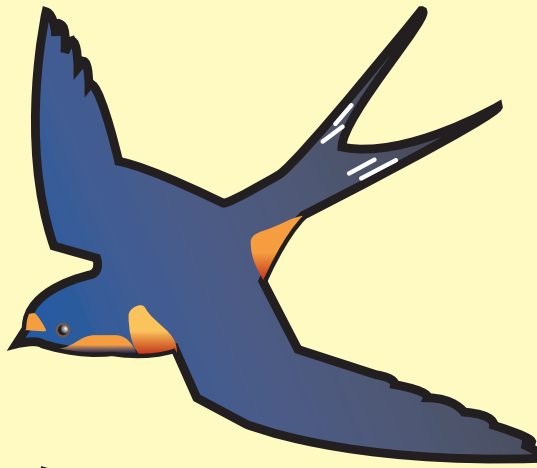


Swallows

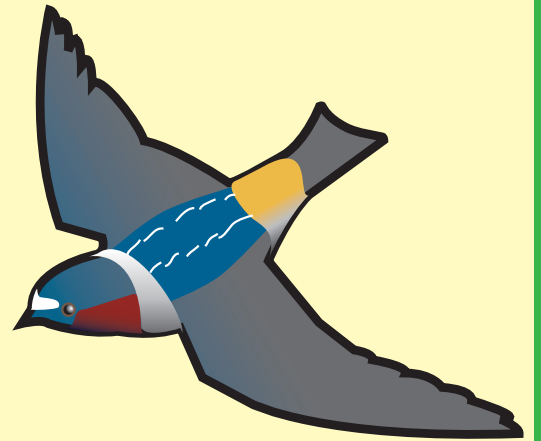
of the
Willamette Valley, Oregon
neighborhood naturalist

www.neighborhood-naturalist.com
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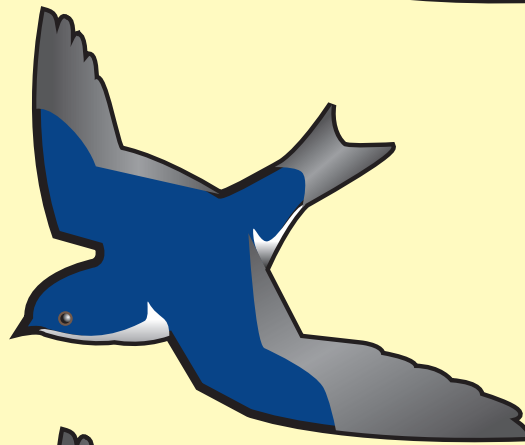
The **Barn Swallow** is common in farms, parks, ball fields and airports. The tail is significantly longer than our other swallows. It has an iridescent indigo back and wings with a black tail. The throat and belly are rust colored.



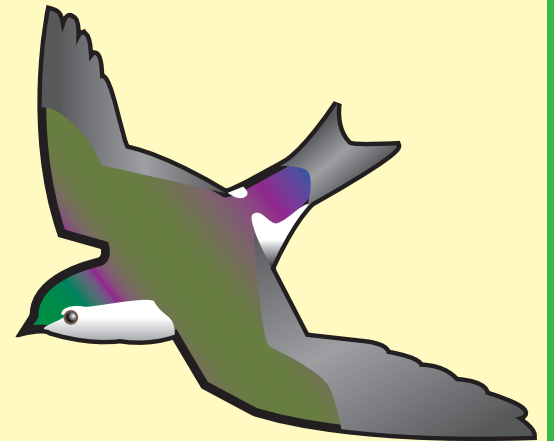
The **Cliff Swallow** is found where there are suitable sites for nesting colonies, usually near water. It has dark gray wings and tail. The blue back has characteristic white dashes. The head is dark with a white forehead.



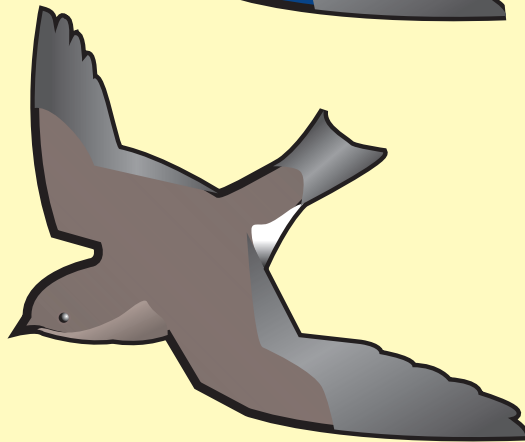
The **Tree Swallow** is common in open areas, often near water. The throat and belly are white. The head wings and rump are iridescent dark blue with dark gray wing tips and tail. Fledglings and yearling females are dull colored and look similar to the Northern Rough-winged Swallow.



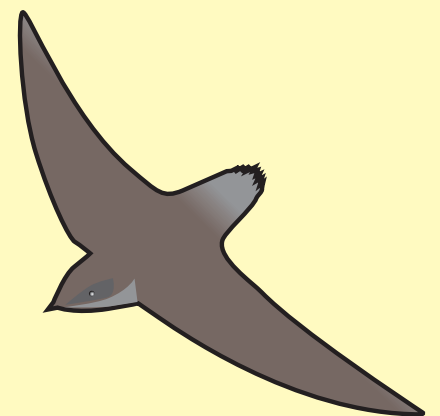
The **Violet-green Swallow** is common and the primary swallow of urban areas. It looks like a Tree Swallow but has shades of iridescent green and violet. The white extends to the rump and the eye is surrounded by white.



The **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** is uncommon and found primarily around rivers. Adults and young are brownish-gray with a light gray belly and whitish under the tail.



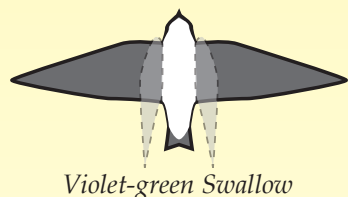
The **Vaux's Swift** (pronounced "vox-es") is not a swallow. It is more closely related to a hummingbird than to a swallow. It is common in urban areas and in forests. A swift spends its waking hours in the sky hunting insects. The only time it rests is at night when it clings to the walls of a chimney, hollow tree or similar structure.



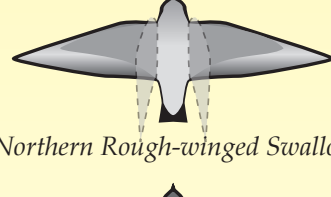
Tree Swallow



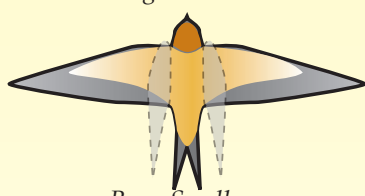
Cliff Swallow



Violet-green Swallow



Northern Rough-winged Swallow

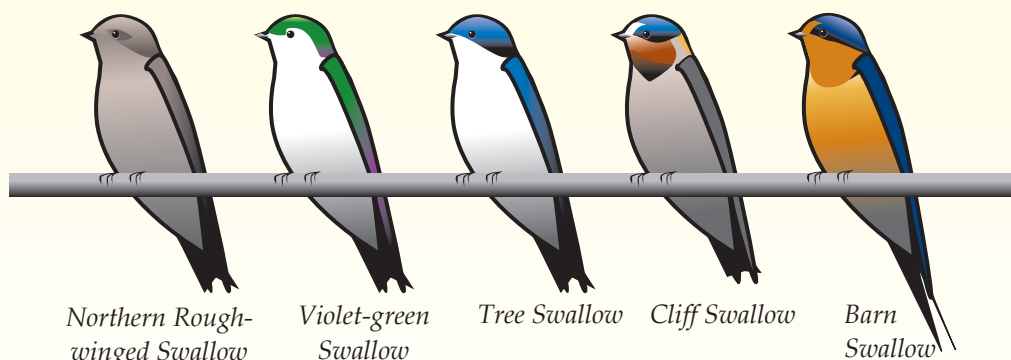


Barn Swallow



Vaux's Swift

Swallows spend most of their time in the air, so it's important to know them from below. Only the Barn Swallow has a unique shape with its forked tail. Tree and Violet-green Swallows are nearly indistinguishable from below. They both have white bellies and throats (except fledglings). Other swallows have darker bellies. Swallows fold their wings when they flap. The Vaux's Swift flies at break-neck speed and flutters rapidly with seemingly stiff wings. Swifts are darker than all of our swallows.



Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Violet-green Swallow

Tree Swallow

Cliff Swallow

Barn Swallow

Swallows perch—swifts can't. Take a close look at swallows resting on telephone cables and you may see more than one species. Take this opportunity to learn the differences in plumage patterns. Compare the head, throat and belly patterns of these swallows.

Swallow nest box: Only Violet-green and Tree Swallows use nest boxes. The oval slot in this box excludes House Sparrows (nonnative). Swallows aren't picky about their nesting sites but they prefer spots away from immediate trees limbs and shrubs. They don't mind other nest boxes nearby but a distance of 15 or more feet is advisable. Be sure to use a smooth post, like metal or PVC, to prevent predators from accessing the nest. An inverted metal cone around a wooden post will work too.

Nesting



Bluebird nest box: This is a design specifically for bluebirds but it will attract Violet-green and Tree Swallows. The hole design excludes starlings but not sparrows. If bluebirds reject your bluebird box as a nesting site, don't worry, swallows may accept it.



Barn Swallow nest

Mud nests: Barn and Cliff Swallows make mud-cup nests and do not use cavities. Northern Rough-winged Swallows make cavity nests in the soil of steep riverbanks