

# Conserving Birds in Urban Environments



Presented by  
Ricky Whelan



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae **Luimnigh**  
Limerick City  
& County Council



Twitter: @Rickywhelan Instagram: @Naturericky Email: [rwhelan@birdwatchireland.ie](mailto:rwhelan@birdwatchireland.ie)

# Conserving birds in urban environments

*No substitute for*



## Pollinator Friendly Zone

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

National Biodiversity Data Centre  
Conserving Ireland's Wildlife

[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)



# Urban Birds – Why do we care?

## Declining Populations

### Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026

#### Amber-list species (medium conservation concern)

##### Breeding

Goosander  
Garganey  
Spotted Crake  
European Storm-petrel  
Fulmar  
Manx Shearwater  
Gannet  
Shag  
Little Ringed Plover  
Common Sandpiper  
Mediterranean Gull  
Little Tern  
Roseate Tern  
Common Tern  
Arctic Tern  
Sandwich Tern  
Great Skua  
Black Guillemot  
Common Guillemot  
Short-eared Owl  
Marsh Harrier  
Hen Harrier  
Goshawk  
Kingfisher  
Merlin  
Chough  
Skylark  
Bearded Reedling  
House Martin

##### Breeding continued

Swallow  
Sand Martin  
Willow Warbler  
Starling  
Spotted Flycatcher  
Northern Wheatear  
Goldcrest  
House Sparrow  
Tree Sparrow  
Greenfinch  
Linnet  
Pied Flycatcher  
Western Yellow Wagtail

##### Passage

Cory's Shearwater  
Ruff  
Spotted Redshank  
Wood Sandpiper  
Little Gull  
Black Tern  
Wryneck  
Tree Pipit

##### Wintering

Brent Goose  
Barnacle Goose  
Greylag Goose  
Greater White-fronted Goose

##### Wintering continued

Smew  
Pintail  
Black-throated Diver  
Great Northern Diver  
Bittern  
Turnstone  
Brambling

##### Breeding and Wintering

Mute Swan  
Whooper Swan  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Shelduck  
Tufted Duck  
Gadwall  
Wigeon  
Mallard  
Teal  
Great Crested Grebe  
Coot  
Red-throated Diver  
Cormorant  
Ringed Plover  
Black-headed Gull  
Lesser Black-backed Gull  
European Herring Gull



# Urban Birds – Why do we care?

## Declining Populations

### Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026

#### Red-list species (high conservation concern)

##### Breeding

Quail  
Grey Partridge  
Red Grouse  
Black-necked Grebe  
Stock Dove  
**Nightjar**  
**Swift**  
Corncrake  
Leach's Storm-petrel  
Woodcock  
Red-necked Phalarope  
Kittiwake  
Puffin  
**Hazontill**  
**Barn Owl**  
Golden Eagle  
White-tailed Eagle  
Red Kite  
Kestrel  
Wood Warbler

##### Breeding continued

Ring Ouzel  
Common Redstart  
Whinchat  
Meadow Pipit  
**Grey Wagtail**  
Twee  
Yellowhammer

##### Passage

Turtle Dove  
Balearic Shearwater  
Curlew Sandpiper

##### Wintering

Bewick's Swan  
Long-tailed Duck  
Velvet Scoter  
Goldeneye  
Scaup  
Slavonian Grebe

##### Wintering continued

Grey Plover  
Bar-tailed Godwit  
Black-tailed Godwit  
Knot  
Purple Sandpiper  
Snowy Owl  
Redwing

##### Breeding and Wintering

Eider  
Common Scoter  
Pochard  
Shoveler  
Oystercatcher  
Golden Plover  
Lapwing  
Curlew  
Dunlin  
Snipe  
Redshank





# Urban Birds

## Gulls



RTÉ NEWS SPORT ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS LIFESTYLE CULTURE PLAYER TV RADIO

NEWS > IRELAND > World Business Sport Nuacht Programmes RTÉ Investigates

### Reports of dead and dying seabirds on east and south coasts

Updated / Tuesday, 13 Sep 2022 15:04

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [m](#) [p](#)

A photograph showing a group of seabirds, likely gulls, on a grassy cliffside. One bird is in flight, with its wings spread wide. The birds are white with yellow beaks and black wings. The cliffside is covered in green grass and some small plants.

breedi  
NEWS  
en's net  
hen she  
the huge  
ing Charle  
erits  
iving in ca  
beach for  
with cats  
ash in

# Declining Populations

*Bust and Boom – Herring Gull 90% declines in 30 years in Ireland!*

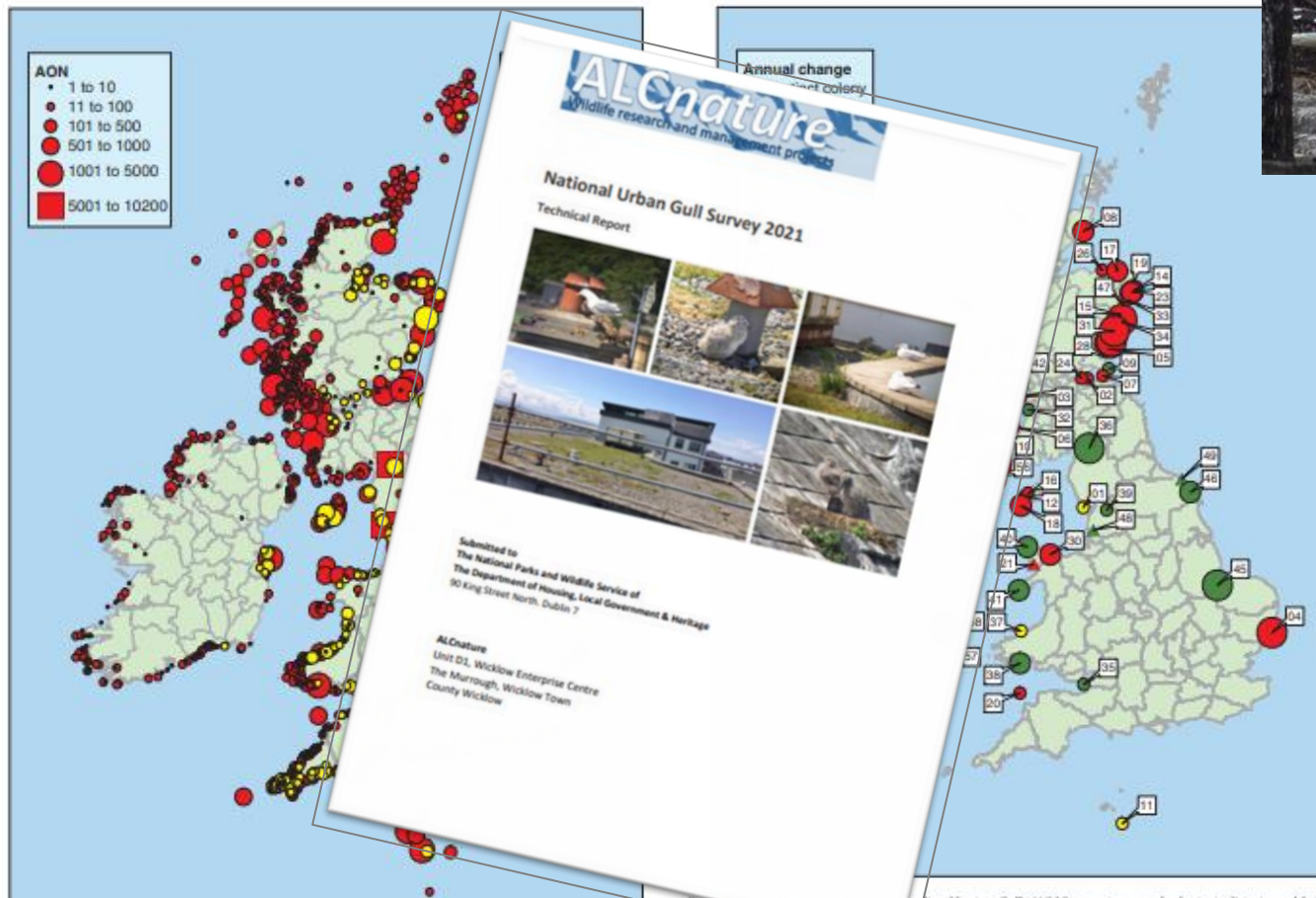


Figure 1 Abundance and distribution of breeding Herring Gulls in Britain and Ireland 1998–2002. Natural sites shown in red and man-made sites (e.g. rooftops) are in yellow (the scale is the same for both types of sites).

Figure 2 Abundance of breeding Herring Gulls (AON) at major coastal colonies in Britain and Ireland between the SCR Census 2000 and Seabird 2000 (1998–2002). Major coastal colonies are those that contained the top 40% of the British population during the SCR and/or Seabird 2000 or the top 75% of the Irish population during the SCR and/or Seabird 2000. Numbers correspond to colonies listed in Table 2.



Figure 3 Herring Gull – urban AON in urban breeding habitat (by county)



# Urban Birds

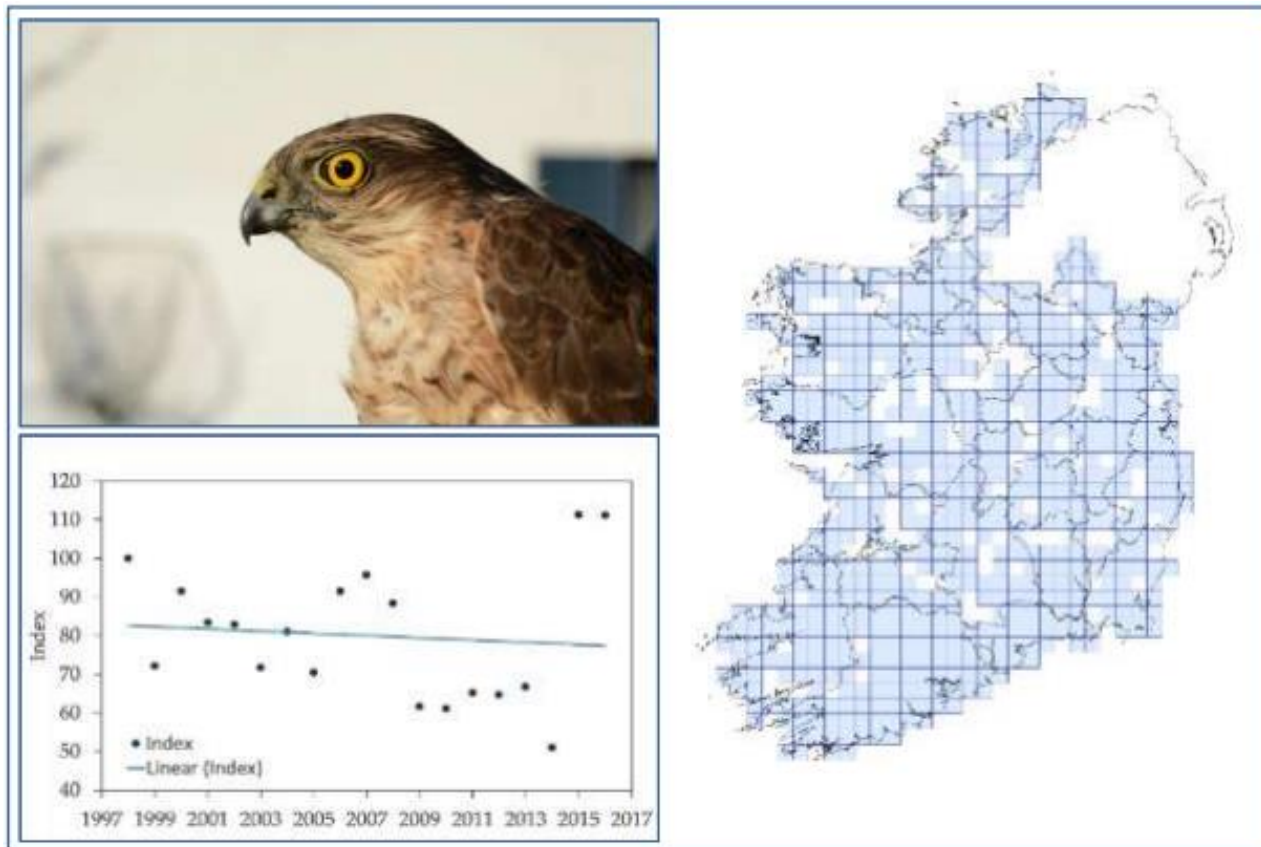
## *Birds of Prey*



# Declining Populations

Studies show a -11.2 % population decline (CBS 1998 - 2016)

## Countryside Bird Survey 1998 - 2016



**Figure 4** Distribution map and graphed population 18-year trend for Sparrowhawk. The breeding distribution map is based on the Bird Atlas (2007-2011) (Balmer *et al.*, 2013). The population trend uses data from CBS 1998-2016 (Photo: Brian Burke).



# Urban Birds

## Birds of Prey - Rodenticides



© Richard T Mills

© Edward Delaney

# Urban Birds

## Birds of Prey - Rodenticides



© Edward Delaney

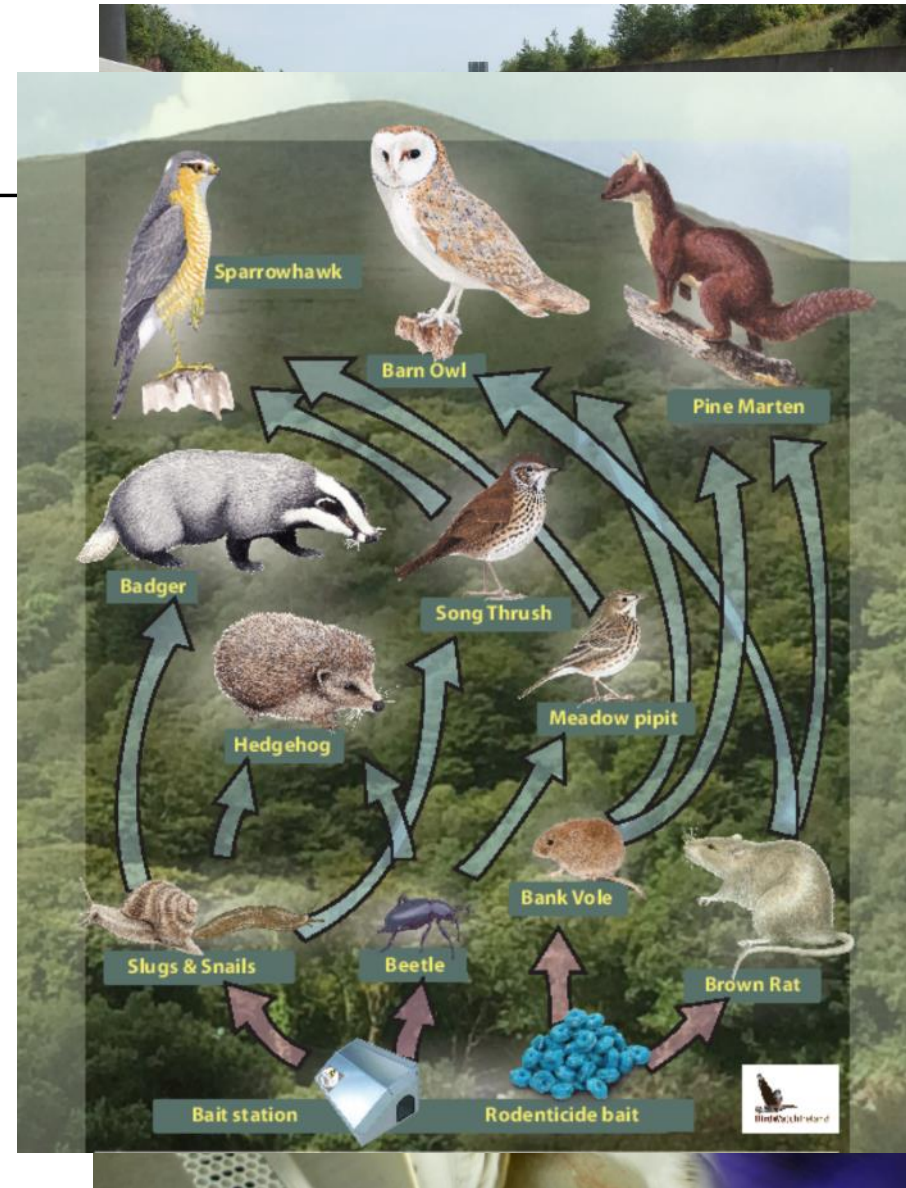


© Richard T Mills



### Rodenticide exposure in Irish Barn Owls

- PM's & toxicology analysis of 69 Barn Owl carcasses collected between 2006 – 2011
- **88.4%** of Barn Owls (n = 69) had detectable levels of SGARs (**Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides**)
- Multiple compounds were detected in **71%** of birds
- Two most prevalent compounds were **Brodifacoum - 74%** of birds & **Floucoumafen - 58%** of birds
- **> 3 times** greater concentration levels than Barn Owls in UK



# Urban Birds

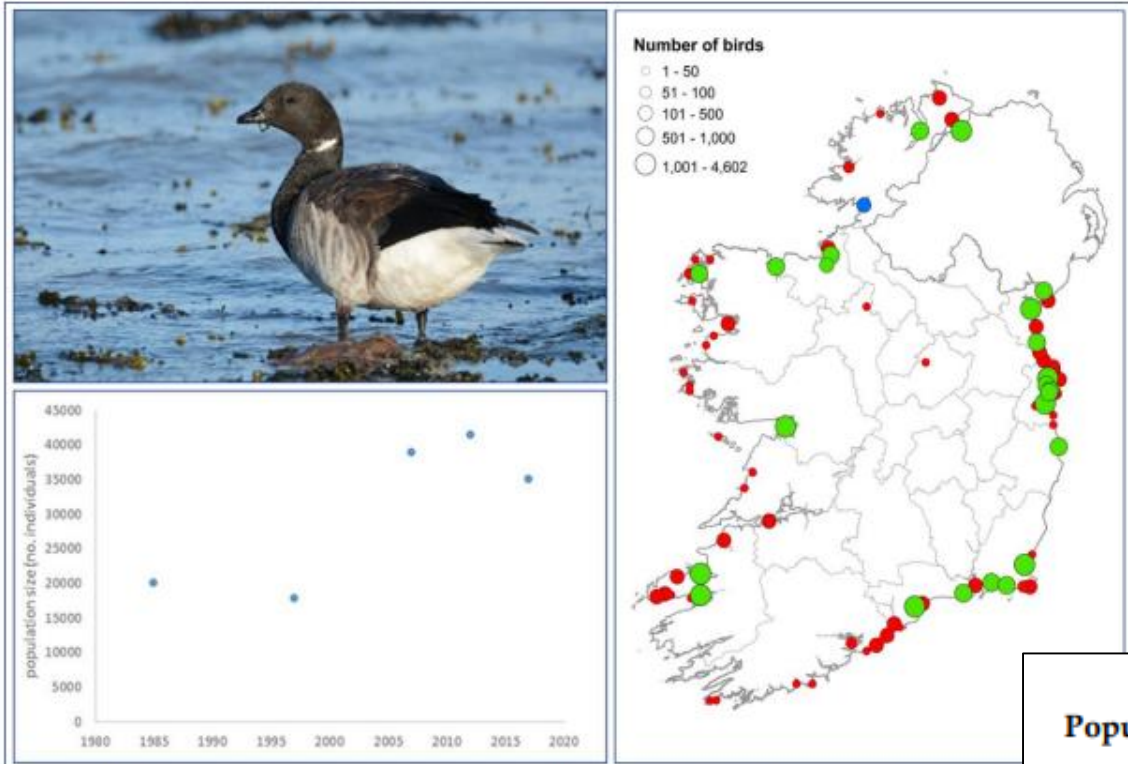
*Birds of Prey - Rodenticides*





# Declining Populations

Studies show a -10.2 % population decline over 10 years (IWEBs)



**Figure 13** Distribution map and graphed population trend for Light-bellied Brent Geese. The distribution map illustrates sites supporting numbers of international importance (large green circles), national (all-Ireland) importance (blue circles), and all other sites where the population was declining during the period between 2011/12 and 2015/16 (red circles). The population trend graph illustrates the population size obtained from census data 1985-2017 (Photo: Brian E. B.

## Population Change (%):

5 year:	-15.5 <sup>b</sup>
10 year:	-10.2 <sup>c</sup>
20 year:	+96.1 <sup>d</sup>
Historical:	+75.1 <sup>e</sup>

# Urban Birds

## *Brent Geese*







# Urban Birds

## *Brent Geese*





# Urban Birds

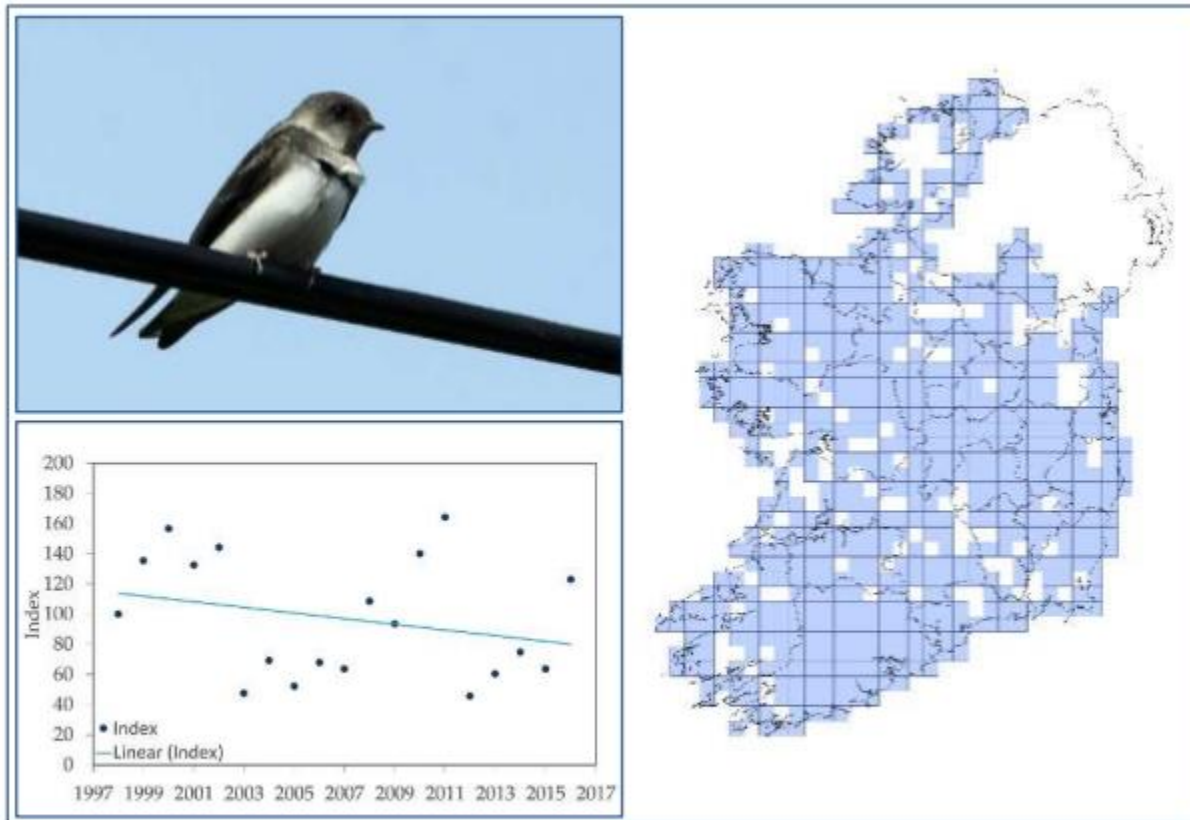
## *Riverbirds*



# Declining Populations

Studies show a -29.6% population decline (CBS 1998 - 2016)

## Countryside Bird Survey 1998 - 2016



**Figure 21** Distribution map and graphed population 18-year trend for Sand Martin. The breeding distribution map is based on the Bird Atlas (2007-2011) (Balmer *et al.*, 2013). The population trend uses data from CBS 1998-2016 (Photo: Dick Coombes).



# Urban Birds

## Riverbirds



 laoislive

HOME LOCAL NEWS SPORT NATIONAL PLOUGHING NATIONAL NEWS CRIME & COURT WHAT'S ON MEMORY LANE PROPERTY MOTORING

You are in: > LEINSTEREXPRESS > LOCAL NEWS

### Devastation in Laois as thousands of fish confirmed dead after big kill



Pictures supplied by

A screenshot of a news article from laoislive. The article title is "Devastation in Laois as thousands of fish confirmed dead after big kill". The main image shows several dead fish, likely trout, lying on a rocky stream bed. The water is dark and still. The article is from the LEINSTEREXPRESS LOCAL NEWS section.



# Urban Birds

*Riverbirds - Sand Martin Colonies*





# Urban Birds

*Riverbirds – Kingfisher tunnels*



# Urban Birds

*Riverbirds – Dipper and Grey Wagtail Boxes*





# Urban Birds

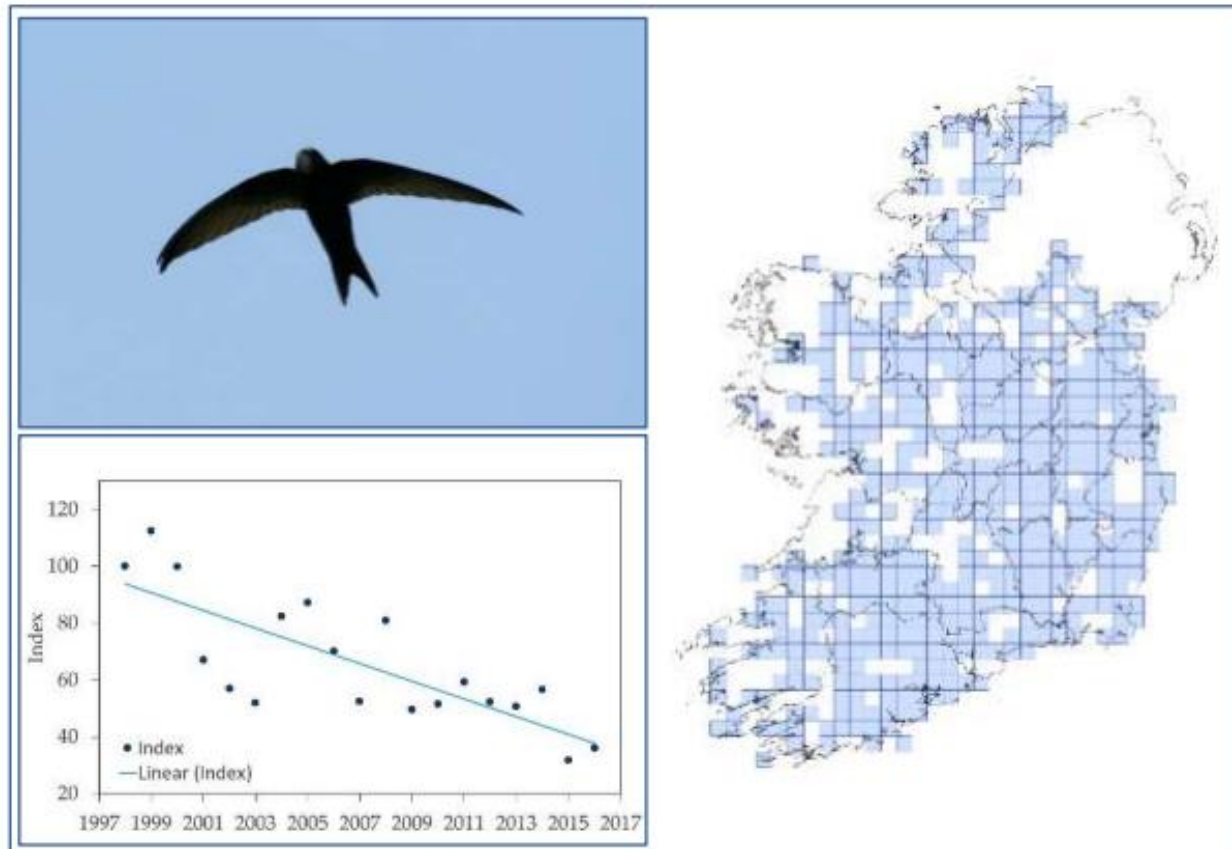
*Cavity nesters*



# Declining Populations

Studies show a -57.7% population decline (CBS 1998 - 2016)

## Countryside Bird Survey 1998 - 2016



**Figure 10** Distribution map and graphed population 18-year trend for Swift. The breeding distribution map is based on the Bird Atlas (2007-2011) (Balmer *et al.*, 2013). The population trend uses data from CBS 1998-2016 (Photo: Dick Coombes).

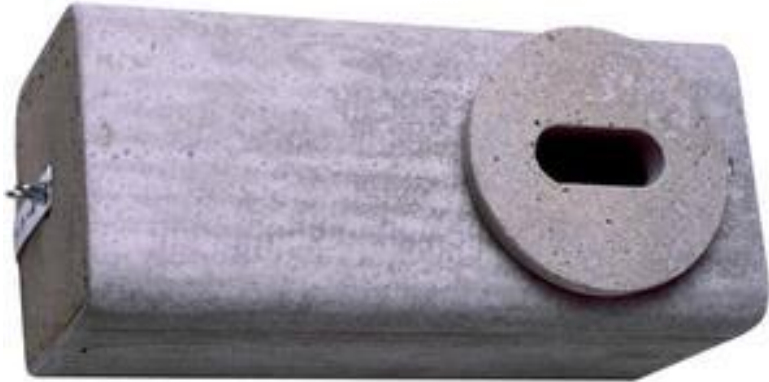


# Urban Birds

*Cavity nesters*



# Swift Boxes





# Stradbally Nest Box Project

*Town & Village Renewal Scheme + colab between LA, BWI, TT and LDG*





# Swift Bricks



Installation





# Castlebar Leisure Centre



*Swift Conservation Ireland*



# Portlaoise Library



*Laois CoCo*







# Baltinglass Primary Care Centre



# International Projects

*Maiden Tower in Baku, Azerbaijan*





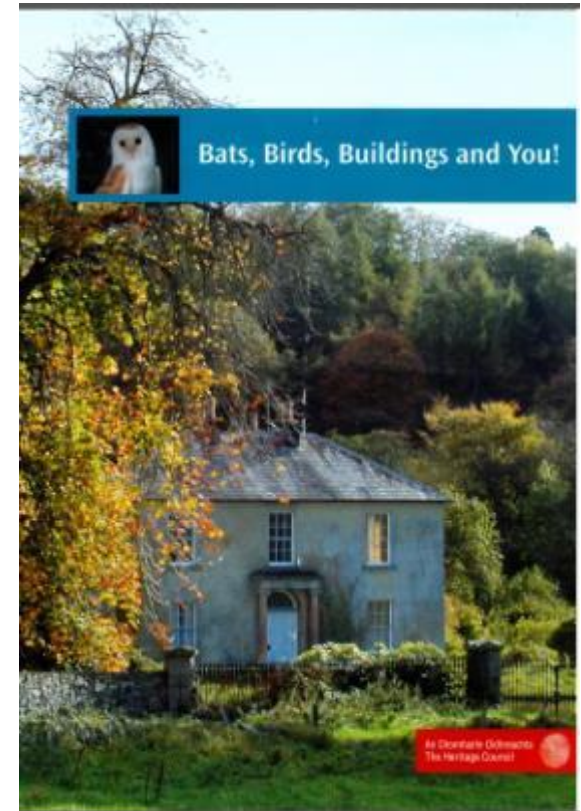
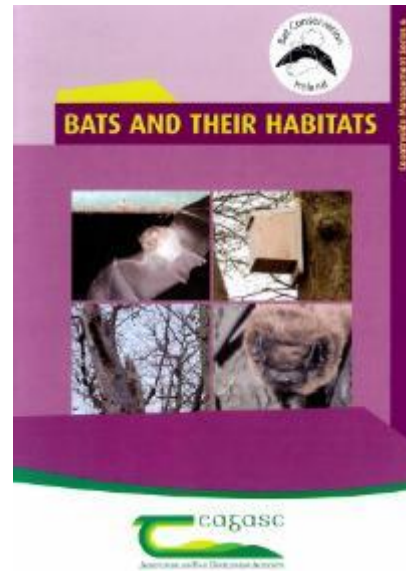
# Available Resources

*Information is out there!*



# Available Resources

Information is out there!





Also!!

Tune in to...

<https://inyournature.buzzsprout.com/>



**Laois County Council**  
Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

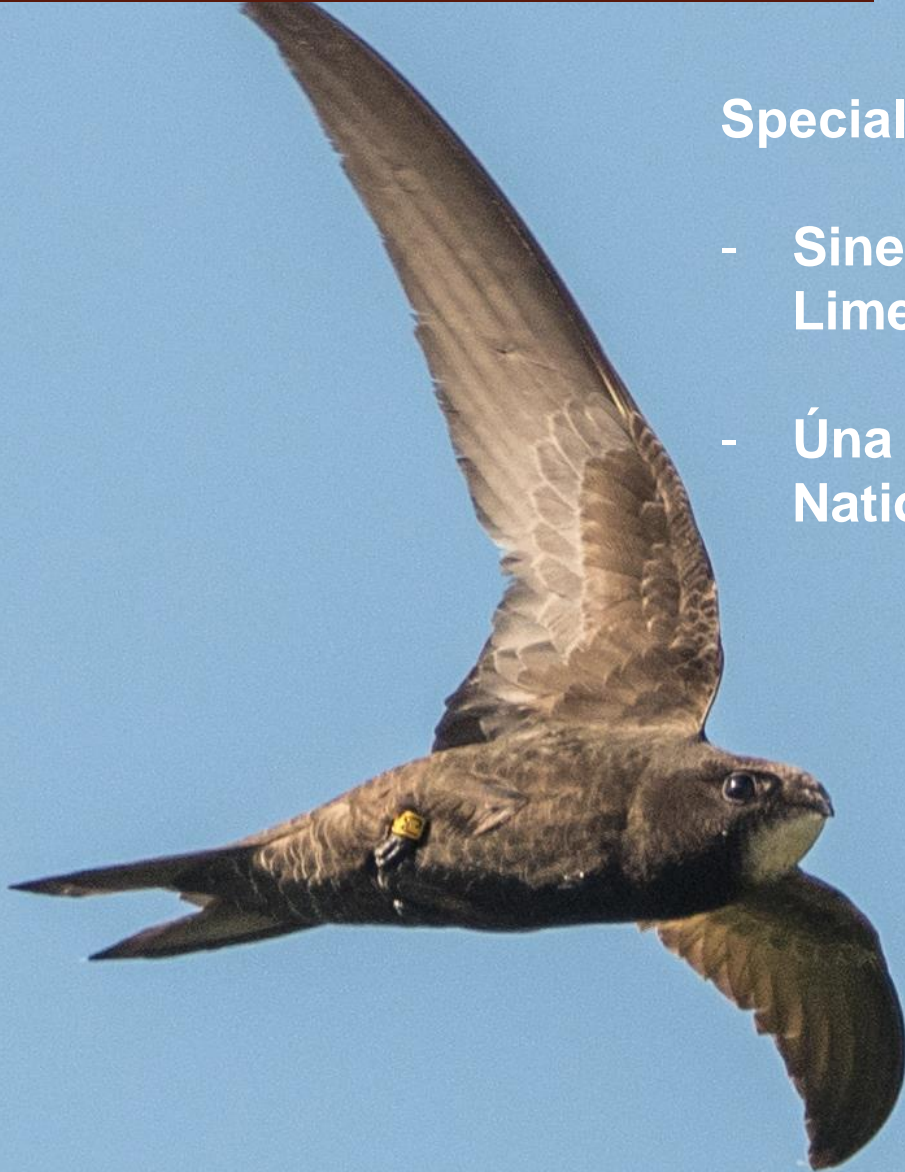


**Offaly County Council**  
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí



**An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**  
Department of Housing,  
Planning and Local Government

# Finally



Special thanks to...

- Sinead McDonnell and Sharon Lynch - Limerick City & County Council.
- Úna FitzPatrick & Liam Lysaght – National Biodiversity Data Centre.





# Any Questions?

Email

[rwhelan@birdwatchireland.ie](mailto:rwhelan@birdwatchireland.ie)



[www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)



<https://www.facebook.com/BirdWatchIreland/>



[@BirdWatchIE](https://twitter.com/BirdWatchIE)



<https://inyournature.buzzsprout.com/>