Volunteer for the Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative

The Chimney Swift is a migratory, aerial insect-eating bird which calls Manitoba home from mid-May to late August. Swifts are recognized in flight by:

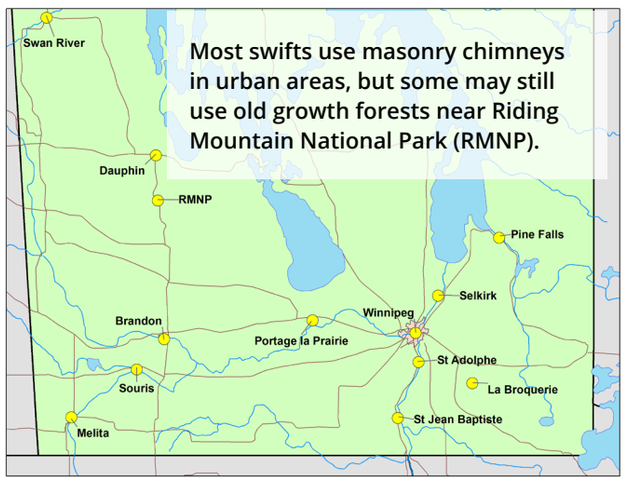
- Their tapered body and sooty to dark colour.
- No obvious tail feathers (they do have short tail feathers with bristles at the ends!).
- Boomerang shaped wings that appear to flicker when beating.

Purple Martins and other swallows have heavier bodies, obvious tail feathers with notches, and more triangular shaped wings.


Swallows


Photo: Christian Artuso

Chimney Swifts



Most swifts use masonry chimneys in urban areas, but some may still use old growth forests near Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP).

Photo: Glennis Lewis

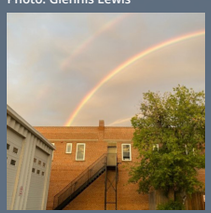
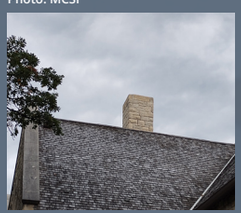


Photo: Christian Artuso

Photo: MCSI



Roosts are occupied by a few individuals or large groups of swifts for resting at night. Chimney Swifts usually enter roosts 30 min. before to 30 min. after sunset. Entry and exit times are influenced by weather; cold and rainy conditions may result in earlier nighttime roosting and later morning exits. Extreme weather may cause swifts to seek daytime refuge in chimneys.

NESTING BEHAVIOUR

A pair of breeding swifts use nesting chimneys during the daytime as they build nests, lay and incubate eggs, and feed hatched young. Juveniles fledge at 28-30 days of age. Activity for each stage of nesting is reflected by changes in the sequence of entries/exits, time interval between visits, and time spent in the chimney.

Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative (MCSI) volunteers have monitored roost and nest sites in Manitoba since 2007... HOW DO WE DO IT?

Prepare supplies:

- MCSI datasheet and pen/pencil to record information. Some monitors prefer to voice/video record observations for later transcription.
- Digital timing device.
- Personal items: water, sunscreen, sunhat, dark glasses etc.

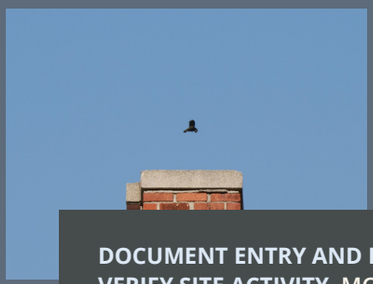
Get comfortable in a chair/car seat with an unobstructed view of the chimney rim:

- Be aware of foot/traffic passing in front of you.
- Be safe and be courteous of others using sidewalks.
- Private homes should not be monitored without permission.

Continuously watch the chimney rim for the observation period (usually 60-90 min.). Record the time of entry and exit events. If possible, use a buddy system so one person can watch the rim and one person can write notes.

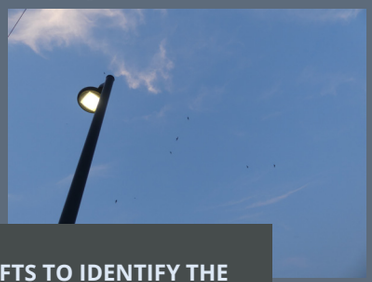
You can help support our MCSI Chimney Swift program in several ways. We will help match your interests to our needs.

Photo: Katharine Schulz



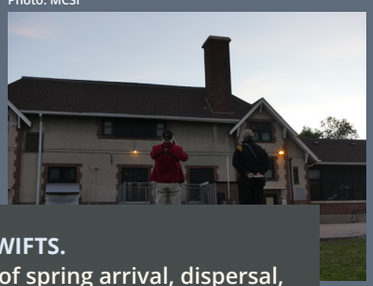
DOCUMENT ENTRY AND EXIT EVENTS TO VERIFY SITE ACTIVITY. MCSI helps protect known Chimney Swift habitat by keeping a current inventory of active roost and nest sites: provide the address of a site where you see entry/exits events. Tell us the date and number of events seen (with times if possible). This reporting is done opportunistically and no schedule is required.

Photo: Jeff Higdon



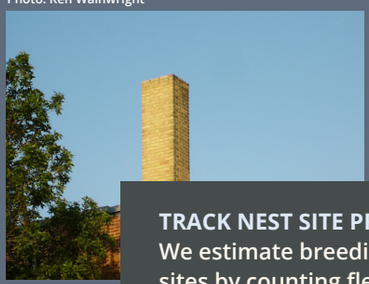
REPORT FLYING SWIFTS TO IDENTIFY THE MANITOBA RANGE. Help us map Chimney Swift distribution. Submit observations of flying swifts: note the location, time, weather, and number of swifts seen. This reporting is done opportunistically and no schedule is required.

Photo: MCSI



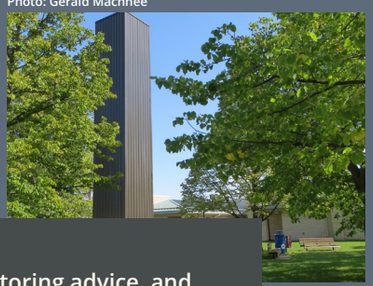
COUNT ROOSTING SWIFTS.
MCSI looks at trends of spring arrival, dispersal, and abundance. You accurately record the time of entries and exits at a roost/nest site during a 90 min. period from 60 min. before sunset to 30 min. after sunset. Four to six evening observations are done at a designated site, on a pre-determined schedule, with a fixed time frame.

Photo: Ken Wainwright



TRACK NEST SITE PROGRESS.
We estimate breeding success at nest sites by counting fledglings. This work requires a flexible daytime schedule and more intense monitoring (2-4 times/ week). High quality observations of 60 minutes or longer are made. Adaptive sampling is required, especially if nest failures are suspected. Entry/exit data to calculate time intervals are needed to follow the progress of breeding swifts through each stage of nesting: arrival, nest-building, egg-laying, incubation, feeding brooded young, feeding non-brooded young, and fledging.

Photo: Gerald Machnee



SPECIAL PROJECTS.
MCSI provides monitoring advice, and guidance for best practices to manage roost and nest sites. Special monitoring is required at sites of interest where habitat restoration, habitat mitigation, and potential disturbance events take place. This work may require a high-end time commitment and work is often done “on demand”. You may be sent to a site on short notice to provide exceptional, high-quality monitoring data.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION:
mbchimneyswift@gmail.com
or 204-943-9029
VISIT THE MCSI WEBSITE :
www.mbchimneyswift.com

Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative

ENBRIDGE