

NHC_News_Event_SwiftNightOut_July26

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Chimney swifts have cigar shaped bodies and boomerang shaped wings. / Photo Credit: iStock

New Mapping Site to Track Chimney Swift Roost and Nest Sites Launches in Time for Annual Swift Night Out Events

The Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group is excited to announce a new and efficient tool for those interested in monitoring chimney swift roost and nest sites. The site will be

available in time for community scientists to use during Swift Night Out events around the state in August and September.

“This new tool will make it easier for Swift Night Out organizers to submit data on the numbers of roosting swifts they count at these events”, says Rich Staffen, Conservation Biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and co-chair of the Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group. Additionally, Staffen says, “anyone out birding or counting swifts at a roost site can use the tool and it also allows folks to add information on summer chimney swift nesting sites”.

The new site, Survey123 Chimney Swift Roost and Nest Data, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/61b0c5d0a8bb4c78946523531027cf90>, includes a user-friendly form to contribute data on any swift site being monitored and includes a live map detailing sites across Wisconsin.

How to Host a Swift Night Out event:

Swift Nights Out are community events that count roosting swifts, with an added social component. They’re a wonderful way to raise awareness of chimney swifts and their conservation needs. And they’re easy to host!

- If you know of a chimney used by chimney swifts as a roost site during fall migration, select a date (or multiple) for the Swift Night Out event. You will need to gain permission if the site is private property.
- Share the event information with your community and invite them to come. Also notify the Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group so they can promote your event on their website.
- Identify at least one person who will count swifts entering the roost during the event. They should follow the protocol listed below.
- As attendees arrive, welcome them and share information about chimney swifts, then sit back and enjoy the spectacle.

The Protocol for How To Count Swifts:

- From mid-August for northern Wisconsin to early September in the southern part of the state, look for tall, uncapped brick chimneys. Watch for swifts swooping and circling near a chimney in the evenings to determine if they might roost there.
- Watch the birds entering the chimney about 20 minutes before sunset until 10 minutes after the last swift enters the chimney. Stay in one location, even if you do

not see swifts right away. They may come to your site later. If you have zero swifts entering your chimney, record this. This is still valuable information.

- Count (or estimate) the number of swifts as they enter the chimney. It's useful to count in groups of five or 10 when they enter quickly in large numbers. A hand-held clicker counter can also be helpful.
- Enter your data on the Survey123 platform:
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/61b0c5d0a8bb4c78946523531027cf90>
Data sharing is a critical piece of this activity to allow swift conservationists to access your count data!

The 2025 [Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan](#) includes chimney swifts as a Species of Greatest Information Need and the [Federal State of the Birds Report](#) lists chimney swifts on the Yellow Watch List for birds most at risk for extinction without significant conservation actions. The new survey tool will allow researchers and the Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group to more easily interpret information submitted by observers to advance swift conservation. Survey123 will be especially useful in gathering additional information on swift nesting sites and to track long-term usage of these sites.

If observers already use eBird, we strongly encourage them to also use Survey123 and to continue submitting observations to eBird, if they wish.

For more information on chimney swift identification, how to protect them or to find a Swift Night Out event near you, visit the [Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group website](#).