on the building to increase Swift populations. Protect the 21 nests sites on Nenagh Castle and continue the Swift awareness activities put in place this summer at the castle by Jim McGuire.
Cahir	Work with local residents and business owners on Abbey Street to protect individual nesting sites. Promote and protect the Swift nesting sites at Cahir Castle.
Twomileborris	Protect the large colony that lives in the Castle Tower. Work with the landowner at The Castle Country House B&B to establish a protocol for Swift nest protection if the castle needs repairs.
Thurles	The Knorr factory has an established colony and may be subject to construction work in near future. Inform the owners of the site of the Swift presence and establish a plan for the protection of the Swift nests. Look into establishing nest boxes on the Iarnrod Eireann building at the train station.
Templemore	Protect and promote the large Swift colony in the Town Hall to raise awareness. There is potential to set up Swift nest boxes at the train station and on the gable end of the Town hall, it is recommended that local groups consider this.
Roscrea	Protect the existing nest sites and provide Swift nest boxes at Damer House to increase the Swift population of the town.
Silvermines	Protect the existing nest sites at the Silvermines Self-Catering complex and Church. Look into the possibility of setting up nest boxes on the church or any other suitable buildings in close proximity to the current Swift colonies.
Carrick-on-Suir	Work with the local businesses to protect the nesting sites in their buildings. The River Suir running through the town is an excellent place to spot Swifts in the summer evenings as this is their feeding grounds. Consider setting up an informative sign focusing on Swift feeding habits along the river.
Fethard	The wide distribution of Swift nests in Fethard increases the potential for an informative and active Swift Walk to take place every summer. Local groups should consider this. Protect the existing nest sites through raising awareness of their location.
Killenaule	Protect the existing colony above Tara Dog Grooming and at the Slieveardagh Rural Development Centre. Provide Swift nest boxes at the Rural Development Centre on the gable ends of the building to increase the Swift population of the town. Inform visitors every summer of the Swifts and show them where the nests are, this will help increase awareness across the community.
Borrisoleigh	Work with residents on Chapel Street to protect individual nesting sites.

Mullinahone	Work with the landowner at Lonergans Gala shop to establish a protocol for Swift nest protection if the castle (found on site) needs repairs. Look into establishing nest boxes on the old courthouse in order to increase the Swift population of the town.
Cappawhite	Protect current nesting sites on the Main Street. Inform residents of the nests. Look into the possibility of setting up Swift nest boxes on suitable buildings near current Swift nests.
Borrisokane	Establish nest boxes near the current colony as the building needs repair.
Ardmayle	Protect current nesting sites and look into establishing nest boxes on the old mill in order to increase the Swift population of the village.
Lorrha	Work with the OPW to establish protocol for Swift nest protection if the Church of Saint Thomas Aquino heritage site needs repairs.
Grange	Protect the known Swift nest on the Church and look into the possibility of setting up a Swift nest box near this site.
Clogheen	Inform resident of Swift nest in their house and work with them to protect this site.
Dromineer	Inform resident of Swift nest in their house and work with them to protect this site.
Dundrum	Inform resident of Swift nest in their house and work with them to protect this site.
Ballycahill	Protect the known Swift nest on the Church and look into the possibility of setting up a Swift nest box near this site.



## Acknowledgments

BirdWatch Ireland would like to acknowledge the support of The Heritage Council and Tipperary County Council in funding this project and a special thanks to Róisín O Grady Tipperary Heritage Officer for her ongoing support and enthusiasm.

Tidy Towns Groups and local groups have been involved in their respective communities and in no particular order we would like to thank:

- Cashel Tidy Towns – Cliff Cope and Paddy Downey
- Silvermines Tidy Towns – Mary Moroney
- Nenagh Tidy Towns – Jim McGuire
- Lela Tierney – Templemore
- Thurles Tidy Towns – Ciarán O’Sullivan
- Kevin Collins – Clonmel & BirdWatch Ireland
- Cahir Tidy Towns – Andy Moloney

We thank the members of the BirdWatch Ireland Tipperary Branch whose input helped plan, execute and make the survey such a success. A special mention to Kevin Collins who was especially generous with his, time and knowledge throughout and for sharing his photos for use in the report.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Aine Lynch of NPWS for her support and numerous sightings reported to our fieldworkers.

We thank all the residents and business owners that allowed us access to their properties to aid with survey work and aims of the 2018 Tipperary Swift Survey.

Thanks also to all at Cabragh Wetlands for hosting our Heritage week event.

Thanks to Stephen Downey for his ongoing help and expertise in designing the ArcGis online data capture application and his help with data management throughout.

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## Appendices

## Appendix 1



### Tipperary Swift Survey 2018

**This summer we are looking for your help to find Swift nest site locations in towns and villages across Co. Tipperary.**

Swifts are an enchanting species, migrating to Ireland each summer from Africa. A bird of the skies, they live much of their lives in the air, only ever touching down for a couple of months each summer to nest in buildings, generally in urban areas. Sadly, Swift numbers are in decline and they urgently need our help. We need to know where they are nesting, so that we can put in place better measures to protect their important nesting colonies.

We are calling on Tidy Towns groups, local residents and other local stakeholders to take action for Swifts. BirdWatch Ireland with support from Tipperary County Council and the Heritage Council are conducting a county wide Swift Nest Site Survey in the summer of 2018. We are asking you to get involved and your efforts locally can be included in your Tidy Towns competition submission this year under the Wildlife, Habitats & Natural Amenities section.

To get you up to speed we are planning two events in Tipperary during May:

Event Title	Date	Location	Time	Venue/meeting point
Tipperary Swift Evening (Tidy Towns)	09/05/2018	Thurles	7:30 - 9pm	Hayes Hotel
Tipperary Swift Evening	21/05/2018	Clonmel	8 - 9pm	St Mary's Gaa Centre (Western Rd)

**To help save your local Swifts, follow these simple steps:**

- 1) Take part in Swift Survey Workshops in your area.
- 2) Learn how to identify Swifts, Swallows and Martins by watching the BirdWatch Ireland video [Ireland's Special Swifts](#)
- 3) Enter your Swift sightings and nest site records to the BirdWatch Ireland [Swift Survey](#)
- 4) Learn more about surveying Swifts with our page on [Swift Survey Tips](#)

**Additional information:**

- For more information on Swifts and for details of upcoming events see our [Swift Webpage](#)
- Follow our BirdWatch Ireland Swift Blog for latest news and project updates - [Life on the Wing](#)
- For more information contact Brian Caffrey & Ricky Whelan [swifts@birdwatchireland.ie](mailto:swifts@birdwatchireland.ie) or phone: 05791 51676

## Appendix 2

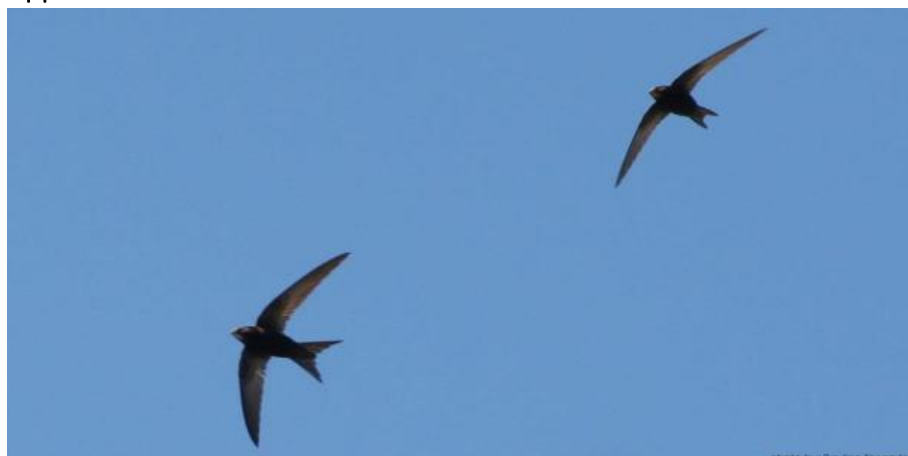
### Swift Survey Sheet 2018

Observer Name	
Date/Time	
County	Westmeath                      Tipperary                      Laois
Town/ Village	
Weather	
Final Peak Swift Count	
Total Confirmed Swift Nests	
Local Tidy Town Group Contacted	Yes    /    No

Nest Site Form							
Time 24hr format	Nest Location (12 Pearse St, Trim)	Building Type: (e.g. House/Residential, Industrial, Church/Religious, School, Castle/Heritage Site)	Using Nestbox (Yes/No)	Swifts Peak Count	Confirmed Swift Nests	Description of Nest Site Location	Photo Tag (as per phone)
		House/Residential, Business, Industrial, Church/Religious, School, Castle/Heritage Site	(Yes/No)				
		House/Residential, Business, Industrial, Church/Religious, School, Castle/Heritage Site	(Yes/No)				
		House/Residential, Business, Industrial, Church/Religious, School, Castle/Heritage Site	(Yes/No)				
		House/Residential, Business, Industrial, Church/Religious, School, Castle/Heritage Site	(Yes/No)				

### Appendix 3

SWIFT SURVEY NENAGH CASTLE 2018 RESULTS							
SURVEY FORMS COMPLETED BY VISITORS TO NENAGH CASTLE							
DATE	TIME	SUNNY/CLOUDY	WARM/COLD	WINDY/CALM	RAIN/DRY	NO. SEEN AT ONE TIME	COMMENTS
25/07/2018	12.05 PM	CLOUDY	WARM	WINDY	DRY	24	Screeching, flying around the tower
14/07/2018	10.58 AM	BOTH	WARM	SLIGHT WIND	DRY	12+	One large group flying between castle and church tower. Smaller groups 2/3 (swallows) flying around the tower(castle)
12/07/2018	3.30PM	BOTH	WARM	LIGHT	DRY	8	We spotted tyhem entering the castle wall. Most were on east side.
12/07/2018	3.30 PM	BOTH	WARM	WINDY	DRY	9	So cute!
10/07/2018	11.15AM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	29	
07/07/2018	10.30 AM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	12	Flying really fast and low
06/07/2018	11.30 AM		WARM	CALM	DRY	16	Flying very fast and making lots of noise
28/06/2018	12.00PM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	61	Very fast birds, hard to count.
28/06/2018	12.00 PM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	4	They are cool. It is hard to count sometimes
28/06/2018	12.00 PM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	21	It was quite hard because they were keep moving
28/06/2018	12.00 pm	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	20	
27/06/2018	10.30 AM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	14	Singing to their hearts content.
26/06/2018	10.20 AM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	14	They were active, lively and lots of sound/song from them
23/06/2018	11.50 AM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	8	
23/06/2018	12.00 PM	SUNNY				10	At Nenagh Castle
23/06/2018	11.30 AM	SUNNY	WARM	CALM	DRY	12	



## **SWIFT CONSERVATION IN NENAGH:**

Swifts are summer migrants to Ireland from Africa. Their numbers have declined in recent years. It is thought that a loss of nesting sites is a significant factor in this decline. They nest in cracks, holes in building, nesting inside the wall. Old buildings like Nenagh Castle are ideal.

We have a population nesting at Nenagh Castle for many years. This year we want to try to confirm what these numbers are. That is a challenge because these birds spend almost all their lives on the wing and they fly very fast!

We need your help to count the swifts you see around Nenagh Castle and fill in the simple survey sheet. This will help establish baseline data and monitor trends. It will be part of the Tipperary Swift Survey underway in 2018. This is organised by Bird Watch Ireland, and supported by Tipperary County Council and The Heritage Council.

Thank you for supporting this work which is part of promoting biodiversity in Nenagh Town.

## **SWIFT SURVEY ---- NENAGH CASTLE**

**DATE:** .....

**TIME:** .....

**WEATHER:**

SUNNY OR CLOUDY .....

WARM OR COLD.....

WINDY OR CALM.....

**NUMBER OF SWIFTS SEEN AT ONE TIME:** .....

**COMMENTS:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SHEET TO CASTLE  
CURATOR.**

