

# Conservation of Bank Swallows at Active Gravel Pits

## Working Gravel Pits and Bank Swallows can co-exist!

All the birds ask is that the banks with their holes are not worked over the short nesting season. They can be worked again in August.

The birds are thankful to you – there is limited real estate for them these days!

Thanks!



Photo by Ejdzej.

**Bank Swallows** frequently nest in the steep, sandy banks at gravel pits. Their nesting season is relatively short and it is possible to accommodate nest colonies at active gravel pits.

- Identify nest sites by watching for birds excavating holes in early to mid-May.
- Avoid extraction activities around active nesting colonies to minimize disturbance.
- Resume extraction activity at the nest site after birds have left at the end of July.

Once birds have left the colony they do not return to the nest holes again that summer. Extraction may resume once birds are no longer going in and out of the holes. Gravel extraction actually creates new vertical faces that are more suitable for Bank Swallow nesting than older, more gradual or vegetated cliffs.

**Important Note:** The birds, their eggs, and young are **federally** protected and may not be killed. Active nests may not be destroyed during the summer breeding season.

## Timetable

- late April-early May: swallows arrive back in the spring
- early-mid-May: begin nesting (egg laying)
- late May-June: incubation (12-16 days) and feeding of young (leave nest at 19 days old)
- mid-July: most swallows leave nesting cliffs but late nesters may stay through July
- late July-August: swallows migrate out of New Hampshire



Bank Swallow colony photo by Sue Randall.



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