

# HAND-REARING PROTOCOL

## Common Swift (*Apus apus*) / Pallid swift (*Apus pallidus*)

### Admission:

#### -Standard wildlife admission protocol

- Weight control, physical examination, identification (ring, tipped dots)

### First Aids:

#### -Fluid therapy (5% body weigh)

- 80% SRL + 20% Duphalyte® SQ (subcutaneously) inguinal crease (Patients should be warmed before administering fluids)

#### -Endoparasits (prophylactic anthelmintic treatment)

- Praziquantel (Droncit®), VO (Oral) 50 mg pill solved in 20 ml water (0,1 ml/25mg)

#### -Ectoparasits (when detected)

- Fipronil (Frontline®) 1 drop on the skin (back of the neck) once at admission

### Acute cases – emaciation/cachexia:

- Frequent oral infusion VO (90% water + 10% Glucolyte®), few drops at the border of the beak
- Infusions 24-48 h., BiD (twice day) 80% SRL + 20% Duphalyte® SQ inguinal crease
- From 3 to 7 days, **Antibiotic**: Ampicillin - Ampitab® (veterinary drug) or Britapen 250g solution® (Paediatric drug), (150mg/kg) two drops, VO, BiD

### Specifics: (Check with your expert wildlife veterinarian)

- Iodine base antiseptics to clean the injury
- Wounds caused by cats and dogs: Antibiotic (Amoxillin + Clavulanic), 150mg/kg, VO SiD, 7 days
- Antifungi: Itraconazol 10mg/kg, VO SiD (once a day), max 14 days – prophylaxis treatment when antibiotic is provided (after 4 days of antibiotic treatment)
- Pododermatitis: Colistin + tetracyclin 12g, BiD, VT (Topical administration)

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## Housing:

- The best is housing 3-4 swifts per box, especially when the swifts are under surveillance and droppings must be monitored
- "Ikea" type plastic boxes are good solutions with absorbent kitchen paper as substrate

## Naked chicks / weak / severe emaciation

- Heated mats where boxes are placed so that a warm area and a non heated area are offered to the swift
- Acute cases, naked chicks have to be maintained in a more controlled environment. There are on the market specialized products like the **hatchers** that **maintain a stable temperature and humidity**
- The paper substrate is checked and changed if needed every feeding time with special attention to the faeces or its absence



## Feeding:

### -Important considerations

- Do not provide any solid food until the bird is completely rehydrated as you may have the temptation observing how often starving and severely emaciated birds show hyperactivity and begging for food
- Follow the protocol providing fluids before giving any solid food **even when the chick is begging desperately**

### -Feeding times

- Normal condition: every 3 hours (8:00-11:00-14:00-17:00-20:00)
- Severe condition/naked chicks: every 1-2 hours

### -Diets

- Insect based diets use different insects in different proportions. **NEVER USE A NON-INSECT DIET**
- Mainly, three different insect based diets have been proposed and used with optimal results:
  - Mealworm based diet (90%) + other insect species
  - Cricket based diet (in addition wax worm is also provided)
  - Diet composed of a variety of insect species
- **Mealworm** based diet (used by this protocol author) is also complemented by other insect species (cricket, wax worm, silk worm, Cockroaches, flies and wild insects). Mealworms are kept alive and drowned in water before feeding. **NEVER DRIED OR FROZEN**
- The other insect species can be maintained frozen and defrosted at the feeding time
- Do never use fly larvae (maggots), are proved harmful



### -Quantity

- Begging young: ad libitum but with measure (20 g per day)
- Forced feeding:  $\pm$  4 g insect (15-20 g per day)

### -Feeding method

- Hold the bird gently but securely (use a handkerchief to avoid spoiling feathers with sweaty hands)
- With the head restrained open carefully the beak with the right finger index placing the fingernail between upper and lower beak
- With the left finger index hold the beak slightly opened
- Place the insects carefully into the rear of the throat with the tweezers and let free the beak
- Help the swallowing reflex by rubbing gently the gorge



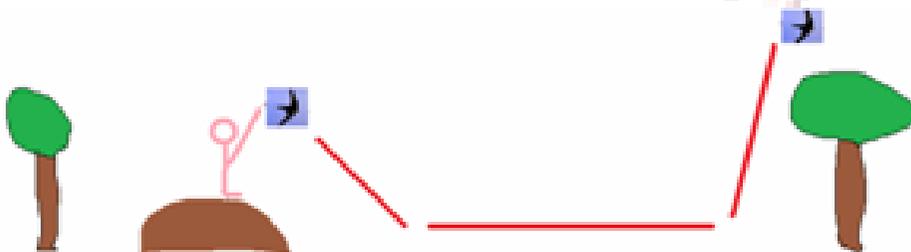
### -Supplementation - ESSENTIAL

- One feeding a day, the insects are powdered with **vitamin** and **mineral supplementation**
  - E.g.: Nekton S, Nekton Bio, Korvimin...
- **Calcium gluconate** one feeding a day
- Once a week, one insect soaked on **Vitamin B Complex**
  - It can be administered orally or SQ
- Probiotic is also recommended



### Release:

- The complete feather growth can be checked before release, even though the fledgling has to decide when is ready
- **Never throw a swift high into the air!**
- A healthy hand-reared swift can take off from your hand easily (even from the ground!), do so, if it doesn't want to fly try the following day
- Never release them from elevated locations, in case something goes wrong the swift may crash land with fatal consequences not having a second opportunity
- Release should be done in an area when it can be rescued easily in case of failure



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[www.swift-help.org](http://www.swift-help.org)

