



SPECIES

Photos: MikeLane45, Norman Crowson

House martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

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All about the house martin

- Prefers open country with low vegetation, such as pasture, meadows and farmland near water.
- They spend the majority of their time on the wing and build closed dome-like nests up under the eaves of houses.
- House martins spend the winter in Africa and generally return to the UK around April. Their arrival depends on the weather en route; as they feed on airborne insects, they depend on good weather conditions to catch their prey.

Why do house martins need our help?

House martins are struggling to find and maintain suitable habitat for both foraging and nesting.

How can we help?

- Homeowners can help by providing artificial nests. Putting up five or six nests is more likely to succeed as house martins are communal nesters. They seem to prefer north and east facing walls!
- Provide a small area of wet mud nearby for the birds to use to build and repair their own nests throughout the summer.
- Raise awareness concerning house martins' decline and learn to tell the difference between martins and swifts!
- Get wild! Leave an area of long, uncut grass near your house. House martins hunt for insects here, and such wild areas are in steep decline.

DID YOU KNOW? Young from the first brood have often been observed helping their parents feed the next brood, an unusual occurrence in birds.

How do I monitor and record?

- Towards the end of the breeding season (August/September) observe the number of successful and failed broods.
- All observations need to be carried out from ground level to avoid disturbing the nesting birds.
- Enter records into iRecord.

Learn more

- rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/nestboxes/how-to-attract-house-martins/
- rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/house-martin/conflict-with-sparrows/#X3IIVE8or7IGLeEw.99
- Contact an A Rocha UK naturalist at naturalist@arocha.org