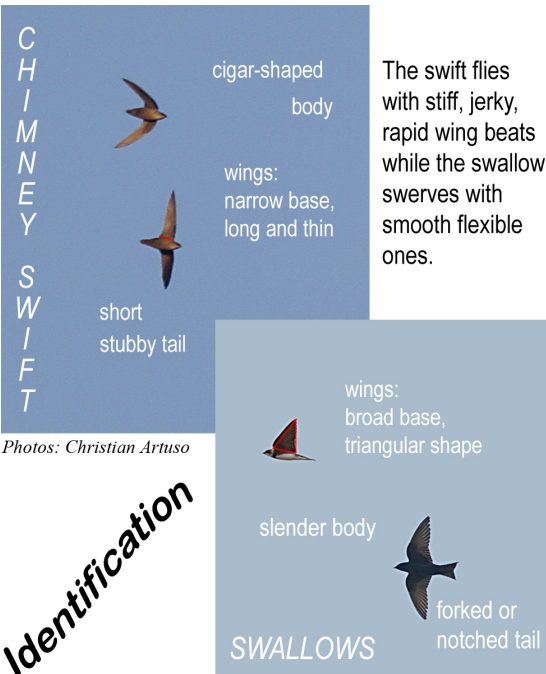


Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

The Chimney Swift (CHSW) can usually be heard chittering before it can be seen. Feeding on the wing, a single bird consumes up to 1000 mosquitoes and other flying insects daily. Because the swift is not adapted to perching upright, it skims over the water to drink and clings to rough vertical surfaces like chimney walls.

The swift builds its miniature cup-shaped nest from twigs that are glued together and fastened with its own saliva well down the chimney. A nesting chimney is used by only one pair. The two to seven eggs hatch in eighteen to twenty one days. When the young are thirty days old, they leave the nest.

Chimney Swift or Swallow ?



Photos: Christian Artuso

Learning to see the difference between the Chimney Swift and the swallows comes with patience, experience and awe.

Status and Protection

Being a migratory bird, the Chimney Swift is protected under the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 (MBCA). This law makes it an offence to disturb, kill or collect adults, juveniles, and eggs. The CHSW was last assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada as threatened in April 2007. As a result the CHSW is now listed as threatened in Schedule 1 of the federal Species at Risk Act and as such receives protection under this act as well.

-Ron Bazin, Canadian Wildlife Services

You can help the Chimney Swift as

A volunteer

- Report sightings, active or historical nesting and roosting sites, including natural areas, to the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative (MCSI).
- Observe and gather data of existing sites.
- Inform and educate others about the importance of saving swifts.
- Inform landowners who have nesting or roosting swifts using their chimneys.
- Preserve and protect existing habitat.
- Advocate for the design and construction of new nesting and roosting sites.

A member of a corporation or government

- Design and incorporate swift-friendly habitat into new structures and existing "ideal" building rooftops.
- Inform the MCSI if you would like a swift-friendly structure on your property.
- Support the MCSI with your time, skills and funding to reduce the plight of the CHSW and ensure its survival.

An owner of an existing swift-friendly chimney

- If you have nesting swifts, congratulations! Do whatever you can to maintain the condition of your nesting chimney.
- Refrain from cleaning or using your fire-place/heating system chimney from mid-May to the end of August to avoid disturbing the swifts during their nesting period. Fumes could be fatal.
- Seal the chimney inside the house to prevent the swift from entering the rest of the home.
- Avoid disturbing the nesting birds by opening clean-out traps, looking down the chimney or by renovating the roof.

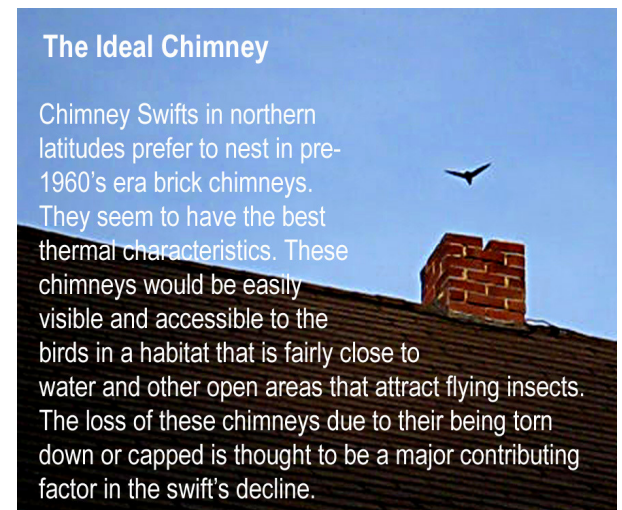
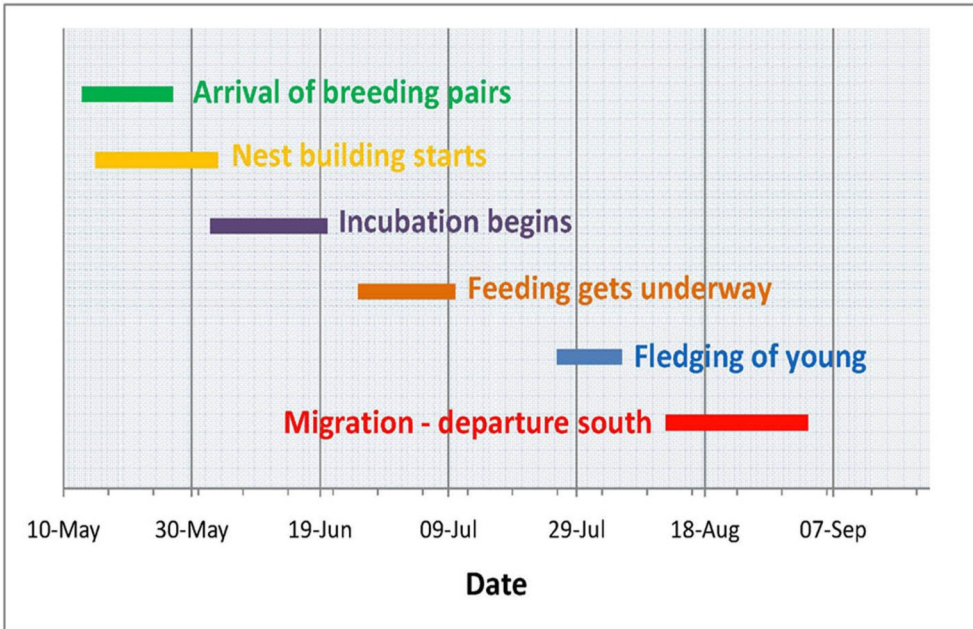


Photo: Carole Penner

Public Outreach

Through presentations to various naturalist-orientated organizations and school groups, the MCSI is attempting to spread awareness of the plight of the swift, encourage the stewardship of swift nesting and roosting sites, and recruit volunteers.



Courtesy: Barbara and Robert Stewart

Biology of Nesting Chimney Swifts

The sequence of Chimney Swift entries and exits, and how often they occur, can indicate different nesting stages. This graph is based on observations in St. Adolphe, MB from 2007 to 2009.

Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative

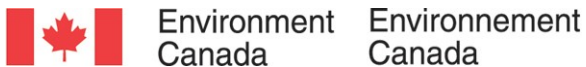


Towers

To reverse the population declines and improve nesting success, a major objective of the MCSI has been to design, locate and build new habitat. To date, five new towers have been constructed and one nesting chimney has been refurbished. Other chimneys are in the process of being repaired in known areas frequented by swifts.

Chimney Swift nesting success is dependent on structures that provide warmth and shelter from the elements. Temperature probes are being used to determine if the towers provide sufficient protection from cold weather in our northern latitudes.

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