

## **Chimney Swift Liaison Report** (Nov 1/17 to Oct 31/18)

This account covers the period Nov 1/17 to Oct 31/18, a time period that enables reporting on a single, complete (April-to-October) season of swift activity in London.

### Introduction

Nature London's (NL's) program of swift initiatives is carried out under the auspices of the club's Chimney Swift Liaison. NL's SwiftWatch Coordinator, Sandy Symmes, organizes and oversees roost monitoring, but also performs many other tasks. In 2018 many additional volunteers enabled the weekly monitoring program to expand to 13 chimneys and to collect far more data than in 2017.

The earliest swifts were reported in London on April 27 and the latest active roost of the season was recorded on October 9. The last swifts in the city were seen on October 18.

### Education/Outreach

- Provided 2018 summary reports to South Collegiate (1 chimney) and Advanced Facility for Avian Research (AFAR) (5 campus chimneys)
- Created a swift page on NL website (new educational documents, image gallery, etc.)
- Assisted First-St. Andrew's church in its successful application for funding from NL to erect a viewing bench and educational sign about swifts, which use 5 church chimneys
- Submitted article to *The Cardinal* (S. Symmes, Nov 2017) on SwiftWatch activities
- Gave PowerPoint presentations on swifts to
  - Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society, Hamilton (Mar 17/18) (attendance 50)
  - Landon Library, London (Apr 24/18) (attendance 65)
  - AFAR, Western University (June 26/18) (attendance 24)
  - Prince Edward County Field Naturalists, Bloomfield (Sept 25/18) (attendance 50+)
- Prepared swift section for NL's Doors Open display, Civic Garden Complex (Sep 16/18)
- Educated passers-by during monitoring, handed out swift info cards supplied by Bird Studies Canada (BSC)
- 16-minute interview on radio station 99.3countyfm, Prince Edward County (Oct 10/18)
- Shared and/or exchanged information with interested parties in Cambridge, Mississauga, Oshawa, Guelph and Manitoba

### Monitoring / Data Collection

- Participated in teleconference organized by Ontario SwiftWatch (Apr 10/18)
- Prepared and circulated guidelines for swift monitoring in London
- Hosted (May 14/18) orientation session at South Collegiate chimney (attendance 13)
- Recruited, mentored and scheduled volunteers for regular roost monitoring
- Met with Liz Purves of BSC re possible modifications to swift monitoring protocol
- Organized weekly (or more frequent) monitoring at up to 13 chimneys (May to Oct)
- Provided updates of results to monitors throughout season (usually weekly)
- Visited additional known swift chimneys (plus others on spec) to check for nesting or roosting activity (identified 7 new chimneys used by swifts)
- Collected all data using BSC swift monitoring protocols
- Submitted data to BSC, maintained file of data in London
- Collected and submitted data on Common Nighthawks to BSC, retained copy in London

- Prepared end-of-season report for London swift monitors
- On an ongoing basis, liaised with Ontario SwiftWatch Coordinator at BSC
- Made 298 visits to 13 chimneys and 52 visits to 41 other chimneys
- Organized wrap-up gathering of London swift monitors (Oct 21/18), with speakers Liz Purves (Ontario SwiftWatch), Debbie Lefebvre (Swift Care Ontario) and Winifred Wake (London SwiftWatch) (attendance 27)

### Conservation

- Made input on Bus Rapid Transit routes in relation to possible impacts on swifts
- Advocated (unsuccessfully) for rebuilding of a recently demolished swift chimney on a downtown business
- Contacted City Planning Department and Architectural Conservancy re protection of London chimneys used by swifts
- Contacted three churches and one business with info on protection of swift chimneys
- Visited an Ingersoll Credit Union to provide advice on swift-proofing its basement
- At request of Mike Cadman (Canadian Wildlife Service) provided info on swift chimney usage in London
- Helped Swift Care Ontario identify locations for four releases involving 23 hand-reared swifts from Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba
- At request of World Wildlife Fund provided information on “How to Help Swifts”

During the reporting period, a dedicated crew of volunteers donated countless hours to swift monitoring and other aspects of London’s swift program: Marguerite Annen, Leslie Baker, Betsy Baldwin, John Berry, Garth Casbourn, Gerry Gedcke, Sandy Grant, Shelagh Grant, Leanne Grieves, Jackson Kusack, Debbie Lefebvre, Ann MacPhail, Bill and Joanne Maddeford, Rick Martin, Maribeth McClusky, Kathy McCoy, Gail McNeil, Olga Nemerowski, Jenn Plaskett, Susan Relecom, Evelyn Rogers, Wendy Russell, Brendon Samuels, Susanne Sutherland, Ric and Sandy Symmes, Pat Tripp, Rachel Turner, David and Winifred Wake, Frits, Lynda and Quinten Wiegiersma, Garry and Heidi Williams.

Sincere thanks to everyone who participated in London’s swift initiatives in 2018.

Winifred Wake  
Chimney Swift Liaison for Nature London