

Swallows and House Martins nesting in Hopesay Parish in 2021

This report follows surveys of 2015 and 2020, which showed decreases in the number of nesting House Martins and Swallows.

Swallows and House Martins

The hoped-for recovery from 2020 has not materialised, nest-counts for both species were down again – shown in the figure and maps.

House Martins are currently *Orange Listed* nationally, and in Shropshire, on account of moderate falls in breeding numbers – as evidenced in this study.

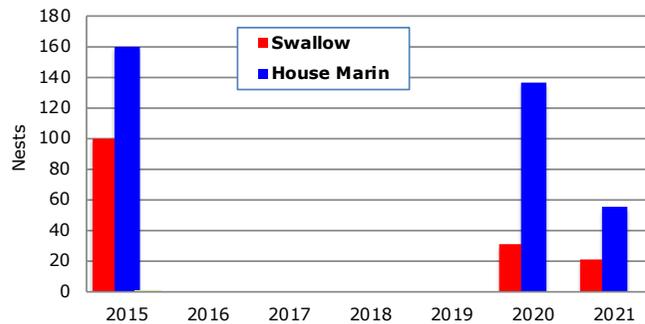
Swallows are currently *Green Listed*, nationally, though this may be under review. Certainly in this parish they deserve being *Red Listed*, so severe is the decline. County *Green Listing* may be revised.

Nest count trends from three Hopesay parish surveys

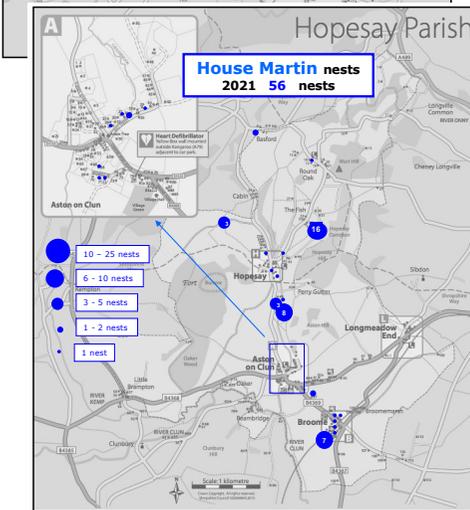
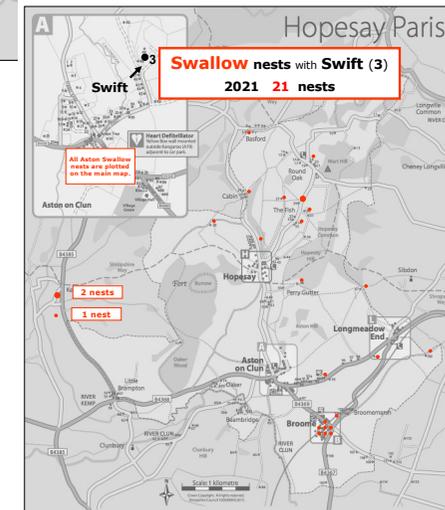
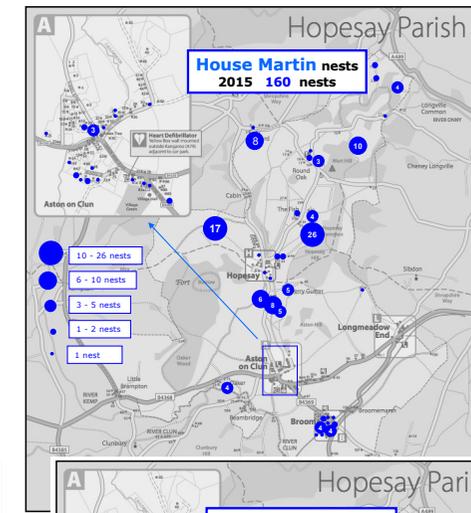
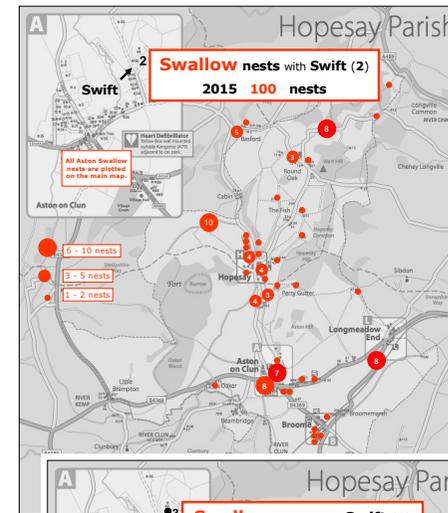
The numbers are (2015, 2020 & 2021):

Swallow: 100, 31 and 21 **House Martin:** 160, 138 and 56

Swallow and House Martin nests
Hopesay parish 2015, 2020 & 2021



For some reason House Martin numbers seem to be holding up in Broome and at Hesterworth. Possible reasons will be discussed in a paper to be published in the 2021 issue of the *Shropshire Bird Report*.



Some good news – Swifts

Swifts also feed on airborne invertebrates so the survey looked at them though they are not related to swallows and martins. They are more closely related to hummingbirds which have been described as 'swifts which discovered nectar'.

In 2015 there were just two Swift nests in one house on Mill Street. Last year those two were active again and a third was discovered in the Coach House at Aston Hall. This year the Mill Street colony had the only three Swift nests. More significant has been

the repeated attention by Swifts to the three special boxes put up for them four years ago on the Village Hall. Late this summer single Swifts have repeatedly been seen entering the boxes, late in the evenings and apparently roosting in them. These will

have been young birds (they start breeding when 2 or 3 years old) investigating potential nest sites so we are hopeful that at least one box will be used for nesting next year. Swifts left for Africa in early August and are due back in April. They will remain on

the wing over the winter, never landing. One house in Hopesay has been successful in attracting Swifts to investigate nestboxes put up for them this year – will they nest next year? A parish project to attract more Swifts to nest here. *See overleaf.*