



BIRD OF THE MONTH - March



BARN SWALLOW

Spring is quite literally in the air.

The swift flying, aerially acrobatic Barn Swallow is a beloved, time-honored symbol for the arrival of spring throughout the entire Northern Hemisphere. A long distance migrating bird, North American Barn Swallows typically over-winter in South America, reappearing late March and April to breed in the springtime and in summer months.

The high flying Barn Swallow's most distinguishing feature is its deeply forked tail, along with steel-blue upper parts, chestnut forehead and throat with a slender cinnamon belly.



Barn Swallows are insectivores with a diet comprised mainly of flies, aphids, mosquitoes, gnats and swarming termites. A single airborne Barn Swallow

will consume 60 insects per hour and up to 850 per day. They have formed a mutually beneficial relationship with people, using man-made structures for nest placement near water sources while also serving to keep insect populations in check.

The male Barn Swallow returns each Spring to the breeding area, identifying a nesting site, there launching into a courtship display that involves singing and circling flight. Barn Swallows are monogamous and typically mate for life. Both parents will diligently feed their hungry nestlings and recently fledged young before they achieve independence and the ability to adroitly catch insects on the wing. They'll need that essential expertise in order to survive the epically long migration south for the winter, followed by their welcome home return flight here next year.



Photographed locally by James Kendall.



Watch and listen for these high flying rapid rockets as they dart about in the clear skies above. You'll be reminded, at last, that spring is indeed in the air.