

House Martin

Delichon urbicum

Bird · Summer migrant · Apr-Sep



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A small, neat aerial bird: glossy blue-black above, pure white below, with a brilliant white rump that separates it instantly from a swallow, and a short forked tail with no long streamers. House martins nest colonially under the eaves of Dumfries houses and bridges, and hawk for insects overhead all summer. They are red-listed following a marked national decline.

BEHAVIOUR

The nest is an enclosed cup of mud pellets, up to a thousand of them, stuck under an overhang with only a small entrance at the top — which requires wet mud nearby, so puddles and pond margins matter to them. Both parents feed the young on insects caught on the wing, and last year's nest is often repaired and reused. Families gather on wires in late summer before departure.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Swallows and martins (Hirundinidae)
SIZE	12.5 cm · smaller than a swallow
UK STATUS	Red-listed

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