

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Cornwall: very scarce breeding summer visitor.



At least 4 pairs of this very charismatic species breed on 2 sites regularly on the South Lizard. I have been told that they are also present at 2 other sites but I have not been able to confirm this. It is quite possible that some birds are yet to be discovered in previously unchecked areas and I have certainly heard a churring male on one occasion away from the two main territories.

On May 27 2003, I was very surprised to hear one calling softly in the middle of the day from dense cover close to the stream at Kynance. An evening visit revealed the presence of a single pair. A male was heard and seen here in both 2004 and 2005 but not subsequently.

Records of migrant birds are extremely hard to come by and so I was in for an even bigger surprise on July 11th 2013 when, whilst working in my garden in the Lizard Village, at about 4pm I once again heard one churring quietly not more than a dozen paces away from me in my neighbour's garden. I chose not to disturb it and wait for nightfall and sure enough, at about 10pm the bird emerged, churring loudly; it made two passes in front of the trees at the end of the garden and then flew off to the north-east.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Cornwall: fairly common breeding summer visitor and migrant.

Two to four pairs regularly breed in the Lizard Village and this has been the status quo for many years.

The first returning migrants are generally seen in the last week of April and my earliest bird is only April 21st. Passage may continue into early June and numbers are generally measured in the tens, not the hundreds. Most head straight through and it is only over the heathland that this species might linger to feed. Larger flocks of several hundred can appear during the summer, usually in concert with still, hot or sultry weather and the birds can disappear just as quickly with a change in the weather.

Most have departed by the middle of August but stragglers continue to be seen into early September. My latest record is September 25th 2015.

On November 27th 1994 near Black Head, I was birding with Steve Bury when a Swift appeared above us. It seemed to be feeding quite leisurely and remained in view, overhead, for about an hour. Unfortunately, it was always set against a