

Maine Nest Quest

SWIFT AND SWALLOW IDENTIFICATION

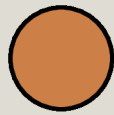


Report observations at
mefishwildlife.com/mainenestquest

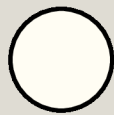
CLIFF SWALLOW



Metallic blue-black back



Cinnamon rump



White to buffy belly



Buffy collar and rusty throat



Pale forehead patch on dark crown



Squared Tail

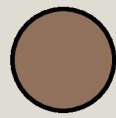


- **Highly social**
- **Forage in flocks and gather at mud puddles to collect nesting material**

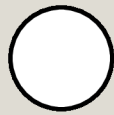
- **Gourd-shaped nests in colonies of just a few to several hundred nests**
- **Built from hundreds of mud pellets**
- **Attached to vertical surfaces under natural or human-made overhangs**



BANK SWALLOW



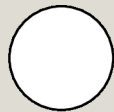
Brown above



Bright white belly



Brown breast band



White chin



Maine's smallest swallow



Slightly forked tail



- **Highly social colony nester**
- **May be found around active colonies or among flocks of other foraging swallows**

- **Excavates small burrows with round entrances**
- **Colonies are clustered near the top of vertical, sandy or gravelly banks along rivers, lakeshores, gravel pits, and road cuts**
- **Colonies range from a few burrows to thousands**



BARN SWALLOW



Glossy blue-black above



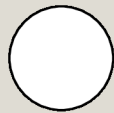
Cinnamon forehead



Cinnamon throat



Creamy to buffy below



White tail spots sometimes visible



Deeply forked tail with streamers



- Forage low over fields farms, wetlands, and open water
- Often perch on fences and wires near nest sites
- May nest alone or in colonies
- Nests are open cups built with mud pellets and lined with grasses and feathers
- Nests on beams, ledges, and other sheltered surfaces of barns, bridges, culverts, porches, and other structures



TREE SWALLOW



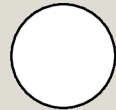
Shimmering blue-green above



Adult females
may appear dull



Young birds often
brown above



Bright white below



Males have a thin black eye mask



Slightly forked tail

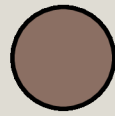


- Forage over fields, wetlands, lakes, and rivers
- Often perch on fences, snags, and nest boxes in breeding areas

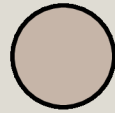
- Nest in natural tree cavities, old woodpecker holes, and nest boxes
- Nests are built with grasses and other plant material, and often lined with feathers
- May nest alone or in loose groups where cavities are abundant by water or agricultural fields



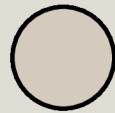
NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW



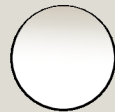
Plain brown above



Pale gray-brown throat and breast



No distinct breast band



Fades into white belly



Juveniles have cinnamon wing bars

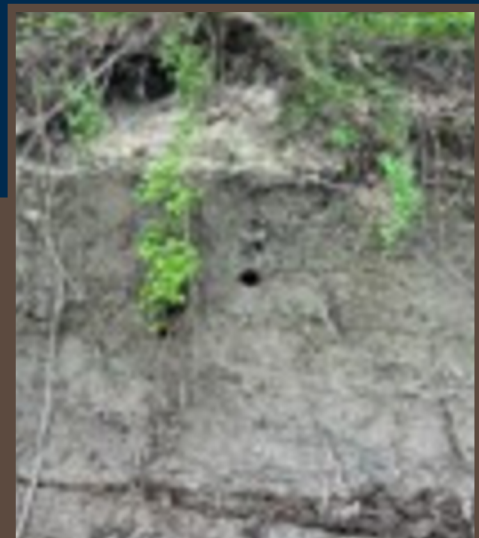


Square tail

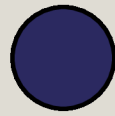


- Forage over rivers, streams, ponds, and wetlands
- Often found alone, in pairs, or in small groups rather than large flocks

- Nests in cavities and burrows within steep banks of rivers, shoreline, gravel pits, road cuts, and other exposed soils
- Nest alone or in small groups rather than colonies
- Occasionally use holes at the edge of bank swallow colonies



PURPLE MARTIN



Males glossy blue-black



Females and juveniles duller above, lighter and speckled below



Broader wings than other swallows, and a slightly hooked bill



North America's largest Swallow



Forked tail



- **Highly social**
- **Forage high overhead in groups**
- **Often perch in groups near nesting sites**
- **In eastern North America, nest almost exclusively in human-provided housing**
- **Houses built for purple martin nesting colonies may be multi-compartment houses or gourd-shaped cavities.**
- **Host a colony: mefishwildlife.com/purplemartin**



CHIMNEY SWIFT



Sooty gray-brown overall



Slightly more pale on throat



May appear black against bright sky



Cigar-shaped with curved wings



Frequently mistaken for bats



Short, blunt tail with bristles



- Almost always seen in flight high overhead
- Gather in large groups before evening roosting
- Rapid fluttering wingbeats and distinctive chatter

- Nests almost exclusively in chimneys and other vertical, enclosed structures
- Nests are small, half-saucer-shaped, and made of twigs secured with saliva
- Nesting pairs are typically solitary but communal chimneys may host thousands of roosting swifts

