

## Population size and trend of Common swifts in the city of Amsterdam

### Latest data on the monitoring project of nesting sites

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Active nests of Common swifts are monitored area-wide in the city of Amsterdam since 2013, to determine conservation status. This project was started after decades of alarming messages of declines of the swift population in the old city. The first census resulted in registration of 2031 active nests (2013-2017), the successive monitoring to 2110 active nests (2017-2023). Methodology and biases between census and monitoring will be discussed. With control counts in subareas (a double sampling method) a detection ratio was estimated: 75% of nests were detected with the survey method, resulting in an estimate of 2600 (2200-3400) breeding pairs for the population size (census 2013-2017).

The population size seems stable now. It remains difficult to compare these data to historic estimates. Population in prewar areas have certainly declined, but this is compensated by increasing population in postwar areas: swifts are slowly moving towards postwar buildings and postwar areas. Also, swifts are moving into existing nestbox projects: numbers of occupied nestboxes have doubled from 128 (6%) to 271 (13% of population) in 5 years. Thousands of boxes were placed since the 1990s by the Swift Task Force and the city of Amsterdam. Which factors make certain nestbox projects successful?

Nesting sites are published on an online map ([www.maps.amsterdam.nl/vogels/](http://www.maps.amsterdam.nl/vogels/)) to make data available to all stakeholders and to enhance awareness on the breeding population of swifts. The data are now used widely to protect the nesting sites.

The city of Amsterdam sustains this project to acquire exemptions from the strict ruling on the protection of nesting sites (Dutch Environment and planning Law (2024) and European Bird and Habitat Directives), in order to facilitate necessary renovation of houses. It is possible now in the Netherlands to get such exemptions, by proposing a species management plan that ensures a favourable conservation status. If you study, protect and manage the swift population (and all the other protected species) in a certain area, you can get an exemption for that area. I will discuss chances and threats to the population of swifts that are the result of this ruling.