

Chimney Swift

Chaetura pelagica



Status: **Threatened**

Threats:

- ◆ Decline in its food sources (flying insects)
- ◆ Habitat destruction (old chimneys), very few natural nesting areas (large hollow trees)
- ◆ Pesticide use particularly in wintering grounds
- ◆ Light pollution



Description:

- ◆ Small-sized bird 12-14 cm long
- ◆ Wingspan 27-30 cm
- ◆ Cigar-shaped body with long, slender wings and a squared tail
- ◆ Body dark sooty brown or grey in colour; lighter on the rump, throat and undersides of wings
- ◆ Nest is half saucer-shaped, made of twigs and saliva and is attached to a wall (inside a chimney or deep shaft)
- ◆ Quick, jerky flight pattern; most likely seen only flying, usually at dusk and dawn
- ◆ Makes high-pitched chipping noises while flying

Biology:

- ◆ May live up to 14 years
- ◆ Active during the day
- ◆ Lays 4-5 eggs, usually white
- ◆ Feeds on flying insects
- ◆ Eats, drinks, and bathes while flying
- ◆ Spends winter in northwestern South America, returning mid-May
- ◆ Congregate into flocks
- ◆ Never perches

Habitat:

- ◆ Found in mature and old growth forests nesting in hollow trees, cavities or cave walls; usually within 1 km of water
- ◆ Also found in urban settlements where they nest and roost in manmade structures including chimneys, air vents, old open wells, and outhouses

Species at Risk
STEWARDS' GUIDE SERIES

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Chimney Swift on Your Property? **Here's What You Can Do:**

- ◆ **Don't disturb nests, young or adults.** Be respectful and observe from a distance.
- ◆ **Don't eradicate flying insects.** Flying insects like moths and beetles are an important component of the ecosystem, becoming food for a wide variety of birds and other animals. Using pesticides will not only harm beneficial flying insects on your property, but also impact those species that feed upon them.
- ◆ **Support sustainable forestry practices when you purchase wood products.** Look for an FSC logo.
- ◆ **If you think your chimney has nesting swifts please don't clean or use it during breeding season (May-September).**
- ◆ **Consider leaving your chimney unlined and directly vent your furnace.**
- ◆ **See a Chimney Swift?** Submit your sighting to the Natural Heritage Information Centre at nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/species/species_report.cfm. Photographs with specific locations or mapping coordinates are always helpful.
- ◆ **Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources.** If you find a Chimney Swift or a nest on your property, you may be eligible for stewardship programs that support the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats. Contact the MNR for more information.
- ◆ **Learn More.** Check out the Species at Risk section on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.



Ontario's **Endangered Species Act**

Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007* came into force on June 30, 2008, making Ontario a North American leader in the protection of species at risk and their habitats.

Compared to Ontario's previous Act, written in 1971, the new ESA 2007 provides:

- ◆ Science-based assessment of species' status
- ◆ Automatic protection of a species and its habitat once it's listed as endangered or threatened
- ◆ Broader protection for species at risk and their habitats
- ◆ Greater support for volunteer stewardship efforts of private landowners, resource users, and conservation organizations
- ◆ A commitment to recovery of species through recovery planning
- ◆ Greater accountability, including government reporting requirements

Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species, most of which have stable populations.

However, more than 180 species in Ontario, 34 of which are found in Parry Sound-Muskoka, are currently considered "at risk" because of threats like:

- ◆ Habitat loss
- ◆ Global changes in insect populations
- ◆ Pollution
- ◆ Invasive species
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Over-harvesting
- ◆ Road mortality



Learn more about Species at Risk on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.