

# Chaetura

Fall 2012

Driftwood Wildlife Association

Volume 17

## Innovative New Chimney Swift Habitat



We have been busy here thanks to Bill Evans!! Our team has been formed with many supporters and partners and it is all good news for the Chimney Swifts!

We approached the Masonry School in Mississauga for two reasons: their expertise in brickwork and it is the school for future masons. The school is working with us and will produce the towers in sections over winter and then place them where the Swift Action Team desires. They can place them with their boom trucks on poured concrete pads with a team of students to finish the tower at the site. The education of the future masons of the plight of the Chimney Swifts, can only help when homeowners report of swifts and want to cap their chimneys. So in effect we will be preserving existing habitat and create habitat where needed. Hanson Brick Company is donating all the brick (3000) we require to construct the towers through the school. The partnerships have escalated to the level we need.

On August 16, 2011 we met with the city of Mississauga staff, Credit Valley Conservation Authority and we gave them the Bill and Rusty show of why we need their help. It also helped to have swifts flying over head while we made our case!!! The response was overwhelming and city councilor George Carlson is making it a personal target to make Streetsville Ontario the Chimney Swift capital of Canada. He offered his help with project funding and high level contact to increase success. There will be 2-3 towers erected in the park targeted by spring of 2012 in Streetsville with education kiosks and signage where needed. All permits and pad preparation were in place by the fall of 2011.



*The "Crew":  
Rusty Rustenburg, Tim Maxson,  
Scott Coliie, Aubrey Go, Mario  
De Nicola and Wild Bill Evans.  
Photos courtesy of  
Rusty Rustenburg*



*Laying out the foundation*



*Completed tower  
Ready for installation*

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Rusty Rustenburg



# Report from Travis Audubon's Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary

*For a virtual hike through Chaetura Canyon go to [www.ChimneySwifts.org](http://www.ChimneySwifts.org)  
and click on the "Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary" link*

Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary has grown from eight acres to ten. The Travis Audubon Society of Central Texas that now owns the property has been actively purchasing adjacent parcels as they become available. Paul and Georgan 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.

Sixteen structures have been constructed specifically for Chimney Swift nesting and roosting. Eight towers are constructed of wood; the other eight are constructed of concrete block. In 2011, all eight of the wooden and five of the concrete block towers were utilized by the swifts. A total of 52 eggs were produced by the thirteen swift pairs. Thirty-six of those eggs hatched and twenty-five of the hatchlings survived to fledge from the towers. The summer of 2011 was the hottest on record for the area. 164 days reached a high temperature of 90 degrees or more. 90 of those days were 100 degrees or higher. Combined with the severe drought conditions, it is amazing that the swifts were as successful as they were in breeding.

## CHIMNEY SWIFT PRODUCTIVITY AT CHAETURA CANYON -- 2011

Tower	# Eggs Laid	# Eggs Hatch	# Young Fledged
Wooden: North Observation	5	3	3
South Observation	5	5	4
West Field	5	3	3
East Field	4	3	2
Prism	3	2	2
Garden (Marlene)	3	3	1
Workshop	5	3	3
12' Demonstration	4	2	2
Concrete: North Pool	6	5	3
Castle	1	0	0
Castle Companion	3	2	2
Driveway	6	5	0
S.W. Corner	2	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>25</b>

The first swift arrived in 2011 on March 27. The North Observation Tower hosted a spring migration roost with 193 (the highest number of birds entering) on May 1. The high total for the fall roost was 165 individuals. The last bird was sighted on October 13. Chimney Swifts were present at Chaetura Canyon for 201 days.

# Here and there 1.0



*Photo by Beth McAllister*

## **Valencia, PA**

Some years ago an Eagle Scout built a swift tower according to your specs at the end of our largest songbird aviary. This year a pair checked it out and built a nest.

This tower is at Wildbird Recovery in Valencia PA. We are a nonprofit rehabilitation center.

Beth McMaster

## **Marshfield, MA**

David Ludlow and Shawn Carey climbed the roof of a building at the Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield to confirm the presence of a Chimney Swift nest and a four-egg clutch. The chimney, built by volunteer Clyde Gurney, has been in use seven of the eight years it's been there. The only time it wasn't used was the year the staff forgot to close the flue—"Not too swift", said the birds.



*Courtesy of Don Gorney*

## **Indianapolis, IN**

We are building several Chimney Swift towers here in Indianapolis as part of our Wings Over Indy project. The project calls for seven towers plus a boy scout is building an 8th! Since the end of May, I have overseen construction of four towers and am working on number five now.

Attached is a photo of your book being used as a shim! It worked great. Five of the eight towers are going up at City of Indianapolis properties, two at a land trust nature preserve, and one at an environmental magnet school. Each is in a high-visibility location.

Part of our project is educating the public about swifts and directing them to our WingsOverIndy.org website. We have received grant money from TogetherGreen for our swift projects.

Don Gorney  
Amos W. Butler Audubon Society,  
President  
Lights Out Indy, Program Director



*Photo by Jerry Goodbody*

## **Long Island City, NY**

Here is a photo of the swift tower in Long Island City. The plaque reads:

"This Chimney Swift Tower is provided through the generosity of Audubon and the family and friends of Geoffrey Cobb Ryan and exemplifies his commitment to furthering partnerships for the protection of birds and habitat."

Jerry Goodbody

# Here and there 1.1



*Photo by Sandy Dunn*

## **Richland Hills, TX**

By chance has anyone mentioned a Swift tower in North Richland Hills recently? I was one that fought to save Chimney at Richland High School with no success a couple years ago.

Sandy Dunn

## **Holt, MO**

We had a double nesting in both of the chimney flues this year and 5 babies in the North tower and 6 in the West tower. All lived and flew. I think we contributed to the population pretty good the year!

Joyce Rosson

## **Chapel Hill, TX**

You might be interested in knowing that there is now a new chimney in Chapel Hill, just finished yesterday. Send some swifts this way!

Phil Bushnell



*Photos by Shirley Needham*

## **Rochester, IN**

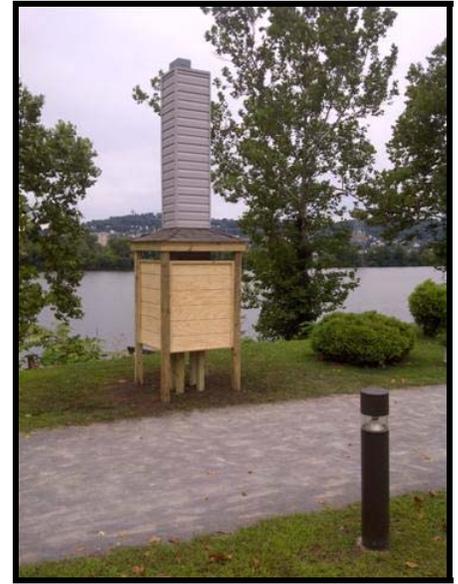
Thought you might enjoy seeing Rochester's very first swift tower. It was built by Bill Walsh and is going in a lovely native prairie grass park with walking paths and a fishing pond. Perfect spot . . . now if only the Chimney Swifts agree with me.

Shirley Needham

## **Hunt, TX**

We built a tower using your Chimney Swift book. We do have a chimney on a nearby house and the birds have started going there, so our efforts are not in vain. Hopefully we can attract some birds to our new tower next year.

Raleigh Johnson



*Photo courtesy of Brian Shema*

## **Pittsburg, PA**

Attached is a photo of a nearly complete tower (Riverfront Trail in the foreground, Allegheny River in the background). Cool thing was that we had 20-30 swifts flying overhead as we constructed this one. We built three others last week as well (two were non-kiosk tower only installations).

## **Brian D. Shema**

Director of Conservation  
Audubon Society of Western  
Pennsylvania

## **Baker Sanctuary, TX**

I looked at the Chimney Swift remains today- 5 dead nestlings on the bottom (nest still attached to the wall). 2 were about half the size as the other 3 but even the eldest nestlings were not that old. Maybe we'll have better luck next year...

Chris Murray, Steward

# Here and there 1.2



Photo by Harold and Deanna Krambeer

## Saint Olaf, IA

Harold and I are happy to report that we had Chimney Swifts nest in two of the three towers at our home. We noticed them flying overhead early summer, but thought they were from a nearby nesting site. Luckily we were wrong, and Harold saw them entering the tower down by the garden one evening. We later saw them enter the tower by the house! (We took lawn chairs outdoors to watch them in the evenings!) When Harold cleaned the bottoms of the towers, we weren't able to count the egg shells accurately, but believe 3-4 birds were in each nest. One egg didn't hatch, and we found one small wing portion.

We (the Friends group) spent a lot of our effort this year on educating people about Chimney Swifts. The interest is there! Kids love to hear about the swifts, probably because they are somewhat unusual and the fact that the nest is held together with swift "spit" is appealing to them!

Deanna Krambeer  
Friends of Sherman Swift Tower

## Johnson City, TX Pedernales Falls State Park

The tower at the Bird Blind was not occupied. The tower located at the entrance to the park had a nice nest on the wall. There were three eggs, three hatched, one fledged. One of the dead was a hatchling, the other a nestling but after the pin feathers had bloomed. It appears one swift fledged. So that was the first nest in the entrance tower.

## Johnson City, TX Middendorf Ranch

Mom's Memorial tower- 3 eggs, 3 fledged. Castle tower- 3 eggs, 3 fledged. Little tower- 4 eggs, 4 fledged. Tower by the big tree. There were 3 eggs that hatched, there was one un-hatched egg in the nest. There was a dead adult size swift on the bottom of the tower. It would seem that an egg that did not hatch would have been thrown overboard. So, for this tower I am not sure if there were 2 or 3 that made it.

I am pretty shocked at all of the swift activity. I saw them going into moms tower and the little tower- but not the rest of them. All in all pretty amazing compared to what I was expecting...

Lydia Middendorf

## Johnson City, TX

I thought you might be interested to see how successful the Acacia tower has been. Each year has been a little better than the last. This one was active during the 2011 drought, so laying 7 eggs, and 6 or 7 fledged, sounds pretty remarkable.

Anne Donovan



Photo of Bastrop County Audubon Tower with project head carpenter, Don Chapman. Courtesy of BCAS

## Bastrop, TX

The Bastrop County Audubon Society thanks you so much for your advice and expertise for our building of the Judy Ing Memorial Chimney Swift Tower. The swift tower is beautiful and very well made. We know it will be a great educational asset as well as a home to chimney swifts. All effort and work was done by volunteers. The four informational panels in the kiosk are about Chimney Swifts, BCAS, Judy Ing, and City of Bastrop and Bob Bryant Park.

Priscilla Jarvis

## Here and there 1.3



*Photo by Delbert Joyner*

### **Carrier, OK**

We live on a farm near Carrier, OK where we have an old abandoned silo. Several days were spent this spring converting the enclosed ladder area to hopefully attract Chimney Swifts back to the farm. We lost them many years ago when central heat and air was put in the farm house and the old chimney was taken out. Have missed them ever since. I closed the bottom and built a plate to install on the top with a smaller opening and lined the inside with T 1-11 plywood. I had about given up, for this year, but it looks like we have been found again!!!!

Delbert Joyner

### **Washington, DC**

I am very pleased to let you know that last night the Board of Directors of The Parker House, a 55 unit condo, reversed itself and voted NOT to cap or put mesh on its chimney so that Chimney Swifts can continue to use it to nest (or do whatever they do).

Thank you all so very much for your help. The vote was 7 to 0 by the way.

Mike Prucker



*Photo courtesy of Matthew Howard*

### **Evansville, IN**

I know that it has been a long time since I asked you on whether or not metal siding would be a good attribute to your design of the Chimney Swift Tower. The light colored, painted, vertical metal becomes a natural predator guard and eliminates exterior maintenance for prolonged life. The tower was my eagle project and it now stands tall and proud in the Blue Grass Fish and Wildlife Area in Southern Indiana. I thank you for your consent on metal siding being a good idea. Without you two I would have had to keep up care on the tower.

Matthew Howard  
Troop 318



## **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 Google Store at:

**[www.ChimneySwifts.org](http://www.ChimneySwifts.org)**

or send a check or money order in the amount of \$10 (USD) to:

Driftwood Wildlife Association  
1206 West 38th, Suite 1105  
Austin, TX 78705

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# Canadian Update

Currently we have two Chimney Swift towers in Rouge Park that follow your plan (we are in southern Ontario by the way). These towers were implemented in 2009 and have so far been unsuccessful in attracting a nesting pair or roost. We are applying for funding to make improvements on our towers as we believe our main limiting factor is temperature. Because we are much more north than Texas, we really are struggling to maintain our internal temperatures over 13 degrees Celsius. We are looking for some sort of plan to insulate the tower so that it can hold a more stable internal temperature. Possibly using bricks on the outside or cinder blocks that may radiate heat through the night when temperatures drop.

Any recommendations that you have for us would be great. I know that most of your towers in the southern states are struggling with overheating, but we have just the opposite problem.

## **Sheryl Santos**

Stewardship Coordinator

*We have been aware of your different temperature problems for some time. It may be that the wooden towers are inappropriate in your climate and you should consider the masonry designs -- possibly with interior T1-11 wooden liners. However, since you already have some of the wooden designs in place, there are a few alterations that we can suggest:*

- *Drill fewer holes in the bottom to decrease the thermal draw.*
- *Consider installing a removable wooden skirt around the bottom.*
- *Increase the insulation by installing 2 x 4 corners over the existing siding, inserting more insulation and then covering the tower with a second outer skin. We actually did this with one of our original towers.*

*You should consider keeping good records of whatever you do so that others in your area can benefit from your experimentation. We hope this information is helpful. Please keep us advised of any progress or set backs you experience.*

Thank you for the great suggestions, I think we have planned to insert more insulation and then cover the tower with a second outer skin. The other tower we have we plan to do something similar to what a person did in Quebec where he used a small propane heater when the temperatures dipped below 13 degrees Celsius. We will be monitoring the towers very closely and will have temperature loggers to monitor any changes.

We will also be coupling these improvements with some playbacks to encourage the swifts and let them know that potential suitable habitat is available.

The following report is from: "Bird Studies Canada, Latest News, July 8, 2011

## **Chimney Swifts Go High-tech**

**July 2011** Maritimes Swift-watchers are a modern bunch! Program participants are using video-monitoring to accurately count hundreds of Chimney Swifts as the speedy birds plummet down chimneys, often in the gloom of dusk. The erratic flight and sheer numbers of these dark, sooty-coloured birds have confounded many a swift-watcher, leading to much head-scratching and many a varied count. But, you ask, how hard can it be? Consider this: at a free-standing chimney in Sussex, New Brunswick, one volunteer described the sight of 302 swifts "tumbling down" the chimney in rapid succession. Another volunteer counted over 570 Chimney Swifts entering the large

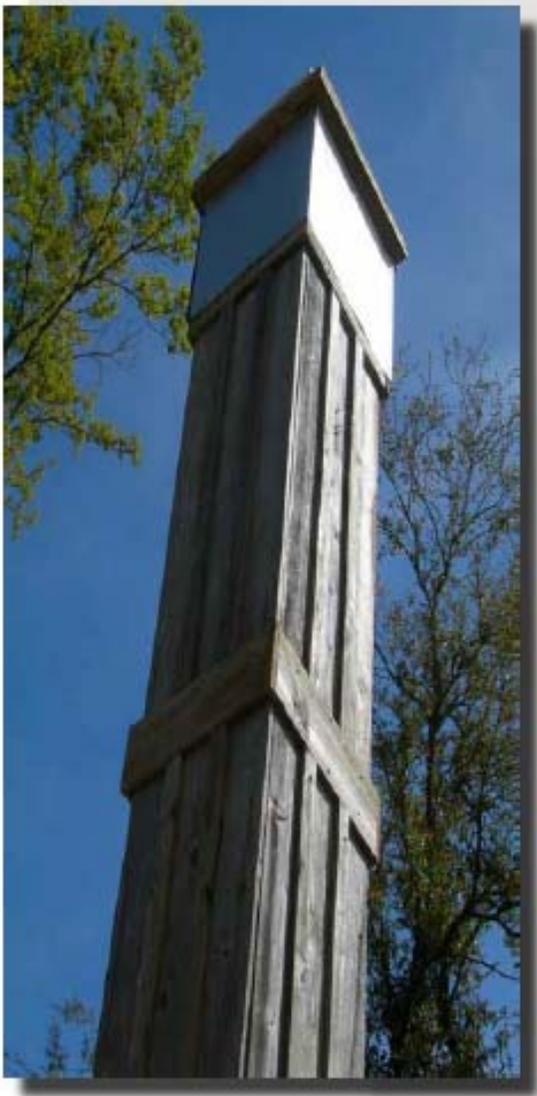
*(Continued on page 8)*

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chimney at Temperance Street Elementary School in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Standing below the old Post Office building in downtown Bathurst, New Brunswick, one group estimated that just over 190 birds had entered the roost. Upon video review the action was slowed down enough to count 242 birds, many of which had entered the [chimney?] in a rapid stream of traffic...very "swift" indeed!

The ability of swift-watchers to accurately record the number of Chimney Swifts using these roost chimneys is crucial to long-term monitoring success. Accurate counts are needed to help form a clear picture of abundance and distribution during migration, and many participants are turning to video recordings which can be played back in slow-motion, allowing one to count entries and exits at a far more leisurely pace.”

## New Swift Technology...



### Video Installation for Chimney Swift Towers

*“A Guide for Interpretation  
and Scientific Monitoring”*

By Mozart Mark Dedeaux

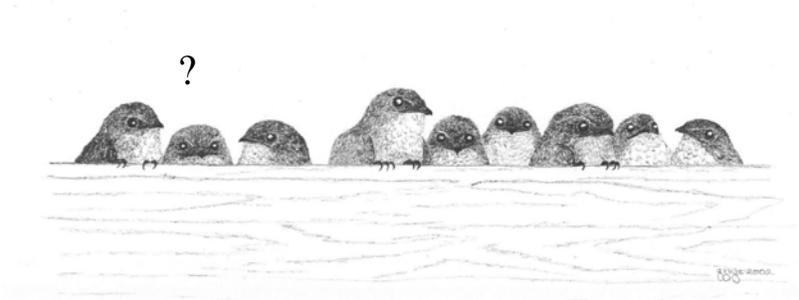


**Mozart Mark Dedeaux**  
Education Coordinator  
Pascagoula River Audubon Center  
Pascagoula, MS

To download a copy of this excellent publication go to: [www.ChimneySwifts.org/Video Installation.pdf](http://www.ChimneySwifts.org/Video%20Installation.pdf)

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...



I have e-mailed you in the past about scouts building a 2nd Chimney Swift tower at the Nature Discovery Center where I work, but now I want to share this exciting news with you.

Our oldest swift tower has a "Swift Cam" in it with a monitor in our Discovery Rooms so that visitors can see what's going on in the chimney. Last year we saw five young successfully fledge from the chimney. This year a pair of Chimney Swifts started nesting early before we had the monitor hooked up, but in early May we saw babies on the nest. There were either four or five. Then on Friday June 17th I noticed one egg in the nest. All the young were off of the nest. At first I thought that it was an egg that didn't hatch.

Then on Sat June 18th there were two eggs with no adult sitting on them each time I looked. On Tuesday, 6/21 there were 3 eggs in the nest. On Thurs, 6/23 there were still the 3 eggs in the AM, and then by the late afternoon there were 4. Today a C. Swift was sitting on the nest every time I looked. It moved off for a little bit once and I was able to see the 4 eggs. There were still some immature birds (at least 3) in the chimney.

I have been teaching a science camp for kids all week and the kids have been watching all this with me. They have been filling out a "Chimney Swift Observation Book" I put together for each of them with pictures of what changed day to day. We were all really excited!

I was under the impression that Chimney Swifts did not breed twice, but could this be a second nest? Or would another pair come in and reuse the 1st pairs nest while there were still young in the chimney?

Mary Ann Beauchemin  
Nature Discovery Center  
Houston, TX

*There will only be one nesting pair per season, but they do occasionally rear a second brood. The eggs for the second brood are normally laid shortly before the young from the first brood fledge, just as you have observed. The eggs are certainly from the original parents as swift mates are very territorial about their nesting structure and protective of their offspring. We are so glad you are able to observe this behavior, and thanks for letting us know about it.*

We've enjoyed Swifts in our chimney for several years but our chimney went silent after a few weeks of their occupation last year. This year, there were no Swifts at all. We did see them in the neighborhood throughout their nesting season so we knew they were here. No work has been done to our chimney. Any ideas why they haven't returned or how we can encourage them to return? Our HOA won't allow a tower.

Lisa Lorden

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*Because the same birds do tend to return to the same chimney year after year, we can only assume that something may have happened to "your" pair. Migration is tough, and many birds do not survive.*

*Our only advice would be to have patience, and maybe a new pair (possibly youngsters hatched this year in your area) will find your chimney next season. If it has been suitable for swifts in the past, it is unlikely that it will stay vacant for long.*

Can raccoons be excluded from a chimney without also excluding swifts? Any insight you can offer me would be greatly appreciated.

David Wolf  
Director of Wildlife & Facilities Management  
Lake Erie Nature & Science Center  
Bay Village, OH

*The only way to keep out raccoons and still allow swifts access would be to install a 2 foot to 3 foot tall band of sheet metal, copper or some other slick material around the top of the chimney to make it too slick for mammals to climb. Tree branches would also need to be kept trimmed back, but that should be done for fire safety regardless. We hope this information is helpful.*

I have been a chimney sweep in central NY for 25 years. I know that Chimney Swifts are a Federally protected species and I would never disturb an active nest. What I find interesting is that, for several years I may not come across any, then there may be a season I come across several. Is there a reason for this? I service about 1,000 chimney's a year. It seem's they prefer unlined chimney's but, last year I came across at least 2 nests in clay lined chimney's.

Mike Ladd

*The dynamics of Chimney Swift nesting activity is forever changing as more and more chimneys are capped. As the availability of open chimneys changes, so does the presence of the swifts. A nesting pair will usually attempt to return to the same chimney year after year. However, if they return to a capped chimney they will search elsewhere for a place to raise their young. This probably accounts for the irregularity in your observations of the birds.*

*Older unlined chimneys make the best habitat for Chimney Swifts because the rougher texture makes it easier for them to cling to the walls and attach their nests. However, they can use the mortar joints in tile-lined chimneys.*

*Many sweeps are now working with their clients to allow access to the swifts during their breeding season. They make a service call in the spring to clean out the creosote and perform a safety check on the chimney at the end of the burning season. Checking that the damper is closed and leaving the cap off during the summer months allows the birds to raise their young and go about their job of clearing the skies of mosquitoes, gnats, and other small flying insect pests. A second service call is then made in the fall (all Chimney Swifts migrate to South America for the winter) to remove the nest and replace the cap for a safe burning season. Two service calls per year: good for business -- great for the Chimney Swifts.*

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I built a Chimney Swift tower about eight years ago. It has been quite successful as a nest sight and to a lesser degree as a pre and post nest season roost site. I have and read the book "Chimney Swift Towers." I am planning to build four satellite nesting towers this spring. The count potentially could expand to eight. My current tower is 24' in height and is 24" by 24" inside. It was featured in your news letter several years ago. I am wondering how big a factor is making the new towers 12' tall verses 8' tall. Also how does the inside dimension effect the desirability of the tower. What data do you have to support your thoughts? I am leaning toward your recommended inside dimensions of 14" by 14" as shown on page 44. All the towers will be attached to the outside gable wall of a couple pole barns on our farm. They will be well over 10' apart (at least 40'). The base will be over 6' above ground and the tops will clear the roof by about 5'. My goal is to create a colony with increased numbers, where the soon to be built towers will be used as nest sites and the current tower will see an increased use as a roost site. I, like you am very enthusiastic about Chimney Swifts. You may or may not know that I was the guy who came up with the idea to use a CD recording of Chimney Swifts to attract swifts to a new nest sight, much like how purple martins are drawn to investigate a new nest sight. It worked so well it is now used by others. My goal is to be able to see dozens if not hundreds of birds swirling about coming to roost. What advice can you give?

Jim Morrison  
Mora, MN

*Nice to hear from you, and glad to hear that your tower has been successful.*

*We currently have 16 towers on the Chaetura Canyon Sanctuary where we are stewards. In most years 12 or more towers have nests, and the three large towers also alternate as communal roosting sites for migrating swifts in the spring and fall, non-breeding adults in the summer and dispersing fledged youngsters from other surrounding towers and residential chimneys in our immediate area. Once the swifts arrive in force, we seldom have less than 100 birds roosting in one of the large towers until they leave in the fall.*

*Of the 16 towers, 5 are 8' tall wooden structures -- all of which have hosted a nesting pair nearly every year since they were installed. We have been very pleased with the productivity of the shorter towers. They are also easier and less expensive to build and much easier to install. In fact, we seldom build a 12' tower unless it is for a Kiosk Tower in a park or other public place. Since you already have a large tower in place, adding smaller satellite towers should work well. All young swifts return first to the site of their birth when they return in the spring, and if there are similar structures nearby they normally will take up residence quickly.*

*If you follow the plans in the book, you will find it to be the most economical use of 4' x 8' sheets of T1-11. The inside diameter has proven to be ideal, and it is actually larger than most standard chimneys. If laid out the way we recommend, you will see that the sections actually "snap" together. There is now a nice video on our web site ([www.ChimneySwifts.org](http://www.ChimneySwifts.org)) that shows a tower being built using our design and methods. You may find it interesting.*

*Just click on the "Chimney Swift Videos" link.*

Thank you for your response. This gives me the info and the encouragement for my tower construction project. I am glad to learn that 8' towers are just fine. That means more towers. I may be able to double my nest tower plans and fit 8 instead of 4 on to our buildings.

Jim

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# CHIMNEY TIME-SHARING REPORTS

My name is Vanessa Ray and I live on a farm in Ida, MI (in Monroe County, about 30 miles south of Detroit). Last year is the first year that my parents noticed our chimney swifts (We've had purple martins coming here for nearly fifty years, so it's possible they've been here that long too, we just never noticed due to their almost silent behavior). It happened by accident. My mother was in the basement and heard what she thought was a raccoon and babies in our chimney. She sent my father up to investigate, and armed with a flashlight, he did just that. In my father's words "When I shined the light in the chimney, I almost had a heart attack...the screaming, the sound of thunder, and something moving at an unbelievable speed in an area where nothing should be able to move at all". He thought he was seeing a banshee. He came down and with anticipation watched as a little bird shot out the opening. And thus began my family's love affair with the bird we came to know as a Chimney Swift.

The first sighting this year occurred on May 20. The way my dad was screaming for me to come outside on that day had me believing that something was being killed. As I nearly broke my foot to get outside as quickly as I could, I looked at my dad, and as a huge smile developed across his face he exclaimed "the Chimney Swifts are back!"

Vanessa Ray  
(Chimney Swift fan)

I enjoyed your website about Chimney Swifts. Right now we have a family living in our chimney. Earlier in the year a swift was in our fireplace. We got him outside and then closed the opening above the fireplace. A few weeks ago we began to hear babies chirping. Just as you said, they can get rather loud. One of our worries was how they would be able to fly up the chimney, but it seems that is their natural habitat. I guess when they are ready, they will move on. Thank you for the information.

Susan Ambrose

*Thanks for your kind words and for allowing the swifts to share your chimney. Swifts are one of the few species that can fly straight up and down (they are closely related to hummingbirds), so the babies should have no trouble leaving when they are ready to be on their own.*

I live in rural Lee County in eastern central Alabama. Until about two years ago Chimney Swifts nested regularly in my chimney during the 28 years I lived in my residence, but they no longer use my chimney. Some Canadian provinces list the species as endangered. Perhaps it is time for the USFWS to consider listing the species as threatened. I really miss the little 'flying cigars' and the cheerful chattering of the nestlings in my chimney. Keep up the good work.

Bob Mount

# OBSERVATIONS - Chimney Swifts

There seems to be a surplus of swifts this year. Like the martins, I think the swifts had an excellent fledge last year. All day long I have investigating swifts peeking into all of my towers, only to be chased out by the nesting pairs. Yesterday there was violence in mid-air when the male from my 8' tower grabbed another swift and they locked together in combat! They almost hit the ground! Playing the cd should be yielding some good results this year. I could easily add a few more towers and get nesters here. I'm up to 5 eggs already from my pair in the concrete tower.

Kelly Applegate



*Photos by Andrea Schuhmann*

I was checking a bridge for roosting bats and found Chimney Swifts and Rafinesque big-eared bats! And if that weren't cool enough, there was a muskrat lodge on the floor.

The bridge is located on Scenic Hwy 315 just off Sardis Dam in northern MS. Unfortunately this is no longer a design used by Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). The columns were a former design I've heard called debris deflectors, where by design a hollow room with one entrance is created within the columns, perfect for roosting critters!

Andrea Schuhmann  
Naturalist/ Outreach Educator  
**Mississippi Museum of Natural Science**

A very interesting report of a *Chaetura* Swift species from the corner of South Congress Avenue and Oltorf Road in south Austin was received on 11/18/11. Both Chimney and Vaux's would have to be considered at such a late date. John Arvin was driving down Congress when he noticed a single *Chaetura* Swift; it was exhibiting non-migratory behavior.

Kenny Anderson  
The Austin Area Rare Bird Alert  
Austin, TX

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# MINNESOTA BOY SCOUT TOWERS

## Chimney Swift Conservation and Boy Scouts

To conserve Chimney Swifts, we must first advance the understanding and appreciation of them and then engage others in these efforts. Only when the public appreciates and gets engaged can we hope to conserve. Audubon Minnesota is working with multiple partners and especially with Boy Scouts to build artificial Chimney Swift Towers at sites with maximum potential of educating youth and raising awareness for many within the communities where the towers are erected.

Audubon Minnesota has facilitated the building of 83 towers, primarily through a Toyota TogetherGreen grant and our numerous partners. Another 29 towers have been built as a result of our presentations/talks and the partnership efforts of Kelly Applegate of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Thirty-seven of these towers were done by Boy Scouts for their Eagle Projects or as Troop projects. Twelve more are in the planning stage by other scouts.

Of the thirty-seven towers built by Boy Scouts, ten of them were built by Boy Scout Troop 100, an all Hmong Troop, chartered to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. Troop 100 was the first such unit in the United States, chartered in 1981, specifically to meet the needs of Hmong immigrants and has many outstanding alumni. The Scoutmaster is Dave Moore, a now-retired teacher who actually started the troop. It is open to all boys, regardless of ethnic background, but Troop 100's identity is overwhelmingly Hmong, and it is the Hmong heritage that is affirmed and celebrated as part of its Scouting program.

The milestone of achieving the 100th Eagle Scout for Troop 100 was awarded along with five other Troop 100 Eagles, (numbers 96 – 101) in a special ceremony on January 7, 2012. Among the other five were four scouts who had built towers as their Eagle projects, Kong Cheng Vang, Chameng Vang, Mark Thao, and the 101<sup>st</sup> Eagle Scout from Troop 100 was Chaoching Vang.

Scoutmaster Moore has been instrumental in gaining support for Chimney Swift conservation with other scoutmasters and the Scout Council at the local, regional, and state level. The partnership with two enthusiastic Chimney Swift conservationists, Mike Menzel and Kathy Iverson, has been paramount to the success of the scouts' tower building efforts. They have devoted hundreds of hours mentoring the scouts and opened their garage, and tools, to the scouts for which to build their towers!

Jesse Yang was the first of Troop 100 to undertake the building of a Chimney Swift tower as an Eagle Project in June 2011. Two months later Kong Cheng Vang and Chaoching Vang each built a tower at Dowling Urban Environmental School. Chameng Vang, an alumnus of Achieve Language Academy, built his tower on their campus. Mark Thao chose the 1666 Coffman University independent living condos in Flacon Heights. Johnny Her built his tower at Camp Ajawah outside of Wyoming, Minnesota. Members of St. Luke Presbyterian Church in Wayzata worked with Ka Her in the building of his tower and then erecting it on the church grounds. Pheng Vang and the troop built his tower along a major parkway at Theodore Wirth Golf Club in Golden Valley.

Erecting a tower at Historic Ft Snelling was a Troop effort. The fort was built in the early 1820s at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and gets thousands of visitors annually. The fort has an old barracks with five chimneys, each used by nesting swifts, so we were not surprised when a pair of swifts claimed the newly built tower within 48 hours. Garlough Environmental Magnet School in West St. Paul was the 10<sup>th</sup> Chimney Swift tower built by Troop 100, which was erected in late May of 2012.

Twenty-seven other Boy Scouts have built towers at 27 separate locations including six nature centers, six schools, nine parks, two National Wildlife Refuge visitor centers, and four miscellaneous sites. All of the sites chosen are sites where there is an opportunity to raise awareness to the public about Chimney Swifts and the importance of their conservation.

Working with scouts in building towers has an exponential effect as it allows the word to spread to the scout leaders,

*(Continued on page 15)*

(Continued from page 14)

other scouts, parents and friends, and to the community in which the tower is built. Generally the local newspaper does a story about the efforts as well, and in a couple of cases we have had state-wide newspapers write about it. Minnesota Public Radio and the NBC affiliate, KARE 11, have both done a story about the scouts, the Chimney Swift towers and swift conservation. Frequently as the result of the increased awareness people decide to uncap chimneys, route metal ventilation pipes through existing brick chimneys, not tear down a chimney, and/or even build a swift tower in their own yards!

The Minnesota Chimney Swift Conservation Project is funded in part by the Beim Foundation and the TogetherGreen Grant from Toyota and the National Audubon Society. For more information about this project you can go to the Audubon at Home page at <http://mn.audubon.org>.

Ron Windingstad



Kong Cheng Vang and Chaoching Vang built two 12' swift towers at Dowling School in Minneapolis with the help of volunteers Mike Menzel, Kathy Iverson, Scout Master Dave Moore and Principal Joe Rossow

Scout Mark Thao and Troop 100 scouts partnered with the residents of a condominium for retired University of Minnesota faculty and staff to erect a tower. The 12 foot tower was assembled in the residents' woodworking shop and erected between the condominium and their community garden.



Troop 100 Scouts, Scout Mater Dave Moore, and volunteers Kathy Iverson and Mike Menzel erected a 12' tower at Garlough School in West St. Paul. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> tower members of Troop 100 built over the last 15 months.

Ka Her stands next to his parents with other Troop 100 Scouts by the 12' tower he erected for his Eagle Project at St. Luke Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. Ka and his family moved from a refugee camp in 2005 and he wants to be an aerospace engineer.



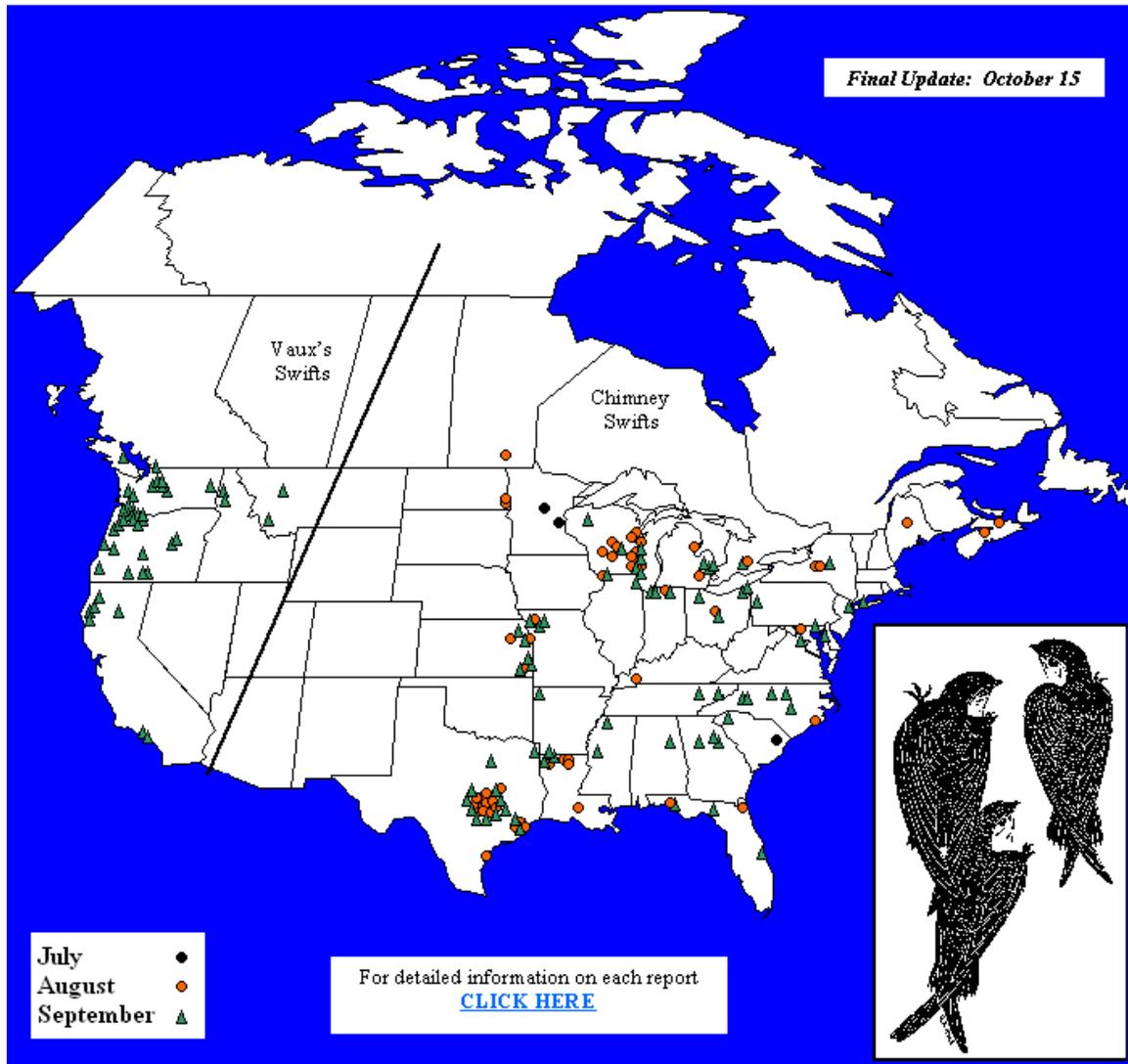
In April 2011 Jesse Yang was the first of Troop 100 to build a swift tower. The 12' tower was erected at a popular Three Rivers Park District park in Coon Rapids, MN. Since then the Troop has built 9 towers and hope to continue to build more in the years ahead.

*All photos courtesy of Ron Windingstad*

# A Swift Night Out!

## 2012

### A Continent-wide Chimney Swift Roost Monitoring Project



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. In 2013 we will introduce an on-line reporting form to make participation easier.

# Change in status of swifts.....

I think the below is something to include in talks, etc....the Chimney Swift has been moved from *Least Concern* to *Near Threatened* on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) list. This status is for the species in general but I understand that this swift has been declared an Endangered Species in Nova Scotia, and as Threatened in the other Provinces within its' range.

NOW is the time to continue to push for swift conservation to keep that Red Tear from moving to the right! The image below would be good to include in Power Points etc.

Ron Windingstad

## The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

### Chaetura pelagica



Red List Category & Criteria: Near Threatened

Year Published: 2012

Assessor/s: BirdLife International

Reviewer/s: Butchart, S. & Symes, A.

Contributor/s: Windingstad, R.

#### Justification:

This species is classified as Near Threatened as survey data has demonstrated that it has undergone a moderately rapid population decline due to loss of nesting habitat. However, trends for three-generation periods ending in 2006, 2007 and 2009 have reached 32%, 31% and 30% respectively, and should these rates of declines continue, the species may be up listed to Vulnerable.

#### History:

2010– Near Threatened

2009– Least Concern

2008– Least Concern

### ***Are You a Member of the Driftwood Wildlife Association?***

***If not, please join our Chimney Swift Conservation efforts!***

***Dues and contributions help:***

- ***maintain the ChimneySwifts.org website***
- ***publish the newsletter, Chaetura***
- ***produce and distribute educational information***

***If you are a Member, please renew ASAP***

***Visit the web site and click on “Membership” for information and categories of support...***

# 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

## *Driftwood Wildlife Association*

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USA

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*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 two web sites were well-visited again in 2011 with more than 110,000 visits to date, and are 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.

### *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.

### *Migratory Bird Banding by Don Connell*

From 9/13-9/24/11, I banded at Calcite, our ranch in Mason County. Four mornings were spent at each locale: H, R, and A. H is completely xeric, R is primarily riparian and A straddles both xeric and riparian habitats. The attachment gives an accounting of the birds banded. This was the first activity for me with a Master's Permit from the Bird Banding Lab. As such, there is a probationary period in which there are certain birds that I am not presently permitted to band. The following were removed from the nets, photographed (except for the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds), and released:

Green-winged Teal 1  
Blue-winged Teal 2  
Sora 1  
American Kestrel 1  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird 6  
Rufous Hummingbird 1

The individual bird that caused the most excitement at the station was a Black-capped Vireo. It was banded in area H on 4/26/09 as a second-year male and recaptured in area A on 9/19/11. Since one of the management goals that Ann and I have had at Calcite has been to increase the breeding habitat for Black-capped Vireos, this possibly nesting male was gratifying.

Prescribed fires have been a tool used extensively at Calcite. Area H is unique in that it receives summer burning on a 3-4 year schedule. After burning last summer, Texas began a period of impressive drought. Therefore, the vegetation at H has been tardy in returning. Hence, there was a paucity of birds captured there.

Visitors were Harper Scott and Kelsey Behrens. Helping on site with the operation were Steve Janda and David Connell. Any properly operated station requires significant support. I would like to thank Ann Connell, Nancy and Charles Floyd, Kelsey Behrens, Mark Mitchell, Kelly Bryan, Greg Lasley, Bob Sargent, Mike Bishop, Tom Walters, Michael Castanon, Terry Harman, Bruce Peterjohn and the staff at the Bird Banding Lab for their support.

Don Connell

### Calcite Ranch Bird Banding

LOCATION	2008	thru	2010	2011			TOTAL	TO
	H	R	TOTAL	H	R	A	2011	DATE
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		1					1
American Kestrel		1	1					1
Sora		2	2					2
Spotted Sandpiper		2	2					2
Mourning Dove	9	2	11					11
Common Ground-Dove	26	11	37	1	3		4	41
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3	2	5					5
Eastern Screech-Owl	1		1					1
Common Poorwill	11	12	23		3	2	5	28
Chuck-will's-widow		1	1					1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	26	31	57					57
Black-chinned Hummingbird	66	60	126					126
Rufous Hummingbird	1		1					1
Green Kingfisher		3	3					3
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	5	4	9					9
Olive-sided Flycatcher		1	1		1		1	2
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	2	1	3	1			1	4
Traill's Flycatcher		3	3		2		2	5
Alder Flycatcher	4	9	13	2	4	1	7	20
Willow Flycatcher	2	2	4		1		1	5
Least Flycatcher	77	29	106	17	31	21	69	175
Eastern Phoebe	8	11	19					19
Say's Phoebe	1		1					1
Vermilion Flycatcher	4	1	5					5
Ash-throated Flycatcher	10	4	14					14
Great Crested Flycatcher	1		1	1			1	2
Western Kingbird	1	2	3					3
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	3	5	8					8
Loggerhead Shrike	2	2	4			1	1	5
Barn Swallow						1	1	1
White-eyed Vireo		1	1		1		1	2
Bell's Vireo	150	62	212	1	11	3	15	227
Black-capped Vireo	4		4					4
Blue-headed Vireo	1		1		2		2	3

**Calcite Ranch Bird Banding**

	2008 thru 2010		2011			TOTAL 2011	TO DATE	
LOCATION	H	R	TOTAL	H	R	A		
Warbling Vireo					4	1	5	5
Hutton's Vireo	1		1					1
Red-eyed Vireo		1	1					1
Western Scrub-Jay	2		2					2
Black-crested Titmouse	21	7	28	1		2	3	31
Verdin	15	2	17		1	1	2	19
Bushtit	10	12	22					22
Cactus Wren		1	1					1
Canyon Wren		2	2					2
Carolina Wren	1	7	8					8
Bewick's Wren	56	12	68	4	2	1	7	75
House Wren	35	13	48	1	11	4	16	64
Marsh Wren	2	21	23			3	3	26
Golden-crowned Kinglet		1	1					1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	13	21	34	1			1	35
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	26	8	34	1		2	3	37
Swainson's Thrush	1	2	3					3
Hermit Thrush	7	2	9					9
Northern Mockingbird	76	6	82	4			4	86
Sage Thrasher	1		1					1
Cedar Waxwing	6	38	44					44
Tennessee Warbler	1		1					1
Orange-crowned Warbler	58	28	86		1		1	87
Nashville Warbler	15	9	24		30	7	37	61
Yellow Warbler	43	30	73	1	41	25	67	140
Magnolia Warbler	1		1					1
Myrtle Warbler		2	2					2
Black-and-white Warbler	1	1	2					2
American Redstart	2		2		2		2	4
Northern Waterthrush		5	5		2		2	7
Mourning Warbler	2	3	5		8	1	9	14
McGillivray's Warbler	7	2	9		8	1	9	18
Common Yellowthroat	7	46	53		7	7	14	67
Wilson's Warbler	16	18	34	1	56	12	69	103

### Calcite Ranch Bird Banding

	2008	thru	2010	2011			TOTAL 2011	TO DATE
LOCATION	H	R	TOTAL	H	R	A		
Yellow-breasted Chat	20	8	28		10	1	11	39
Summer Tanager	36	29	65	1	7	1	9	74
Green-tailed Towhee		1	1					1
Spotted Towhee	22	21	43					43
Canyon Towhee	12	2	14	1	1	1	3	17
Cassin's Sparrow	56		56	1		2	3	59
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	74	97	171	4	4	10	18	189
Chipping Sparrow	30	4	34		1		1	35
Clay-colored Sparrow	289	21	310	1	28	12	41	351
Field Sparrow	78	53	131					131
Vesper Sparrow	177	13	190					190
Lark Sparrow	109	7	116	1			1	117
Black-throated Sparrow	97	7	104	2	1	3	6	110
Lark Bunting	5		5					5
Savannah Sparrow	119	20	139		1	2	3	142
Grasshopper Sparrow	159	4	163	1			1	164
LeConte's Sparrow	8		8					8
Fox Sparrow	2	2	4					4
Song Sparrow	122	30	152					152
Lincoln's Sparrow	260	123	383		1		1	384
Swamp Sparrow		17	17					17
White-throated Sparrow	1	1	2					2
White-crowned Sparrow	103	69	172					172
Slate-colored Junco		4	4					4
Northern Cardinal	45	60	105	2	3	5	10	115
Pyrrhuloxia	12	2	14					14
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	1	2					2
Blue Grosbeak	11	46	57		1	1	2	59
Lazuli Bunting		1	1					1
Indigo Bunting	2	2	4		2		2	6
Painted Bunting	139	126	265		5		5	270
Dickcissel	6	3	9		4		4	13

**Calcite Ranch Bird Banding**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>thru</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TO</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Red-winged Blackbird	1	41	42					42
Western Meadowlark	9		9					9
Yellow-headed Blackbird	1		1					1
Bronzed Cowbird		1	1					1
Orchard Oriole	33	92	125		9	6	15	140
Baltimore Oriole		2	2		4		4	6
Bullock's Oriole	2		2					2
Scott's Oriole	8	1	9					9
House Finch	107	18	125		2		2	127
Pine Siskin		1	1					1
Lesser Goldfinch	11	4	15		3		3	18
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3012</b>	<b>1498</b>	<b>4510</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>5020</b>
<b>H: Highland</b>								
<b>R: Riparian</b>								
<b>A: Acacia (straddles highland and riparian zones)</b>								

## SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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Bettie Janda*



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Visit our web site at:  
**[www.ChimneySwifts.org](http://www.ChimneySwifts.org)**

In addition to learning more about the North American Chimney Swift Nest Site Research Project, you can:

- ◇ 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](mailto:Kyle@ChimneySwifts.org)

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