**The HOWS and WHYS of Monitoring Kane County Chimney Swift Towers**

The goal of monitoring is to determine tower use for either nesting and/or roosting. Spring migration begins in April, breeding season is May to August and fall migration begins with onset of cold weather, September to October. Swifts at the northern edge of the range (Canada) leave as early as late August and may start congregating in our area.

1. **Four one hour observations are needed from May 5 to June 15. Do only one in a week and make sure one during the last week (6/8-6/15). Arrive at tower at dusk (half an hour before sunset and stay until half an hour after sunset.) Keep a distance of at least 30 feet**. **This is known as a roosting monitoring session.** If swifts are using the chimney, dusk is the time they come in to roost for the night. If the weather is cold and/or rainy, swifts may stay inside their chimneys until the return of nicer weather. It is therefore recommended monitoring take place on days that are not raining and/or unseasonably cold. **Observations to be made**: the number of Chimney Swifts entering the tower, number flying and predator observations\*. Record data during every visit, even if there is no activity at the tower. Use **one** Roosting Data Sheet for all 3 observations. Obtain Sunset times at: http://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/usa/chicago
2. **If swifts are observed during an evening roosting monitoring session, monitor the site at least once in June after the 15th, during daytime hours for a minimum of 45 minutes. This is known as a nesting monitoring session.** As non-breeding swifts feed during the day and only enter the roost at sunset, the presence of swifts entering and exiting a chimney during daytime indicates that the site is a nesting site. Daytime monitoring may take place any time between sunrise and half an hour prior to sunset. Keep a distance of at least 30 feet when monitoring. **Observations to be made** are: presence of Chimney Swifts, the exact time and number of Swift entrances and exits, breeding behaviors, flight patterns, vocalizations made and predator observations.\* The chance of detecting vocalizations when 30 feet away are probably not good, but if heard it would be a good observation to record. Refer to Information Sheet on *Swift Behaviors and Vocals* for a guideline on breeding behaviors, flight patterns and vocals that occur with nesting. Complete Nesting Data Sheet. Record data during this visit, even if there is no activity at the tower. IF nesting Swifts are confirmed, please notify the Millers as soon as possible.
3. **If nesting swifts are confirmed, monitor tower through breeding season for predator prevention\*.**

The main focus of this monitoring is to look for overhanging branches that may be used by raccoons or squirrels to jump onto tower, inspect legs for ants\* and observe for any vegetation that may be touching tower that could be a highway for ants. Ants can easily consume a Swift hatching that is about the size of a jelly bean and weighs a bit more than 1.5 grams, which is about 3 paper clips! This monitoring would ideally be once a week during daylight hours, but if not possible, then as often as possible. Predator prevention monitoring should only take a few minutes. *If desired*, you can lengthen some monitoring to observe and record Swift behavior. Remember to keep disturbances to a minimum during breeding season by keeping quiet and at least 30 feet away from the tower. If interventions needed (branch removal, ants present) call Millers immediately. If vegetation or objects found touching tower and you are able to remove it, do so quickly and quietly. If you do an extended monitoring observation please complete a Nesting Data Sheet.

1. **If no nesting Swifts detected during the one hour daytime June session, monitoring will stop and resume mid September to mid October.** This is weekly evening observations for migrating roosting chimney swifts. Follow protocol as in #1 but only 3 weekly observations are needed. Use one Roosting Data Sheet for all observations. Record data during every visit, even if there is no activity at the tower.
2. **One post migration check will be done in late October by Rich and Marion Miller.** At this check, the bottom of the tower will be removed and inspected for droppings and egg shell pieces. If present, nest placement will be noted and removed. A cap will be placed over the top of the tower for the winter.

**Submit completed Data Sheets within 5 days to Rich & Marion Miller by mail, email, drop off or request pick up.** 1500 Charleston St. Batavia, IL 60510 [TLCbyRNme@sbcglobal.net](mailto:TLCbyRNme@sbcglobal.net) 630-291-2690. The Kane County Chimney Swift towers are a part of the North American Chimney Swift Nest Site Research Project and the data you collect is important, PLEASE submit your completed forms as requested.

\*When looking for ants, move in as close as needed to see them using your binoculars. Keep quiet and be as quick as possible in this inspection. If ants are detected, IMMEDIATE ACTION is needed, which includes removal and reapplication of Tanglefoot.