

## 2011 Manitoba Chimney Swift initiative (MCSI) Monitoring Protocol

---

### General Overview

The following is a description of the procedure and amount of monitoring we would like for each site. If you are unable to monitor your site to this degree, please do whatever you can. The goal is to monitor as many sites as possible, and we are grateful for any amount of observation.

- The first time you visit your site, please **fill out the Chimney Assessment Form** to the best of your ability (if it was not already done in a previous year. Ask me if you are unsure). This form involves a small amount of math, so you may want to bring along your calculator! Don't worry if you're not able to fill out all columns, such as GPS coordinates.
- **Arrive at your site half an hour before sunset and stay until half an hour after sunset.** If swifts are using the chimney, this is the time they come in to roost for the night. If the weather is cold and/or rainy, swifts may stay inside their chimneys until the return of nicer weather. It is therefore recommended that monitoring take place on days that are not raining and/or unseasonably cold.
- **If swifts are observed at a site, the volunteer is requested to continue monitoring as long as the swifts are present.** Ideally, monitoring should be weekly from late-May to mid-late August. This will give us the best indication of how migrating birds arrive/depart, distribute themselves between roosts, and how nest activities progress over the summer. However, we greatly appreciate any monitoring, to a minimum of once per month, as your schedule allows.
- If no swifts are observed after several monitoring sessions (assuming at least one of these monitoring sessions takes place after the first week of June) **the volunteer may choose to be reassigned to a new site in need of monitoring.** Whatever you do, don't feel discouraged! A Chimney Swift count of zero is still useful data.
- **If swifts are observed during an evening monitoring session, the volunteer is requested to monitor the site at least once during daytime hours** in order to determine whether the site is used for nesting or roosting. As non-breeding swifts feed during the day and only enter the roost at sunset, the presence of swifts entering and exiting a chimney during daytime indicates that the site as a nesting site. Daytime monitoring may take place any time between sunrise and half an hour prior to sunset. Daytime monitoring should last for a minimum of for 45 minutes, or until swifts are observed entering or exiting.
- If volunteers wish, they may combine their daytime and evening monitoring sessions together by monitoring for 75 minutes prior to sunset and 30 minutes after sunset. If you choose to do this, please indicate on your datasheet the time at which daytime monitoring ceases and evening monitoring begins.

- If volunteers wish, they are welcome to search out chimneys they would like to monitor. This is a good way to do your monitoring close to home! Look for chimneys at least 2.5 bricks in diameter that are not noticeably capped or lined with metal. If you find a chimney you think suitable, contact the MCSI coordinator to verify whether it is already being monitored.
- **Please forward any additional Chimney Swift sightings to the MCSI coordinator.** If possible, please include location, time, date, observer name, contact information, and number of birds.

## **Filling Out the Data Sheet**

### **Date**

- Write down today's date.

### **Site Number**

- Each site is identified with an individual number. The coordinator will give you the site number for each chimney assigned to you.

### **Observation Number**

- This indicates the number of observations made at each site. For example 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Location**

- If you know the address of your site, write it down. If this is unknown, please write down the approximate location of the site. For example, "building on the west side of Banning St., north of Portage Ave behind Shoppers Drug Mart".

### **Name of Observer(s)**

- Write down the names of all observers present.

### **Contact Info**

- Write down the email address or phone number one of the observers present.

### **Time of Observation**

- Write down the start time and end time of observation.

### **Duration of Observation**

- Write down the number of hours and/or minutes that observation takes place.

### **Daytime or Roosting Hour**

- Circle one. Daytime observations take place any time from sunrise until half an hour before sunset. Roosting hour observations take place from half an hour before sunset until half an hour after sunset.

### **Sunset Time**

- Write down the sunset time for the day of observation. Sunset times can be found online at <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/moonsun/>.

### **% Cloud Cover**

- Look up at the sky and estimate the percentage covered by clouds. Use the cloud cover scale at the bottom of the datasheet.

### **Wind**

- Use the Beaufort scale at the bottom of the datasheet to estimate wind speed.

**Temperature**

- If you know the temperature at the beginning of the observation period, enter it. You can find this information ahead of time online at <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/>.

**Precipitation**

- Write down None, Trace, or Rain

**Real-Time**

- Write down the time that a Chimney Swift enters or exits the chimney in hours and minutes.

**Entry or Exit**

- If you observe a swift entering the chimney, mark an arrow pointing down. If you see a swift exiting the chimney mark an arrow pointing up.

**Other Swifts in the Airspace**

- If other swifts are flying in the airspace near the chimney at the time of entry or exit, do your best to count them and write down the number.

**Comments**

- If you observe anything that you feel is worth noting while monitoring your site, please enter this in the comments section. Even if you don't observe swifts entering your site, you may notice something that could potentially influence the presence or absence of swifts. For example, the presence of a Merlin (a small species of falcon) or other bird of prey in the area near your site may discourage entry into the nest/roost at the time of your observation.
- If it begins to rain, becomes completely overcast, or the weather makes a noticeable change during your monitoring period, please note this in the comments section.

**Total Entries**

- Record the total number of swifts that entered the nest/roost.

**Total Exits**

- Record the total number of swifts that exited the next/roost.

**Submitting Your Monitoring Data/Observations**

We request that participants send their data to the MCSI Coordinator once every two weeks so that updates can be sent out to all participants throughout the season. For those who have access to a computer and have an email address, the data sheets may be filled out electronically and emailed to the MCSI Coordinator at [mbchimneyswift@gmail.com](mailto:mbchimneyswift@gmail.com). For those who do not have access to email, feel free to contact the MCSI Coordinator at **798-6275**, or the data sheets can be filled out manually and mailed to:

MCSI Coordinator  
c/o Nature Manitoba  
Suite 401 - 63 Albert St  
Winnipeg MB, R3B 1G4

**As our project is built upon the foundation of volunteers, the MCSI Steering Committee would like to thank you for your generous contribution of time and support.**

**Look for monitoring forms and other information at**  
<http://www.naturemanitoba.ca/CHSW.html>