

## Swallows Summary (based on lecture by Eric Stager)

ORDER: Passeriformes FAMILY: Hirundinidae									
GROUP	SPECIES	KEY FIELD MARKS	ADDITIONAL FIELD MARKS	DISTRIBUTION	SIZE, GISS & STRUCTURE	FLIGHT CHARACTERISTICS	IMMATURES	VOCALIZATIONS	NESTING
Green	Tree	Sharp contrast between dark cheek and white throat.	Glossy blue-green back. All dark above including rump. Entirely bright white below. Some white at base of tail, less prominent than Violet-green.	Throughout North America (NA). Breeds in the north, migrant in the middle, present in winter along southern coast in low numbers.	Large and compact. Broad wings, notched tail.	Chase after flying insects with acrobatic twists and turns, often at higher altitudes.	Often shows shadowy gray breast band.	High clear two-note whistles, liquid chirping and twittering.	Nests in tree cavities, bluebird boxes.
	Violet-Green	White face, white above eye. Brilliant white below. Emerald green back. White of underside wraps onto sides of rump.	White face, white above eye. Lacks contrast between cheek and throat. Eye is visible. Female duller than male, brown cap.	Western NA. Higher, drier and faster than Tree.	Wings project well past short tail. Smaller than Tree in direct comparison. Long wings and short tail. Tail narrow at base.	Erratic, stiff flight recalls swifts. Acrobatic stunts over lakes and streams high in the sky in search of flying insects.	Dusky face with indistinct border. White saddlebags more prominent than immature Tree.	Chirping like Tree, but sharper, harder <i>chilp</i> or <i>chip-lip</i> .	Nest in cavities in trees and cliffs, old woodpecker holes, and nest boxes.
Rusty	Barn	Long slender body. Long forked tail. Blue-black above.	Orange to whitish below with rusty throat. Underparts variable. Bicolored underwings. Rustier than Cliff.	World wide. Summers north, winters south.	Very long narrow wings. Deeply forked tail with white band. Looks very dark at a distance. Tail always longer than other swallows.	Smooth fluid flight with quick turns and dives. Rarely glides. Often hunts low over ponds or fields.	Young birds may lack deeply forked tail	Musical mutterings, churrings, squeeks with occasional rattle.	
	Cliff	Hooded. Sharply defined dark throat. Forehead mnemonic "white cliffs of Dover".	Buffy rump and collar. Sharply defined dark throat. Whitish forehead. High contrast. Dark above with buffy rump and collar. Dark underwing and tail contrasts with pale body.	Summers NA, winters South America (SA).	Stocky with short square tail. Stocky body, broad wings with rounded contours.	Strong flier with fluttery wingbeats. Glides frequently.	Highly variable! Dark throat and forehead, often with white speckling. Dark auriculars. Pale rump.	Drawn out creaking and rattling sounds, shorter and simpler than Barn.	Builds gourd-style mud nests under bridges.
	Cave	"Capped" rather than hooded. Buffy orange rump and collar.	Buffy orange throat, not sharply defined. Dark chestnut forehead. Lower contrast than Cliff. Less contrast between underwings and body. Lacks sharply defined dark throat.	West & central Texas. Increasing range. Winters in Mexico and Caribbean and a few in Texas, especially on coast.	Very similar to Cliff.	Flight similar to Cliff, glides less. Flies with deep and strong wingbeats interspersed with frequent glides.	Highly variable! Pale throat and cheeks. May have buffy forehead. Pale throat and cheeks. Lacks white speckling.	Song "like muffled Barn Swallow," sweeter than Cliff.	Breeds in caves, bridges, other human structures.
Drab	Northern Rough-winged	Plain brown above, dirty white below. Dusky throat.	Drab overall. Low contrast.	Throughout contiguous US. Some winter along Gulf coast, most in Mexico and Central America.	Round contours. Broad and blunt wings.	Smooth, deliberate flight.	Cinnamon wing bars.	Short, rising burry notes.	Nests in burrows on steep banks, crevices in structures.
	Bank	Crisp brown breastband with contrasting throat. Rump distinctly paler than back.	White wraps around auriculars. Brown breast band sets off white throat and belly.	Breeds across Holarctic. Winters south of US.	Small and slender. Long slender tail with fork. Trim body, long notched tail. Smallest swallow.	Very quick, downward flicking wingbeats. Steep climbs and descending swoops.		Buzzy, unmusical "brrrrrr". Higher pitched and more varied than Rough-winged.	Nests in excavated tunnels in riverbanks, excavations.
	Purple Martin	Males glossy black-purple. Females bluish gray above, dirty gray below.	Darker on chest. Pale collar. Females grayish undersides contrast with dark underwings and breast.	Central and eastern US. Winters in SA.	Big and sturdy, broad chested. Large head, peaked with sloped forehead. Large and broadly proportioned. Long tapered wings. Projecting head. Falcon-like silhouette.	Flight is direct and powerful. Glides frequently. Often hunts at high altitudes. Often flying before dawn.	Brownish to bluish gray above, dirty gray with fine streaks below.	Rich, musical, liquid gurgling.	Breeds mostly in martin houses around towns, rural areas.