

# BANK SWALLOW

*RIPARIA RIPARIA*

Your ally against flying insects

## Main benefits for agriculture

Bank swallows are highly active and voracious hunters. According to some estimates, a single bank swallow can consume **more than 1,000 insects a day**, especially during periods when they are busy feeding their young.

Bank swallows hunt in open areas, such as grain fields (wheat, barley, oats, etc.), where they help reduce insect populations that can damage crops. Above pastures and meadows, they capture flying insects potentially harmful to livestock or forage crops.

In fruit and vegetable crop fields, bank swallows also help control populations of insect pests such as thrips and whiteflies, which can be detrimental to yields and crop quality.



## Habitats

- Breeding: Sandy banks along shorelines and man-made environments (sandpits, cranberry bogs, road-cuts, sand piles, etc.)
- Feeding: Wetlands and riparian environments, grasslands, and pastureland

## Did you know?

Swallows can help **reduce the need for pesticides**, resulting in substantial cost savings. They also help prevent the issue of pest insects developing a resistance to pesticides.

# What you can do to help the bank swallow

## Preserving habitat

Maintain pastures and graze livestock more often to **attract the insects** on which bank swallows feed.

**Maintain diverse riparian buffers** to encourage the presence of insects.

Maintain **vegetation with stabilizing properties at the top of banks** where bank swallow burrows are located to reduce the risk of erosion.

## Encouraging reproduction

**Avoid disturbing sandpits, shorelines, and banks** used by bank swallows.

## Reducing mortality

**Reduce pesticide use** by using integrated pest management methods and promoting soil health, to ensure a source of food.



Bank swallows are gregarious, forming nesting colonies with multiple mating pairs.

Their sociability may make them more effective at controlling insect populations, thus protecting crops near their colonies.

### References :

Environment and Climate Change Canada (2022). Recovery Strategy for the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) in Canada. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Environment and Climate Change Canada.  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (2017). Best Management Practices for the Protection, Creation and Maintenance of Bank Swallow Habitat in Ontario. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

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