

SUMMARY OF ST. ADOLPHE MCSI ACTIVITY SUMMER 2007

Chimney Swifts used St. Adolphe chimneys for nesting and airspace for feeding this summer. Swifts were first observed in St. Adolphe on May 16th. The Club Amical and St. Adolphe Parish Church chimneys were monitored throughout the summer. A private home owner self-identified on July 26th as two observers sat at the Church - birds were flying in and out of the chimney at their home. Father Michaud (parish priest) had copied material from websites provided to him by MCSI leaders, and had distributed information on July 22nd at Sunday mass. The third nest site of Chimney Swifts in St. Adolphe was verified as a result of Father Michaud's much appreciated involvement.

The community interest in St. Adolphe was tremendous. The RM of Ritchot council provided valuable support for the program and expressed interest in the construction of new nesting towers in the area. Passers-by routinely stopped to inquire about observer activities. Father Michaud embraced the project as noted above and then he embraced 2 swifts. After the first Steering Committee meeting when the possible departure of non-nesting swifts around July 6-7th was discussed, 2 swifts were discovered flying in the church. The birds would not leave through opened doors. After 4-5 days, the exhausted birds were found clinging to a chair back one morning. Father Michaud and a parishioner each took one bird outside and released them. Swift entries/exits to the church chimney were observed again on July 18th, indicating that the second nest site in St. Adolphe was active once more. Observations suggest that the nesting pair attempted incubation for one week approximately. Then, swifts only roosted at the church chimney. This appears to be a failed nesting attempt. Eggs in the nest likely died when the adult birds were trapped in the church. Next spring, the damper on the chimney will be closed before the swifts return in mid-May.

In summary, 3 nest site chimneys were located in St. Adolphe. A group of Chimney Swifts fledged from the NE Club Amical chimney in late July; one fledgling likely entered the non-nest SE chimney and drew an attending adult in for a day. Then, roosting exclusively continued in the SE chimney until the swifts departed. The nest site - 10 feet down from the chimney top - was observed in September after the RM of Ritchot Fire Department kindly positioned ladders for the MCSI crew to access the chimney. The Parish Church nest was a failed attempt due to entrapment of adults in the church for 4-5 days. The private residence supported a nesting pair of swifts, as it has done for at least the previous two summers. It is assumed that nesting was successful but the homeowner was unable to track the developments over the summer. No communal roost site was found to account for all swifts in the St. Adolphe airspace. Chimney Swifts were last observed on August 12th at Club Amical and on August 13th at the Parish Church. We look forward to next spring's first chattering of the Chimney Swifts as they arrive from the Amazon basin.