

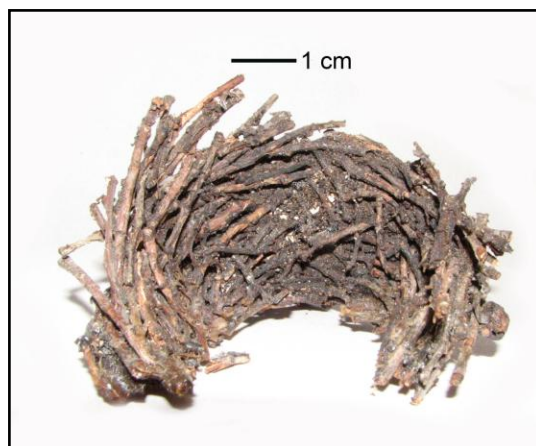
HAVE CHIMNEY SWIFTS BEEN NESTING IN MY CHIMNEY?



Chimney Swifts build distinctive nests by using their sticky saliva to glue short pieces of small diameter twigs together. While flying, adults use their feet to break off dead twig ends from trees. The twigs are transferred to the bird's beaks. Chimney Swifts then enter a chimney and fasten the twigs onto the rough, vertical surface to form a small cup-shaped nest.

Nests are located far below a chimney rim to protect them from the sun and rain. One nest in St. Adolphe's Club Amical (2007) was approximately 10' down from the top of the chimney.

Pairs of breeding Chimney Swifts arrive at Manitoba nest sites in mid- to late May. Nest building starts soon afterward – birds can be seen entering and leaving chimneys during the daytime or early evening. Juvenile Chimney Swifts typically fledge for their first flights outside the nest chimney during the last week of July through the first week of August. Thereafter, family groups and redistributed local Chimney Swifts may gather to roost for the night in a nest site. You will see Chimney Swifts enter chimneys 1/2 hour before to 1/2 hour after sunset. Usually, migration southward is complete by the end of August and no birds will be seen using a chimney for roosting. In early September through to the first week of May, chimneys and cleanout traps may be inspected for previous nesting activity.



If it is safe and convenient, you can peer down your chimney to check for a nest which is attached to the chimney wall. It may be more convenient to look into the cleanout trap for signs of nesting. Do not disturb nesting birds once they are active in the chimney.

Nests eventually fall down from the chimney wall and small twigs may have dropped during the early stages of construction. Open your chimney cleanout trap to see if any nesting material is present – twigs will appear to be bonded with dried, yellowy glue; there will be no mud present. Broken pieces of small white egg shells and long, tapered, dark feathers moulted by adults are also indicators of nesting Chimney Swifts.



If you find nesting material, be assured that there is no fire hazard. As a nest would fit easily in the palm of your hand, air can circulate in the chimney properly during the heating season.

More information on Chimney Swifts and their nests can be found at:

- [Nature Manitoba website](#)
- [Video: Peering down the Chimney at Club Amical](#), in St. Adolphe, MB 2007
- [Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2009. Chimney Swift nestcam.](#)
- [Government of Canada. 2009. Species At Risk Public Registry; Species Profile; Chimney Swift.](#)
- Kyle, G. Z., and P. D. Kyle. 2005. *Chimney Swifts. America's Mysterious Birds above the Fireplace*. Texas A & M University, College Station. (ISBN 1-58544-371-9; available from Driftwood Wildlife Association, Box 300369 Austin, Texas 78703)