

Chaetura

Fall 2013

Driftwood Wildlife Association

Volume 18

ORIGINAL CHIMNEY SWIFTS' TOWER RESTORED



Althea R. Sherman's original Chimney Swifts' Tower photo courtesy of Barbara Boyle

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Althea R. Sherman's original Chimney Swifts' Tower has been fully restored and stands again!

Designed by Sherman and built in 1915 to attract and study Chimney Swifts, the tower is both habitat and a research tool that advanced ornithological science. It is the only remaining structural artifact belonging to Sherman.

The tower allowed Sherman to be the first ever to witness and record the entire nesting cycle of this species. Throughout 18 years she filled more than 400 journal pages with her pioneering Chimney Swift research.

The Chimney Swifts' Tower is sited at the 540-acre Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve in Cedar County, Iowa. The land encompasses 350 acres of timber, a sand prairie and over a mile of Cedar River frontage. It offers exceptional opportunities for bird and nature study.

With its original purpose as Chimney Swift habitat and research facility reclaimed, the tower will be open to scholars, school children and the public. Future plans include a Sherman museum and interpretive center. Bob Anderson (Decorah Eagles) will be installing cameras and microphones in the tower, as well.

For more information about Althea Sherman, her archetypal tower, and the Althea R. Sherman project, please go to <http://altheasherman.org/>

Barbara Boyle



Editor's note: Ms. Sherman's tower was the inspiration for the first towers built by the Driftwood Wildlife Association in the 1980s and the hundreds more that have since been built across North America. Without this innovative design, Chimney Swift conservation would not have the momentum it has today.



Report from Travis Audubon's Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary

*For a virtual hike through Chaetura Canyon go to www.ChimneySwifts.org
and click on the "Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary" link*

Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary is a ten acre preserve of the Travis Audubon Society of Central Texas. Paul and Georgean Kyle remain the Sanctuary Stewards and continue research and educational efforts on behalf of Chimney Swifts that were begun by them on this property in 1989.

Seventeen structures have been constructed specifically for Chimney Swift nesting and roosting. An eight foot tall wooden tower was constructed in 2012 as a memorial to Jack Freeman bringing the total number of wooden towers to nine. The other eight towers are constructed of concrete block.

The breeding season of 2012 was remarkable in a number of ways. A record number of structures were occupied, all nine of the wooden towers and seven of the eight concrete block. The sixteen swift pairs were all successful in producing at least one fledgling. In 1999, The Pool Towers were constructed to determine if swifts would nest in structures closer than ten feet from each other. These two towers are 32 inches apart. From the first year of construction, a pair would claim one or the other towers in early spring. If another pair would attempt to nest in the opposite tower, a territorial dispute would ensue. Subsequently, one of the two pairs would be dissuaded from nesting. Not so in 2012. Both towers were occupied and contained fledglings!

CHIMNEY SWIFT PRODUCTIVITY AT CHAETURA CANYON -- 2012

Tower	# Eggs Laid	# Eggs Hatch	# Young Fledged
Wooden: 1. North Observation	6	6	4
2. South Observation	7	4	4
9. West Field	7	7	5
8. East Field	8	7	6
5. Prism	7	5	4
4. Garden (Marlene)	6	5	3
16. Workshop	4	3	3
14. 12' Demonstration	4	4	1
17. Jack Freeman	8	3	3
Concrete: 6. North Pool	4	3	3
7. South Pool	3	2	1
3. Castle	6	6	6
11. Castle Companion	6	6	5
12. Castle Gate	3	2	2
10. Driveway	5	3	3
13. S.W. Corner	4	3	2
15. LBB	0	0	0
Totals	88	69	55

The first swift arrived on March 21; the last bird was sighted on October 16. Chimney Swifts were present at Chaetura Canyon for 210 days in 2012.



Chimney Swift Towers of Travis Audubon's Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary

The line indicates the current boundary of the Sanctuary

The towers are numbered in the order of their construction with #1 being the first tower constructed in 1989.

The following page is a summary of Chimney Swift Tower productivity through 2012



TOWER		'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	TOTALS
1	E	4	5	5	4	6	5	5	5	6	6	8	5	9	6	9	5	10	5	6	5	5	6	5	6	141
	H	4	4	5	4	3	4	5	4	5	6	1	4	9	4	8	3	6	4	6	5	4	4	3	6	111
	F	4	4	5	0	3	3	5	4	2	5	0	2	3	4	8	3	6	4	6	5	4	4	3	4	91
2	E	0	0	4	6	12	10	7	6	8	9	6	6	10	9	6	5	6	10	4	5	5	5	5	7	151
	H	0	0	4	5	8	8	7	4	4	9	5	6	9	5	6	5	6	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	122
	F	0	0	4	5	4	5	7	3	4	8	5	4	5	5	6	5	3	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	103
3	E							8	4	5	5	5	5	8	6	10	4	0	0	5	4	4	5	1	6	85
	H							4	1	5	4	2	4	5	3	4	4	0	0	3	2	0	3	0	6	50
	F							4	0	3	4	2	4	2	3	2	4	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	6	39
4	E							0	4	6	0	0	4	3	0	4	0	4	4	4	12	7	9	3	6	66
	H							0	4	0	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	3	3	9	5	7	3	5	47	
	F							0	4	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	2	2	9	3	7	1	3	38	
5	E							0	5	3	7	5	9	4	8	5	8	16	4	5	7	9	3	7	105	
	H							0	0	3	7	5	7	4	6	3	7	5	3	3	3	7	2	5	70	
	F							0	0	3	7	5	2	4	6	2	7	3	3	1	3	5	2	4	57	
6	E											5	5	9	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	4	38	
	H											4	4	6	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	3	30	
	F											4	3	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	24	
7	E											0	0	0	0	2	4	9	4	3	4	6	3	0	3	38
	H											0	0	0	0	2	3	7	4	3	3	4	0	0	2	28
	F											0	0	0	0	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	0	0	1	23
8	E												0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	20	
	H												0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	18	
	F												0	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	15	
9	E												3	9	8	0	0	7	6	4	6	7	7	5	7	69
	H												3	6	5	0	0	6	4	3	3	4	1	3	7	45
	F												0	4	3	0	0	6	4	3	2	0	1	3	5	31
10	E												0	0	0	0	0	5	4	3	4	0	4	6	5	31
	H												0	0	0	0	0	5	4	3	3	0	4	5	3	27
	F												0	0	0	0	0	5	1	3	3	0	4	0	3	19
11	E													0	0	0	0	0	8	3	6	4	3	3	6	33
	H													0	0	0	0	0	6	3	5	3	2	2	6	27
	F													0	0	0	0	0	3	3	5	3	2	2	5	23
12	E													0	0	0	5	7	10	2	4	0	0	0	3	31
	H													0	0	0	5	7	4	2	3	0	0	0	2	23
	F													0	0	0	5	3	4	2	3	0	0	0	2	19
13	E														0	0	0	0	5	2	5	0	0	2	4	18
	H														0	0	0	0	4	2	5	0	0	0	3	14
	F														0	0	0	0	3	2	5	0	0	0	2	12
14	E															0	3	4	3	2	4	4	5	4	4	33
	H															0	2	2	3	2	4	4	4	2	4	27
	F															0	2	2	3	2	4	2	4	2	1	22
15	E															0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	H															0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	F															0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	E																					7	9	3	5	28
	H																					2	4	1	3	13
	F																					2	4	1	3	13
17	E																								8	8
	H																								3	3
	F																								3	3
TOTALS	E	4	5	9	10	18	15	23	15	28	29	31	29	58	45	39	35	56	75	42	71	58	63	52	88	898
	H	4	4	9	9	11	12	16	9	18	22	19	26	46	33	30	26	46	45	37	52	35	41	36	69	655
	F	4	4	9	5	7	8	16	7	13	20	18	18	23	30	28	24	36	35	36	49	26	36	25	55	532

E = eggs laid
H = eggs hatched
F = young fledged
italics = two broods

Here and there 1.0



Photo courtesy of Deanna Krambeer

National, IA

In 2008, the Friends of the Sherman Swift Tower completed a replica of Althea Sherman's chimney swifts' tower in National, Iowa, and the group anxiously awaited the arrival of nesting swifts inside the tower.

Memorial Day weekend 2012, the tower hosts noticed bird droppings inside the drip pan at the bottom on the chimney, but no swifts were seen. But during some routine maintenance to the chimney on June 10, a nest was discovered in the tower. It was below the viewing window, about the same place Althea found the first nest in her Tower! It was an incredibly narrow, small, and fragile looking nest, but it gave hope to the Friends of the Sherman Swift Tower that chimney swifts could nest successfully in the replica.

Occasionally swifts were seen flying in the area, but no one entered the tower for fear of disturbing the birds we hoped were inside. On June 30, we saw a chimney swift leave the chimney, so we quickly and quietly climbed to the top of the tower and peered through the tiny peephole. We saw 4 eggs in the nest. Eureka!

There were frequent trips to the tower, but few visits inside for fear of causing the birds to abandon the nest. Three of the four eggs in the nest hatched, and the helpless, blind, naked babies grew rapidly to become gangly, pin-feathered adolescents. Their eyes

opened. They soon outgrew the nest and spilled out of the nest to cling to nearby walls. By now they were an elegant and beautiful charcoal brown, with mesmerizing dark eyes. They watched us as we watched them, both of us curious about each other. It was time now to watch from afar to prevent frightening them out of the chimney before they could fend for themselves.

On August 17, no swifts were seen in the sky, and the chimney was empty except for the unhatched egg which remained intact in the drip pan at the base of the chimney. The fragile looking nest remained firmly attached to the wall.

Thus ended the first year of nesting swifts in the tower. We hope the swifts have a safe migration so they can return again next year. Althea would be pleased to welcome them home to National.

Deanna Krambeer
Friends of the Sherman Swift Tower

Dallas, TX

The North Texas Master Naturalist built and installed 3 Chimney Swift Towers in 2008/09. We have been collecting data on the use of the towers since the summer of 2009. Two of the towers are at Trinity River Audubon Center and have been occupied each year starting in 2009. The third is located at Cedar Ridge Preserve and has never been used.

Natha Taylor
NTMN Past President

Austin, TX

Both swift towers at the Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Education were occupied. Six birds fledged.



Photo courtesy of Tal Blankenship

Glendale, OR

I built my first tower in March of 2007 and have attached it to our existing chimney. We have had Vaux's Swifts using it and raising a family for the last five years. I'm in the process of building my second swift tower. This one will be a free standing tower near by. The local Audubon chapter visited last week and were excited about my success with the tower. We love our Vaux's Swifts!

Tal Blankenship

Johnson City, TX Pedernales State Park

The nesting swifts at the tower located near the bird blind fledged two young. Three birds fledged from the tower at the entrance to the park.

Lydia Middendorf & Nate McVaugh

Johnson City, TX

Swifts nested in all four towers at Middendorf Ranch. There were seventeen eggs laid; ten of the eggs hatched and all fledged.

Lydia Middendorf

Here and there 1.1



Photo courtesy of Rich Merritt

New York, NY

Rich Merritt of Audubon New York was awarded a 2012 Toyota TogetherGreen fellowship grant to conduct a conservation project to install Chimney Swift towers in the Capital Region of upstate New York. 4th and 5th graders in Troy and Albany schools initiated a letter writing campaign to the city mayors to gain permission to build the towers in city parks. The response from both cities was terrific and in early April two towers were erected in Troy and one in Albany. sSaid Merritt, "The commitment of the students to helping to create habitat for the Swifts was truly inspirational and they also now have seen first-hand that they can make a positive difference in conservation right in their own neighborhoods." Driftwood's 12' Free Standing Tower design was used for all three towers.



Photo courtesy of Rich Merritt



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Thompson

Leesburg, NJ

Swifts arrived in Leesburg on April 19, 2013. We built a tower this winter (except the predator guard). We eagerly anticipate some swifts starting a family in it!

Elizabeth Thompson

Cole Camp, MO

I appreciate the help your website has given me in our effort to replace the swift roost at Cole Camp's city hall. As of last week it has been determined that the new tower is now occupied. My husband and I observed one swift coming to roost last Friday night. I would like to recognize the Cole Camp City Council for their action and cooperation to replace the roost that was removed when they capped the old chimney.

Marge Lumpe

Orwell, OH

A twelve foot tall tower with a kiosk assembly was constructed at Grand Valley School Science Lab by Brandon King and Zach King as an Eagle Scout project.



Jackie Vernot and Ray Kotz

Photos courtesy of Jeff Reiter

Wheaton, IL

We finished building a swift tower last Nov and are now awaiting the spring arrival of swifts here in the Chicago area. Our tower is at Cantigny Park in Wheaton.

Jeff Reiter
Senior Manager, Communications
Cantigny Park

Spicewood, TX

There are now twelve towers at the Harte Ranch. In 2012, ten towers were occupied by swifts. 54 eggs were laid and 33 birds fledged from the towers.

Here and there 1.2



Photo courtesy of Lester Germanio

This is the third year chimney swifts have nested on our property. The picture is of one of the fledglings taken 6/22/12. There were four of them close to the ground hanging off the wall and making lots of noise, along with a broken piece of their nest. They've been nesting in the chimney above an outside firepit. The chimney has a couple of bends in it and they nest above the bends in the last straight section toward the top. Can't see them from the bottom, but could sure hear them when they were hungry. The chimney is about 18 inches inside diameter and is rough cement plaster interior finish. There were no problems the previous couple of years. The chimney has not had any smoke in it yet. It seems the fledglings had no problem hanging on the stone wall. I am wondering if they can also hang off the cement stucco in the chimney. I am thinking that if I make a wire fabric pan to temporarily close the bottom of the chimney that I ought to include some sort of vertical pieces that are more easily gripable until they can fly out. It must be that the adults can somehow grip the interior of the stucco chimney, it is just a little hard for me to imagine

Lester Germanio



Photos courtesy of Judy Pulver

Iowa

After several years of watching and enjoying chimney swifts in our farm house brick chimney, we decided to build a swift tower using the "Chimney Swift Tower" book as a guide. The tower is just now finished, all but the painting. Chimney Swifts usually return in mid-April.

Janet Pulver



Photo courtesy of Mary Lane

Oklahoma City, OK

This is Steve's first springtime project. I think we beat the nominal end-of-March arrival of the chimney swifts into Oklahoma, so we're very hopeful they will give us a chance with their nesting this year!

Mary Lane and Steve Davis



Photos courtesy of Gail Miller

Conway, AR

I recently had a tower built, it is concrete block, faced with rock. The tower is 12 feet tall, the photo is of it before the clean out door was added.

Gail Miller



Photo courtesy of Terry Zirkle

St. Joseph, MO

Dayton almost finished up his Eagle Project yesterday after 4 separate work days. It only needs a little flashing at the top to be complete. The picture is of the boys who helped on his final work day. He is the one in the middle in the light gray t-shirt. He completed his project at Helen M. Davis School, a school for children with special needs.

Terry Zirkle

Here and there 1.3



Photo courtesy of Karen Manning

Maquoketa, IA

Friends of Jackson County Conservation just completed the construction of a Chimney Swift Tower in conjunction with an information kiosk at the Hurstville Interpretive Center.

More than just decorative—it is a carefully designed nesting and roosting tower for chimney swifts.

Friends of Jackson County Conservation decided on this design for a number of reasons. It is designed to provide ideal conditions for nesting chimney swifts, small insect-eating birds which are declining in number. It provides a dramatic visual statement to draw attention to the information presented on the four panels of the kiosk. And the stone construction echoes the use of limestone in the building and from the Hurstville Lime Kilns.

The tower was built by Larry McDevitt of Maquoketa, IA, who would be happy to build such a tower as part of your landscape! We'd like to say thank you to Iowa Ornithologist Union, Lechtenberg Dental, Whitetails Unlimited and Dubuque Audubon for helping us get it built!

Karen Manning
Friends of Jackson County
Conservation Member



Photo courtesy of Sonia Najera

Corpus Christi, TX

I just wanted to let you know that we finally have our swift tower at our office in Corpus Christi, across from Blucher Park. Aiden Montgomery (third from right) completed his Eagle Scout project (Boy Scouts of America Troop 87) this past week. We are so excited to have this tower. We continue to get nesting swifts every year in our chimneys at the office but with this tower in place, we should be able to provide additional habitat. With the full support of his family, Aiden did a remarkable job gathering all the information, fund raising, and organizing the volunteers.

Sonia Najera



Photo courtesy of Allen Jackson

Millville, NJ

Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center in Millville, New Jersey now has a chimney swift tower for the public to enjoy. It was erected December 1, 2012 by Patrick Powell of the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 4 with the assistance of his father Phillip and other Troop 4 members. Patrick used the project to earn his Eagle Scout badge.

The project was envisioned by Allen Jackson, a wildlife biologist who had been observing chimney swifts nesting in his neighbor's chimney. One evening during September 2011 he noticed over 200 swifts using the chimney to roost in and became interested in the chimney swift towers. When Hank Adams, Glass Studio Creative Director at Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center expressed an interest in environmental projects Jackson thought the tower would be a great project for a boy scout and contacted Troop 4. Patrick stepped forward and began to

Here and there 1.4

research the project after meetings with Jackson and Adams.

Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center already had much of the necessary materials to build the tower and was able to provide a cement mixer to lay the foundation and a fork lift to erect the tower once completed.

Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center, located in southern New Jersey, offers fellowships for artists to study and improve their vocation. It is open to the public, attracting people from all over the world. As one walks thru the entrance gates the tower immediately attracts attention. A fence and kiosk will be added to help educate the public about chimney swifts. Pictured are Patrick with his parents Phillip and Samantha beside him.

Allen Jackson

Carrier, OK

What a difference a year makes!!! I am pleased to report that I have had a small part in increasing the population of chimney swifts by 4 individuals.

Last year the swifts discovered the silo May 21 and the 4 eggs hatched July 6. Two were dead by July 9 and the remaining two died July 20 and July 21.

It was very hot last year and I blamed the deaths on the heat. Since we had put floors in the large part of the silo years ago, and I had screened the first door to the chimney swift home for ventilation, I decided to purchase a small evaporative cooler for this season and prevent last year's failure.

This year the swifts were back April 29, and 5 eggs hatched June 18. Six days later, found one dead swift at bottom of chimney. I had not turned on the cooler yet as temps were reasonable. If the outside temp went above 95, I turned the cooler on and would shut it off before I went to bed. By July 5 all four babies were out of the nest and hanging on the walls above the nest. Then yesterday July 15 at least two of the four made their 1st flight!!!! So after last year I feel like 4 out of 5 is great success!!! I think that since they were earlier this year and the temp. has not been as hot, although one day was 105 and another day 103, they might have made it without the cooler. One will never know, but it is a good feeling to have a backup and hopefully can have success year in and out.

Delbert Joyner



Photos courtesy of Delbert Joyner



Chimney Swift Vocalization CD Now Available

Some tower builders report excellent results using recorded swift vocalizations to draw nesting birds into new towers.

This recording was made by Georgean and Paul Kyle at Travis Audubon's Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary in Travis County, Texas at the peak of nesting season. At least 14 of the 16 towers on the sanctuary were occupied at the time. Peak evening activity centered around the North Observation Tower on the Stewards' residence where a communal roost was forming.

For suggestions on how to use this CD, please refer to the excellent article by Kelly Applegate on page 9 of the 2010 issue of Chaetura.

To order a copy of the CD, please visit our online store at:

www.ChimneySwifts.org

Chimney Swift Research and Conservation Workshop

On the snowy morning of February 20th, 2013 the first Chimney Swift Research and Conservation workshop began in Montreal, Quebec. This two day workshop was organized by Regroupement Quebec Oiseaux which represents birdwatcher societies and individuals interested in bird conservation. Biologists and Chimney Swift conservation specialists from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, New-Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the United States met to exchange information and share significant findings on the species.

The decline of the Chimney Swift population has been dramatic in the Canadian Provinces over the last decade. This working group is dedicated to monitoring the existing population, determining if artificial breeding and roosting structures are effective in Canada, and initiating a recovery strategy for the swifts.

The exchange of ideas and information continues online at the Chimney Swift Working Group Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChimneySwift/>



Workshop participants photo courtesy of Regroupement Québec Oiseaux

OBSERVATIONS - Vaux's Swifts

For the most complete information about Vaux's Swifts, please visit "Vaux's Happening" web site:

<http://www.VauxHappening.org/>

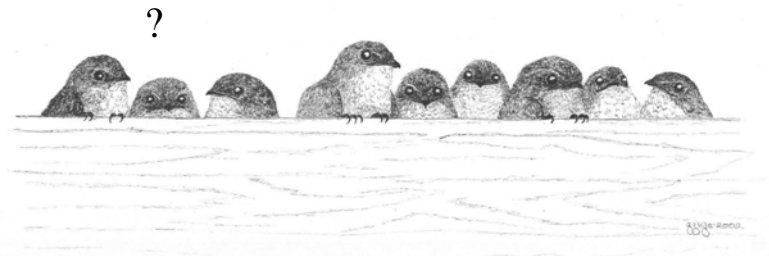
Since we put the camera in the Monroe Wagner chimney we have discovered that the swifts use it most of the summer. Probably a lot of the non-breeders in the area, maybe 250 on a good night. But there is more to it. When we get rain, especially a cold rain, there are big numbers that come from somewhere. I'm estimating 3-4 thousand in there tonight. Check it out.

Larry Schwitter's



www.wildearth.tv/player/vaux-happening-swift-roost-webcam/nochat

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...



What happens to the swifts when the chimney they've been coming to since the mid 1940's is destroyed? Yesterday a chimney in Northville, NY was destroyed because the owner was afraid of its liability. Our town celebrated the return of the swifts every year with the local high school band, boy scouts selling fried dough, a speaker, school children drawing pictures of the event, and the community coming out, standing on the street, watching for their return. Many out of town folks from miles away would attend the event.

I am the village of Northville and town of Northampton historian.

Gail M Cramer

I live in a neighborhood in Silver Spring, Maryland that has an elementary school with a chimney that's had visiting swifts for - according to collective memory of the neighborhood - probably at least 20 years. I first saw them somewhere between 10-14 years ago. Yet, somehow, the school was apparently unaware of its visitors until this August. One of the neighbors saw them and let the school principal know and another neighbor who works at a local news station got one of their reporters to do an informational spot. The school principal joined the discussion that was taken up on the community listserv about the birds and informed us that if the birds hadn't migrated by the time the school needed to turn on the boilers, then "...humans trump birds. When the mornings start to get colder, if the birds are still there, the county will be following the instructions of the US Fish and Wildlife Service to either "make a lot of noise to get them out", or, "use a little smoke and they will leave". The chimney then will have to be cleaned by sweeps, and then a cap will be placed on the chimney." The county swept and capped the chimney yesterday afternoon. The daytime high yesterday was 80 degrees. Night-time low was 70. The usual start date for the boilers is around Oct. 15. As soon as it became evident that they were set on capping, I started investigating chimney swift towers. There are quite a few folks who are interested in getting involved with making this a community project. I want to construct a well-thought out proposal and ask the school if they will let us put the tower(s?) on their property. Also, do you have any knowledge of what happens to swifts that are suddenly excluded from their roost prior to migration, like our swifts were yesterday? The neighborhood listserv is abuzz with people wanting to know whether the birds would have been able to effectively find shelter at the last minute like that, and whether it will have a negative impact on their migration (exerting precious energy stores).

Karen Eason
Silver Spring, MD

Unfortunately, this is becoming all too common, and it is so needless. These migratory roosts located in school chimneys should be recognized as the educational resource they could be.

In Portland, OR there is a famous swifts roost in the Chapman School (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapman_Swifts). In fact, the school mascot is the swift. They have coordinated the use of heat with the roosting swifts for many years. It is a source of community pride.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

In Bellaire, TX a school chimney was slated for demolition. It was saved by community activists, and an educational curriculum was created around the roosting swifts: [http://www.chimneyswifts.org/Chaetura%20\(VOL%2013\)%202008.pdf](http://www.chimneyswifts.org/Chaetura%20(VOL%2013)%202008.pdf)

The same in MN: [http://www.chimneyswifts.org/Chaetura%20\(VOL%2015\)%202010.pdf](http://www.chimneyswifts.org/Chaetura%20(VOL%2015)%202010.pdf)

A replacement Chimney Swift Tower was built in Elkhart, IN when an old chimney could not be saved: [http://www.chimneyswifts.org/Chaetura%20\(VOL%2016\)%202011.pdf](http://www.chimneyswifts.org/Chaetura%20(VOL%2016)%202011.pdf)

These are just a few examples that we know about.

The suggestion of using smoke to evict the swifts was illegal and irresponsible. Birds have a very delicate respiratory system, and can be easily overcome and even killed by only a small amount of smoke. Disturbing nesting Chimney Swifts is a violation of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The bottom line is that when the furnace needed to be turned on around October 15th, the Chimney Swifts would most likely have already migrated from the area. There was no conflict.

There is certainly reason for concern about the displaced birds. Swifts are very aware of all suitable shafts available in any given area. When one structure is removed, they will seek out another site. However, options are disappearing for the birds in all communities and there have been reports of the death of large groups of swifts that attempted to enter structures too small to hold their numbers.

Chimney Swifts are a rapidly declining specie. They were recently moved up on the international watch list to "near-threatened" world-wide. These large migratory roosts are essential to the future of the birds.

I live in NE Ohio and want to build a chimney swift tower at Mosquito Creek Lake in Cortland, Ohio. We are about ready to start construction, but the people with the funds are asking questions. The main concern is: "Why would we spend the money if there is only one nesting pair per chimney?" The cost per fledged bird seems a lot higher. We could help more birds of other types with that money.

Can you help explain what happens in the roost and how many birds are fledged per season? Any supporting information you can provide would be greatly appreciated. I think we are close to getting it approved. After we get the first one installed, I think there are other locations to build the towers. Are there any support groups in NE Ohio that I could contact?

Loyd Marshall

Unlike regular "bird houses" that are only used for nesting and then abandoned, Chimney Swift towers are home to the family from the first day they arrive until the last day before they leave in the fall for migration. They are unable to perch as songbirds do. They must have a safe place to roost at night and to seek shelter in bad weather when the flying insects they feed on are unavailable.

Typically 3 to 5 young are fledged each year, and occasionally there will be a second brood. The same pair will return each year as long as they survive the rigors of migration, and they can live as long as 12 years. Once a tower is established, it may also be used as a roost by dozens or even hundreds of birds.

The towers also act as a focal point for conservation education -- especially with well-designed information displays. Because the towers are so visible, people want to know what they are -- most folks have never heard of Chimney Swifts.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

Finally, the plight of Chimney Swifts is quite dire. Just north of you in Canada their numbers are down by more than 95%. They have been listed as threatened all across Canada and endangered in some of the maritime provinces. Extinction does not abide by national borders. Chimney Swifts are in serious trouble everywhere due to loss of habitat: first large hollow trees and now open chimneys. Obviously they are very adaptable, but suitable sites for them to adapt to must now be created.

Tower construction can be great community projects for organizations such as Audubon groups and garden clubs. They are also great Eagle Scout projects -- that is how many of the existing towers in North America have been constructed.

The Cleveland Metro Parks system has been very active in Chimney Swift tower construction in the past. You might contact them for feed back on their project.

Thanks for your interest in conservation of this important but little-known species. We hope this information is helpful.

Thank you for your prompt reply. It was a very good explanation and answered the questions. We are now approved to build and install a chimney swift tower at Mosquito Lake near Cortland, Ohio. We plan to have it completed by the middle of March 2013 in time for the nesting season.

We are constructing a swift tower at our nature center this summer and are assembling information on the birds and I came across your awesome website and videos. Would it be possible for us to make a qr code to your videos so from our signage visitors may watch them on their mobile devises?

Jennifer Meyer
Naturalist Intern
Jackson County Conservation at the Hurstville Interpretive Center Maquoketa, IA



*This quick read code (QRC) will link to www.ChimneySwifts.org
From the home page, videos and all other pages in the web site are available.
We encourage all signage associated with Chimney Swift Towers to include this QRC.
Thanks to Jennifer for getting this ball rolling..*

Recently I have been terrorized in my own back yard at dusk by a chimney swift circling. When I go outside to enjoy a few minutes peace after a long day at work, the swift swoops closer and closer to me. Last night he hit me in the arm, the second time I have been hit in a couple of weeks. Could it be the scent of my hairspray, or a color I am wearing? Does he think I am food, or is he trying to bump me out of his territory? Will he nip me?

Christine

This sounds atypical of Chimney Swifts and more like Barn Swallows who feed lower than swifts. It may be that swallows have a nest near by and they are trying to defend it. A swallow nest will be made of mud and often attached up under the eaves of a building.

It may be that they are feeding on flying insects in your back yard and you are just being hit by accident. This is more likely. Or it could be young, curious birds who find you interesting.

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

Neither species (swifts of swallows) will bite or harm you in any way, so don't worry. Swifts and swallows will be migrating before long as the summer draws to an end. Until then just try to enjoy them and know that they are eating mosquitoes, flies, gnats and termites by the thousands.

Could you tell me how far down from the top of a chimney the birds usually build their nest?

Lee Thompson

The swifts normally build in the lower third of the chimney. This keeps their nest away from direct sun and provides protection from rain -- which can dissolve the nest. It is not uncommon for them to build just above the damper.

I have lived in this house 22 years, have chimney swifts, but have never cleaned out the chimney. We do not use our fireplace, as I have always preferred the chimney swifts, and wasn't sure about removing old nests. In the fall, I think my chimney might be a roost, as so many go in each night, and, my! the rumbling! Do you recommend after they leave this fall I clean out my chimney after all these years and, assuming so, should I clean it every four or five years, or how often? (I still don't plan to use the fireplace).

Virginia Young

Yes, it is a good idea to clean your chimney in the winter for the benefit of the swifts. It will remove the old nests (only one per year) and droppings that build up over the years. Every 4 to 5 years is probably fine. Be sure to tell the chimney company that you want the chimney left open for the swifts, because they will undoubtedly want to sell you a chimney cap. Pick a company that does not advertise "bird removal" and preferably one that is a member of the National Chimney Sweeping Guild. It is not necessary to choose between swifts and winter fires. The birds will be in South America during the coldest months of the year.

My husband & I built a new home in 2005 with 2 masonry fireplaces. We have had sweeps every year in our bedroom fireplace. It drove us bonkers the first year and we would forget to order the caps. At spring time we would realize it was too late once we heard them again... We have learned to enjoy them. This year there were 20 or more flying around the house over the past weeks learning to fly and dive... Amazing!! We ordered the caps last week, so when is it safe to cap and not leave them with out a home? I live in south/middle Georgia. I found your site and enjoyed it. I never knew all the important information on these species of birds.

Dorie Griffith

You can cap your chimney after the 1st of November without troubling the swifts. You should remove the caps in early March since the same birds will return to the same chimney as long as they live. You can then re-cap in November. It is a great time-sharing arrangement that makes a real difference in the lives of these rapidly declining mosquito-eaters

My boyfriend and I just closed on a house in Wales, WI on June 6th. We have found out that we have an active nest in our chimney. After learning about the Chimney Swift, we are excited that we can have them in the chimney and co-exist. Thank you for your website and the helpful information.

Tracy Ringwell

Historic Arrival Dates – Austin TX

Chimney [Swifts] used to come to my home chimney in Austin, Texas. My mother kept a diary of the first date they came back to the chimney that went from 1949 to 1989. I'd be happy to share a copy of a letter my mother, Mercy Ramsey Carl, wrote about her Chimney Sweeps diary. The letter lists all the dates and times. I don't know if the Association's records go back as far as 1949 but I hope you can use this data. My mother loved the birds and was diligent in her recording of their return.

Charlotte Carl-Mitchell / now living in Scottsdale, AZ

5409 Aurora Drive
Austin, Texas, 78756
April 16, 1986

Austin Public Library
% The Austin History Center
P.O. Box 2287
Austin, Texas, 78768-- 2287
% Sharnyn Lumsden
Topic: Return of Some Chimney Sweeps, to the home of Mercy Ramsey Carl
and Edward M. Carl, Jr.

Dera Friends in the Austin Public Library:

On April 11, 1986, I called your Library and talked with Sharnyn Lumsden about my history of our Chimney Sweeps. Since it covers a period of over thirty (30) years, I felt that surely someone who is interested in birds would be interested in this history.

My husband, Edward M. Carl, Jr., and I built our house in 1941, and we moved into it on October 12, 1941. My first notation of the arrival of the Chimney Sweeps was on April 10, 1949. After that, my dates do not begin until 1954, but I have not missed a year since then in recording the arrival of the birds. We have never tried to put a cover over the Chimney to keep the birds out, and, so far, we have never had one fly down and get into our house. The following is an account of the arrival of the Chimney Sweeps in our chimney:

April 10, 1949- Sunday
March 29, 1954- Monday
May 15, 1955
April 1, 1956- Easter Day
April 23, 1957
April 12, 1958
April 7, 1959-- At Night
April 24, 1960 - cold winter- about 6:00 PM
May 6, 1960- the most came.
April 17, 1961
April 9, 1962- Monday
April 17, 1963- they came at night.
April 17, 1964- at night.
And april 19 & 30.
April 7, 1965- at night
April 3, 1966- at night
April 12, 1967- at night
April 12, 1968- at night & LOUD.
April 7 & 1969 at 7:15- at night.
April 7, 1970- 6:30 at night.
April 14, 1971- 6:45 AM
April 9, 1972- 8:00 PM- Sunday
April 26, 1973- 6:00 AM- (Cold winter.)
April 27, 1974- 4:00 PM- saturday
April 15, 1975- 7:00 AM- Tuesday
April 19, 1976- 8:00 PM- Monday
April 23, 1977- 6:10 AM- saturday

Return of the Chimney Sweeps to the Home of Mercy Ramsey Carl
and Edward M. Carl, Jr.

April 27, 1978- 10:PM- Thursday
 April 16, 1979
 April 15, 1980- 6:30 AM
 April 16, 1981- 9:30 PM
 April 17, 1982
 April 15, 1983- 10:00 PM
 April 12, 1984
 April 12, 1985- 9:00 PM
 April 9, 1986- Midnight- Wednesday.
 Apr 15, 1987 - P.M. on Thur. 8:30 P.M.
 April 21, 1988 - a. 3.0 - P.M.
 April 8, 1989 - Sat - 8:40 P.M.

I sincerely hope that this record may be of some use to any person who is interested in the migration of birds. I, personally, have no idea where they come from to us.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs. E.M. Carl, Jr.)

Mrs. E.M. Carl, Jr.

Edward M. Carl, Jr.

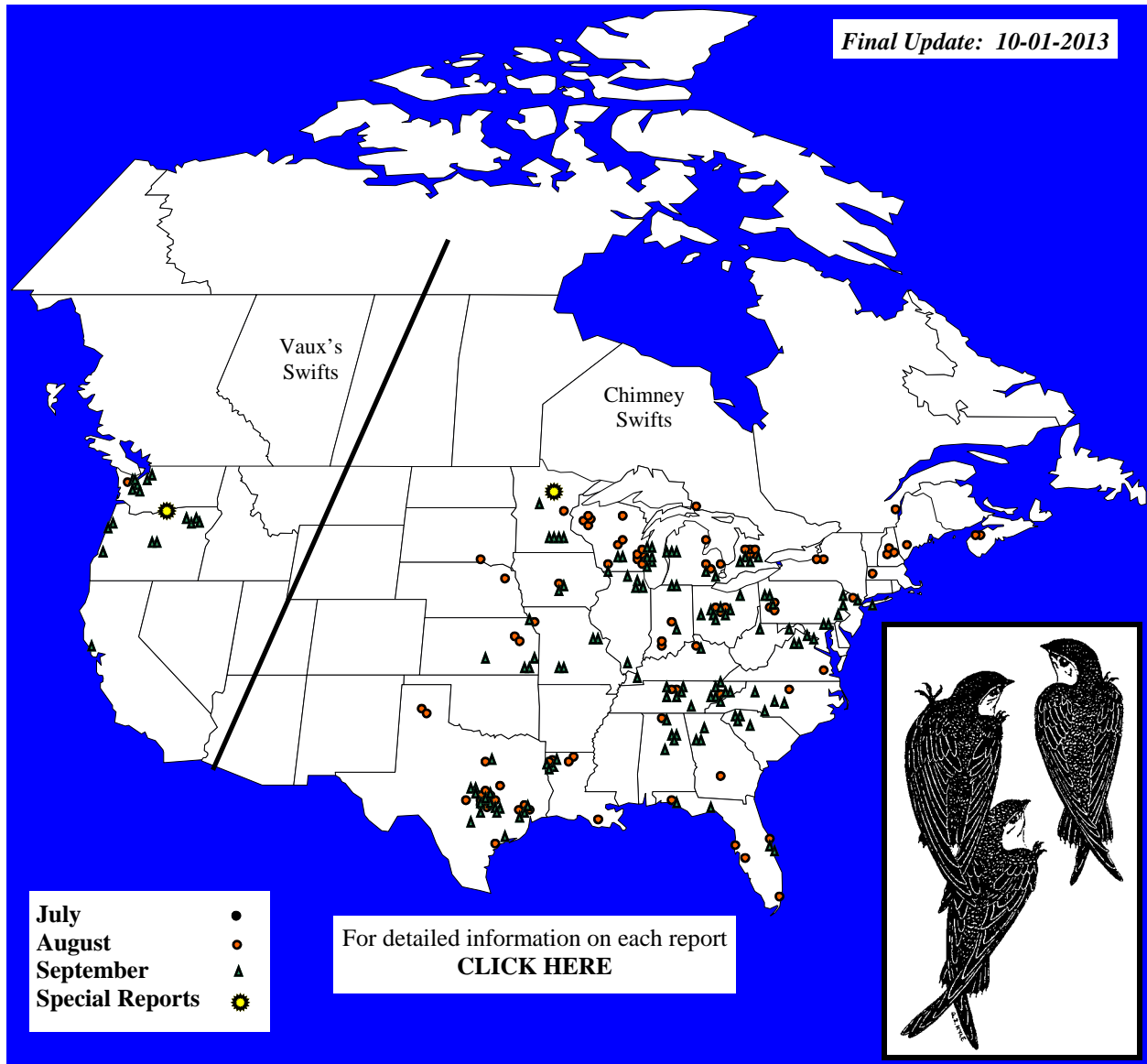
(Mercy Ramsey Carl)

{ Biruta Kearl
 captian (Eng)
 4-17-89- at Lib
 I talked with her

Our thanks to Allison Manthorne, Coordinator / Maritimes SwiftWatch / Bird Studies Canada for forwarding Charlotte's email about her mother's observations to us. Check out their work on the following web site:

<http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/acswifts/>

A Swift Night Out!



A SWIFT NIGHT OUT is a continent-wide effort to raise awareness about and encourage interest in Chimney Swifts and Vaux's Swifts. The project has become a favorite late summer event for professional and amateur birdwatchers alike.

As summer draws to a close and the swifts have finished raising their young, these fascinating aerial acrobats begin to congregate in communal roosts prior to their migration in the fall. Some roosts may consist of an extended family group of a half a dozen birds or so, but the larger sites can host hundreds or even thousands of swifts! We encourage you to involve your local Audubon chapters, bird clubs, scout groups and neighbors in this exhilarating spectacle.

This year's event was centered around the second weekends of August and September, but reports continued to come in through the end of September. This year we received more than 200 individual reports as well as several state-wide composite reports from 32 states and 3 provinces. If your state is not represented or is under-represented, please spread the word and plan to participate next year. This year we introduced an on-line reporting form to make participation easier. The form also makes all of the data available for research and analysis.

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Driftwood Wildlife Association

14246 Hunters Pass

Austin, Texas 78734

USA

(512) 266-3861

Kyle@ChimneySwifts.org

*A volunteer organization
dedicated to promoting
research
and*

*providing community education
in the areas of
wildlife rehabilitation,
and avian natural history.*

Officers:

Don Connell.....President

Georgan Kyle.....Secretary

Paul Kyle.....Treasurer

Editors for *Chaetura*
Georgan and Paul Kyle

Research and Rehabilitation

Driftwood Wildlife Association publications continue to be useful to rehabilitators throughout North America and the world at large. A list of these may be found on the “Publications” page of our web site.

Education

Our web site was well-visited again in 2012 with more than 145,000 visits to date, and is our most efficient way of disseminating educational information. We continue to work with the Travis Audubon Society at Chaetura Canyon to provide workshops on a variety of conservation and habitat issues.

This year in February, Georgan and Paul Kyle were invited as guests of honor to the first Canadian Chimney Swift Research and Conservation Workshop in Montreal. In reciprocation for the honor, the Kyles distributed copies of their book *Chimney Swifts: North America's Mysterious Birds above the Fireplace* and a copy of their Chimney Swift vocalizations CD. It was a great opportunity to put names with faces and network on the difficulties of Chimney Swift conservation.

With Appreciation

We wish to express our thanks to the many members, supporters and contributors who have helped make the Driftwood Wildlife Association recognized as a continent-wide conservation organization. We welcome your comments on past and current projects as well as suggestions for the future.

Memorials

As time goes by we inevitably must bid farewell to supportive friends and family who are no longer with us.

This year we fondly remember long-time member and supporter Aileen Stenbridge, the mother of Ann Connell, one of our past DWA Presidents.

We also remember Pat Powers. Pat was a past board member of the Texas Chimney Sweeping Guild and an important liaison between the professional chimney sweeping community and our Chimney Swift conservation efforts.

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Driftwood Wildlife Association

PUBLICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Chimney Swifts: America's Mysterious Birds Above the Fireplace
 (152 pp. 41 color and b&w photos, 28 line drawings, map, bibliography, index
 Texas A & M university Press, 2005) Hard Cover \$ 34.00 _____
 Paper Back \$ 16.95 _____

Chimney Swift Towers: New Habitat for America's Mysterious Birds
 (96 pp. 36 b&w photos, 13 line drawings - Texas A & M university Press, 2005) \$ 12.99 _____

Chimney Swift Vocalization CD. Playing the CD in the vicinity of a new
 Chimney Swift tower may enhance the chances of attracting swifts. \$ 10.00 _____

Rehabilitation and Conservation of Chimney Swifts (Fourth Edition)
 (53 pgs. with 50+ illustrations and photos of diet, housing and care information) \$ 15.00 _____

Hand-rearing Carolina Wrens (Second Edition) \$ 8.00 _____

Housing Avian Insectivores During Rehabilitation (Third Edition) \$12.00 _____

Care Guide for Whitetail Deer Fawns:
 Based on Experience in Central Texas (Forth Edition) \$ 12.00 _____

Report: Nutrition Survey 2000 for Whitetail Fawns \$ 8.00 _____

Chimney Swift Note Cards. Eight cards with four different designs
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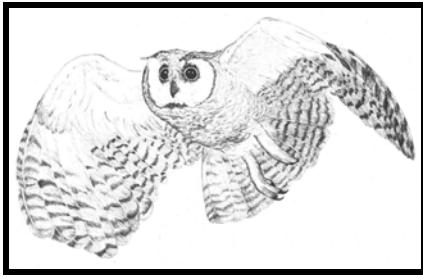
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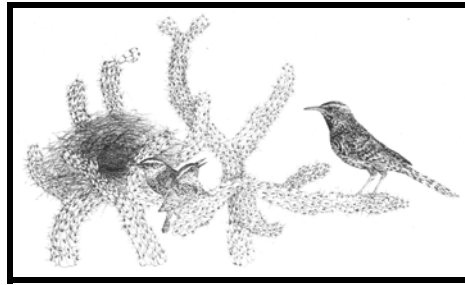
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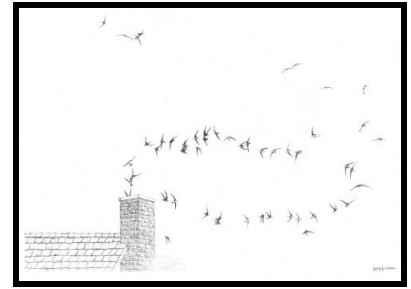
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Cactus Wrens



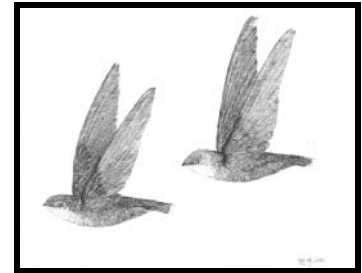
Going to Roost



The Line Up



Black-chinned and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds



Courtship "V"

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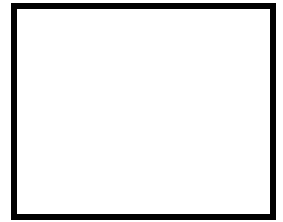
by **Georgan Z. Kyle**

Georgan Z. Kyle has been studying and sketching birds for more than 20 years. Her inspiration comes from her love of observing the behavior of birds in their natural habitat. Georgan's works are also heavily influenced by her many years of close personal contact with thousands of injured, ill and orphaned birds that came under her intensive care as a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Since 1989 her drawings have graced the covers of the Driftwood Wildlife Association's Annual Reports. All proceeds from the sale of her prints are forwarded to the Driftwood Wildlife Association for the purposes of public education and habitat conservation.

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www.ChimneySwifts.org

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- ◇ track the spring movements of Chimney Swifts
- ◇ download past issues of **Chaetura**
- ◇ order publications and merchandise from Driftwood

Send your e-mail to **Kyle@ChimneySwifts.org**

Chaetura

Volume 18, Fall 2013

The official publication of the
Driftwood Wildlife Association
a non-profit, all volunteer organization
supported by tax-deductible contributions.

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