

## **SBSG SWIFT SURVEY 2014–15**

### **PRELIMINARY RESULTS FOR SK 38**



Members were invited to submit records of Swifts during both the 2014 and 2015 breeding seasons in the hope of repeating the previous survey carried out by the Group during 1979–80 under the leadership of Jon Hornbuckle.

Sadly, despite the ease of recording this species during the breeding season, the relatively simple submission via the Group's website, and plenty of recent exposure regarding the national decline of this iconic species, the response was somewhat underwhelming (a big

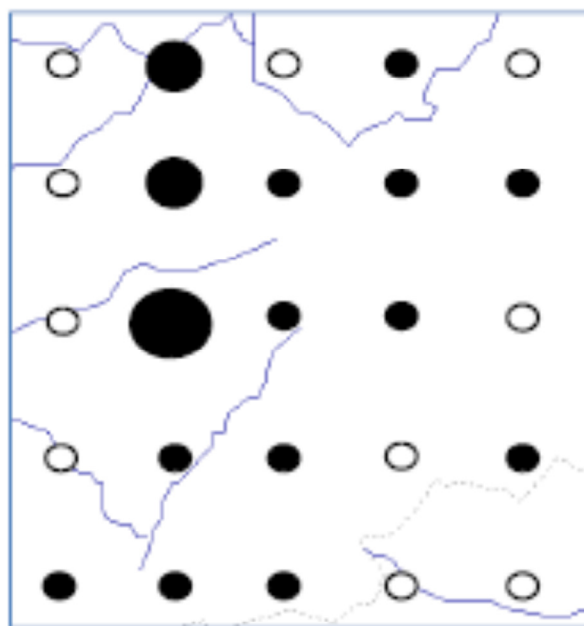
thank you to those that did submit records). A sign of the times perhaps...

Not wanting to waste either the opportunity, or the small number of valuable records received, a back-up plan was instigated to restrict the survey to the 10 km square centred on Sheffield City Centre, otherwise known as SK 38 (see below) and compare the results with the previous survey.



During the 1979–80 survey, this key square yielded over 700 pairs of breeding Swifts. So, has anything changed during the past 35 years? are Swifts still as common? or are the trends noted at a national level now prevalent in and around the City Centre? – I was determined to find out!

Well, after walking, cycling, and driving through various parts of SK 38 this summer recording Swift nests, the preliminary results would suggest so. Although the density and distribution is broadly comparable to both the 1979–80 survey and the most recent 2003–08 local breeding Atlas, there is strong evidence in the preliminary results that the number of breeding Swifts has declined significantly, particularly in and around the City Centre (see below).



The lack of breeding records from previous strongholds like Fulwood and Manor Park is particularly noticeable, as is the significant reduction in breeding pairs from once familiar areas such as Millhouses, Woodseats and the western fringes of the City Centre. Although there is still more to analyse, such as the the nature and type of nest sites utilised by Swifts during the survey, if you have any breeding records during 2014-15 that are yet to be submitted, **please do so via the website**. Many thanks!

**Richard Hill**