



Create a high home for Swifts

Step by step guide

1 Choose a suitable location for your nestbox. Due to the flat roof, this box will need to be fully covered by the eaves and tightly secured beneath them, with no gap. Thus, this box design is only suitable for buildings with wide eaves. If you haven't got wide overhanging eaves, it is crucial you choose a box with a sloping roof. Alternative designs are available on the Action for Swifts website: <https://bit.ly/47qiTm5>

Position your box high on a vertical wall, at least 5m (15ft) above the ground, with an unobstructed flight path. Think how the Swift will approach the entry hole. It first swoops down and then up again at speed. The upward ascent slows it down to land. Remember to avoid south-facing walls when choosing a location for external boxes.

2 Buy a box. If you have a suitable location, but are short on time or DIY skills, you can buy a ready-made Swift box on the RSPB shop website. The entry hole should be 28mm by 65mm.

3 Cut your exterior plywood. Cut all pieces and a rectangular hole into the front, as shown on the diagram in black. For plywood 15mm thick, the hole should be cut 45mm high and 80mm wide. Plywood comes in different

What you will need:

- exterior plywood, 1800mm long x 150mm wide x 15mm thick
- saw
- nails
- drill
- glue
- screws
- tall ladder
- raw plugs

thicknesses, so you will need to adjust the size of the rectangular entry hole you cut according to the wood thickness you are using. Thus, when assembled, the resulting entrance hole is a maximum of 30mm high x 65mm wide (but not smaller than 28mm x 65mm). For guidance we have included cutting guide on the next page.

4 Assemble your nestbox. Use wood adhesive to assemble the box. Then use either nails or screws to secure the parts firmly in place. It helps first to drill small 'pilot holes' in the facing parts (back, front, top, and bottom). This helps hold nails and screws in place making it easier to hammer or screw in and minimise the risk of splitting the wood.

Ideally, attach a small wedge of wood just above the entrance hole to help shelter it from the elements. The wedge will need to be sloping to prevent predators from perching on it.

5 Putting up the box. Use the projections on the back plate of the box to screw firmly to the masonry of the house, tightly beneath the eaves. Avoid fixing above any doors or windows.

When they're raising a family, birds are sensitive to disturbance and protected by law, so just watch from the ground or install a nestbox camera before the breeding season starts.

6 Maintaining your box. There is no need to clean the box as Swifts prefer 'ready furnished' homes. To encourage occupancy, you can additionally glue four pieces of wood (15mm thick with an 80mm hole in the centre) at the opposite end the entrance hole (please see simple diagram below).

For longevity, the outside of the box may be painted with a non-toxic preservative or water-based paint. This may be a colour to match brickwork or white to help reflect heat. Do not paint the rim of the hole or inside the box.

7 Add Swift nest bricks. One of the best nestboxes for Swifts are purpose-made Swift bricks. These can be built into the fabric of a new house and during renovation or construction of an extension. Several products are available from various suppliers, including some which allow replacement of a single brick space. All are listed on the Action for Swifts page: <https://bit.ly/3MKzOrz>

Swift bricks should only be installed by someone qualified to do so.

8 Create a Swift colony. Swifts are gregarious birds that like to nest, feed and migrate in groups. They mate for life, and like to return to the same nesting site every year. Fitting Swift nestboxes is one of the best thing we can do to help these long-distance migrants. So if you have a building ideal for more than one box, go for it!

It can take several years for Swifts to find your nestbox. But you can attract them by playing Swift calls for a short time in the morning and evening from the end of May until the end of July. To find out about Swift callers please visit Swift Conservation web page: <https://bit.ly/43gG53v>

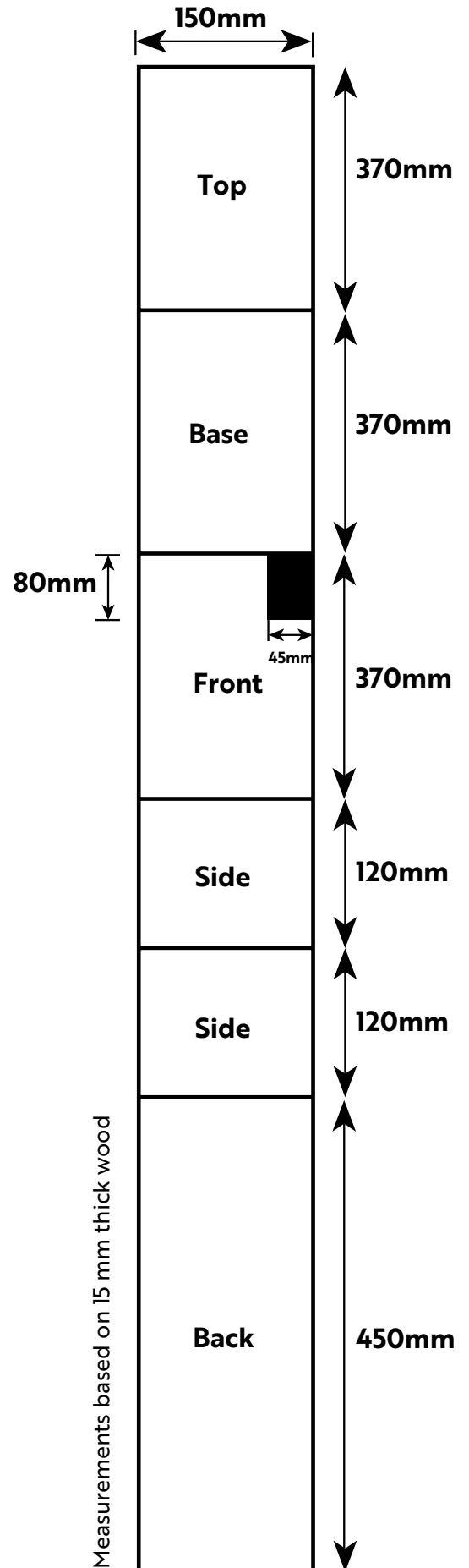
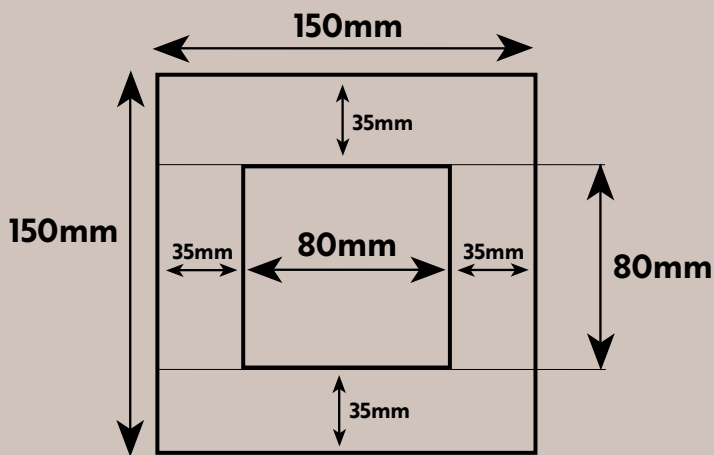
Cutting guide for your Swift box

The table below allows you to see the resulting hole size based on the thickness of the wood that you choose.

Thickness (mm)	Hole size (cut)		Resulting hole size	Side walls
	H (mm)	L (mm)	Actual hole size (mm)	H (mm)
12	42	77	30 x 65	126
15	45	80	30 x 65	120
18	48	83	30 x 65	114

Add a nest cup to your box

Using an off-cut of your 15mm thick wood, cut two pieces 150mm x 35mm and 2 pieces 80mm x 35mm. Glue these to the floor as per drawing, opposite end to the entrance hole.



Measurements based on 15 mm thick wood