

Welcome swallow

Hirundo tabitica neoxena

15 cm

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE, NOT THREATENED

The welcome swallow is a recent colonist in New Zealand, and has bred on Chatham Island since about 1976. It is a small, slender bird with rapid, darting flight. Welcome swallows have dark heads and backs, chestnut-coloured foreheads and throats, and are greyish underneath. The wings are long and pointed and the tail deeply forked. Welcome swallows are common near waterways and in open areas. They forage by hawking for flying insects. The characteristic mud nests are attached to vertical surfaces under an overhang, typically under eaves of buildings, bridges and culverts, or in sea caves.



Welcome swallows at their nest. Photo: Peter Reese.