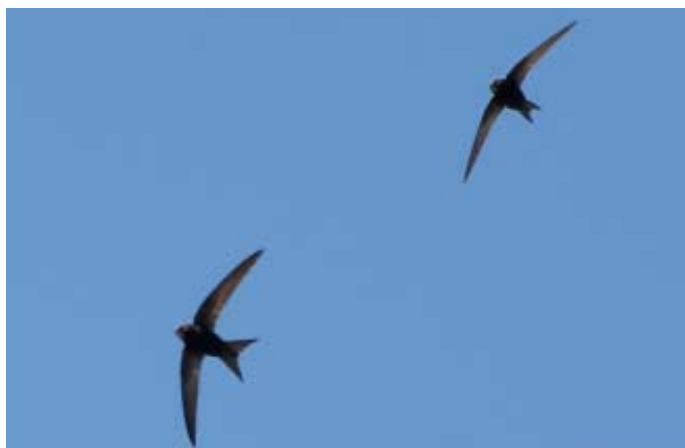


# Bird life



An easy and fun way for you to help us keep track of our spring migrants as they come to Ireland

[www.springalive.net](http://www.springalive.net)

**S**pring Alive is an exciting new project organised by BirdLife International and its national partners all around Europe, including BirdWatch Ireland. The main message of the project is that birds are migrating across the whole of Europe, crossing many borders, and that everyone can be a part of this fascinating event.

Taking part in *Spring Alive* is very easy: Children, their families and school classes around the continent are asked to go for a springtime walk around their neighbourhoods and look for their first Cuckoo, Swift, Swallow or White Stork\* - four common European bird species - that have been chosen as the Spring Messengers. These observations should then be entered on the specially-provided form on the project's web-site - [www.springalive.net](http://www.springalive.net). The whole process requires mere seconds: a name, an e-mail address and a couple of mouse clicks are all it takes.

\*White Stork is also included, but it is unlikely to occur in Ireland.

To show the progress of spring, the computer system creates maps based on the submitted data, showing the rate at which the four Spring Messengers are returning from their wintering sites. These maps are also available on the web-site and will be updated daily. Participants can check the maps, as soon as the following day, to see if their observations have pushed the march of spring forward in Europe. A country-by-country breakdown of the figures is also provided, and it is even possible to watch the spread of each species in Ireland on an individual county or provincial basis.

To help you get to know as much as you can about the four species covered by the project, key information about them is available at [www.springalive.net](http://www.springalive.net), including photos, sound recordings, video clips, and interactive games. The scheme makes an ideal project for schools, and is perfect for kids (and adults) of all ages.



Above: Swallow; Left: Swift  
(Front Page: Cuckoo)

interesting annual patterns and may become very useful for the monitoring of other important environmental issues, like climate change or habitat loss. Please remember that every observation is valuable!

Every single observation is important for us - thanks to your input we will be able to check the arrival dates every year and see how different factors influence the arrival of birds. With time, the data we gather should reveal some

We are particularly hopeful for a large Irish participation in *Spring Alive* this year, so please do have a go yourself and send in your records. After all, if you have seen some of the Spring Messengers, wouldn't it be nice to share this news with the rest of the world?

## For Teachers

The project is expected to be an exciting experience for children, but as such it can become an exceptional educational opportunity for the teachers. *Spring Alive* is based on the internet, making it particularly easy to take part in and even more attractive for young participants. The project can be a useful way to introduce children to bird migration, wildlife and citizen science activities. It can also be a great way to demonstrate the importance of cross-border conservation and the close connection between children's local environment and the European natural heritage.

To meet the needs of teachers that are interested in participating with their classes, there is an additional web-site with special teaching materials ([www.springaliveresources.net](http://www.springaliveresources.net)). These materials include information sheets on the four *Spring Alive* species, educational games and lesson scripts. All the activities included in the materials are dedicated to general knowledge about observations, bird migration and habitats, in context of the *Spring Alive* species.



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