

## A PROTECTED SPECIES

The Bank Swallow is a migratory bird species at risk that has lost 98% of its Canadian population over the last 40 years.

This insectivorous bird is particularly drawn to sand and gravel pits, stockpiles of sand and soil, and sandy banks along water bodies and roads. Bank Swallows generally dig their burrows in near-vertical banks (slopes of at least 70 degrees) that are more than 2 m high. Bank swallows typically use their nesting sites from mid-April to late August. This is the sensitive period during which the risk of harming the birds is especially high. The absence of the birds in August is a good indicator that the breeding season is over.

FIGURE 1. SUITABILITY OF SLOPES FOR NESTING



The best way to minimize the possibility of contravening the **Species At Risk Act** and the **Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994** and their regulations is to fully understand the impact that your activities could have on migratory birds and their nests and eggs and to take reasonable precautions and appropriate avoidance measures. In fact, under the acts and associated regulations, it is an offence for anyone to kill, hunt, capture, injure or harass a migratory bird or to damage, destroy, remove or disturb its nest, eggs or residence (burrow) without a permit. The sand and gravel industry can play a major role in the conservation of Bank Swallows by adopting operating practices that do not harm the species.

For more information, visit the [Species at Risk Registry](#) or the [Avoiding harm to migratory birds](#) web page on the Government of Canada website at [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca)

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## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Before the Swallows arrive and begin nesting (generally before mid-April)

- ▶ In areas where operations will be carried out during the breeding season, contour your piles to have a slope of less than 70 degrees
- ▶ When conducting operations outside the breeding period, create suitable nesting habitat with vertical faces of at least 70 degrees.
- ▶ Install scaring devices to deter Bank Swallows from establishing colonies in active areas.

### During the breeding season (generally from mid-April to late August)

- ▶ Avoid intense activity near the colony and mark off a protective buffer zone around it.
- ▶ A minimum buffer zone of 50 metres should be maintained around the colony to protect it from noise or vibrations generated by operations.
- ▶ During more intense periods of activity, a larger protective buffer may be needed to minimize the risk of disturbance.
- ▶ Spend a few minutes flattening vertical faces at the end of the day to prevent Bank Swallows from digging burrows in them overnight or on weekends.
- ▶ Stop excavation work if Bank Swallows colonize a bank in an active area, and do not resume operations until the birds leave at the end of the breeding period.
- ▶ Do not use scaring devices once the colony is established as they may interfere with ongoing Bank Swallow breeding activities.

### After the Swallows leave at the end of the breeding season (generally after late August)

- ▶ If a nesting site needs to be excavated after the birds leave, provide an alternate site that can support nesting in the following year. To be suitable for Bank Swallow nesting, the bank must have a slope of at least 70 degrees.

Notify your employees of the prohibitions that apply to the Bank Swallow and the techniques that can be implemented to avoid harming the species



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# BANK SWALLOW

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IN SANDPITS AND QUARRIES