

Nature London Chimney Swift Liaison Report 2016-2017

Introduction

This account covers the period Nov 1/16 to Oct 31/17. Nature London's swift initiatives are carried out under the club's Chimney Swift Liaison. In early June, Sandy Symmes became London SwiftWatch Coordinator under the Ontario SwiftWatch program of Bird Studies Canada (BSC). Her main activity involved organizing volunteers to monitor swift roosts, which resulted in a substantial increase in the amount of roost data collected compared to previous years.

Core volunteers were Marguerite Annen, Barry and Joan Attridge, Betsy Baldwin, Garth Casbourn, Gail McNeil, Olga Nemerovski, Wendy Russell, Susanne Sutherland, Ric and Sandy Symmes, Pat Tripp, David and Winifred Wake, Garry and Heidi Williams. Thanks to all.

The sections below highlight a selection of the activities carried out during the year.

Education and Outreach

- Answered inquiries and provided information to chimney owners as opportunities arose
- Published article on chimney conservation efforts in London (*Ontario Birds*, Aug '17)
- Gave PowerPoint presentations on swifts to naturalists' clubs in Woodstock (Nov 7/16, attendance 26) and St Thomas (Feb 3/17, attendance 55); led downtown walking tour of potential swift chimneys in Woodstock (May 30/17, attendance 25)
- Shared information re roost monitoring and/or conservation of swift chimneys with monitoring groups and others in Cambridge, Mississauga, St Thomas, Windsor and Manitoba
- Organized wrap-up gathering of London swift monitors (Oct 18/17), with speakers Liz Purves (Ontario SwiftWatch) and Debbie Lefebvre (Swift Care Ontario) (attendance 15)

Monitoring and Data Collection

- Liaised with Ontario SwiftWatch Coordinator; also helped find locations for data loggers
- Recruited, mentored and scheduled volunteers for roost monitoring; data sent to BSC
- Monitored 4 roost chimneys: spring blitz May 14 to June 5, weekly mid-June to mid-Sep
- Monitored active roosts daily mid-Sep to mid-Oct; conducted spot checks at lesser roosts
- Provided timely updates of roost count results to monitors throughout season
- Visited known swift chimneys to look for nesting (22 active, 13 inactive, some uncertain)
- Collected and submitted data on Common Nighthawks to BSC
- Prepared end-of-season report for London swift monitors
- In 2017, London volunteers made 196 monitoring visits to 53 chimneys: 131 visits to 7 active roosts, 8 visits to 7 potential roosts, 57 visits to 43 chimneys to check for nesting

Conservation

- Advocated for preservation of individual swift chimneys and chimneys in general
- Submitted comments re draft Federal Species-at-Risk policies document
- Provided comments on Subject Lands Study Report for London's proposed Bus Rapid Transit routes in relation to possible impacts on swifts
- Made input to draft Committee on Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) threats calculation and assessment of status of the Chimney Swift in Canada
- Helped Swift Care Ontario and Le Nichoir (of Hudson, Quebec) find suitable release locations for hand-reared swifts from Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba

Winifred Wake, Chimney Swift Liaison for Nature London