



## A Protected Species

The Chimney Swift is a migratory bird and species at risk whose population in Canada has experienced a decline of close to 88% over the past 50 years.

This insectivorous bird forages for insects while in flight and generally uses brick, stone, or concrete chimneys for nesting and for roosting during summer. Unlike many other birds, Chimney Swifts are incapable of perching. They cling to the interior wall of a chimney or other similar structures while attaching their nest to its rough surface. **In Quebec, Chimney Swifts typically use vertical structures such as chimneys, ventilation ducts or hollow trees from late April to late September.**

Prior to European settlement in North America, the Chimney Swift nested and roosted in large hollow trees. As suitable large trees became increasingly scarce with extensive logging, clearing of land for agriculture, and urban development, the Chimney Swift began to primarily use brick, stone, and concrete chimneys, which is how the species got its name. **As a property owner with a structure suitable for the Chimney Swift, we are counting on your co-operation to help ensure the species' recovery.**

**Funding** is available under certain conditions for activities aimed at conserving structures used by Chimney Swifts. For more information, contact the *Habitat Stewardship Program*: [HSP-PIH@ec.gc.ca](mailto:HSP-PIH@ec.gc.ca)

The Chimney Swift is protected by both the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and its regulations. The best approach for minimizing the risk of contravening these laws is to be fully aware of the impact that your activities could have on migratory birds and their nests and eggs, and to take reasonable precautions by implementing suitable avoidance measures. In fact, under the Acts and regulations, it is an offence to kill, hunt, capture, injure or harass a migratory bird or to damage, destroy, remove or disturb its nest, eggs or residence without a permit.

**To report a sighting of a Chimney Swift entering or leaving a structure:**

**Canadian Wildlife Service**  
[SOSPOPCFQC-SOSPOPCWSQC@ec.gc.ca](mailto:SOSPOPCFQC-SOSPOPCWSQC@ec.gc.ca)

## What You Can Do

**If you plan to modify a structure that is used or has been used by Chimney Swifts in the past three years, you may need a permit under the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*.**

**Activities can be carried out without a permit under SARA, IF** they are conducted between October 1<sup>st</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup> (i.e., after the birds have left for the winter and before they return in the spring), **AND** the interior of the structure (e.g., chimney) is kept intact and is accessible to the birds when they return from their migration:

- ▶ Cleaning/sweeping the chimney\*
- ▶ Replacing a roof covering\*
- ▶ Repairing the exterior of the chimney (repairing the masonry, resurfacing the outside of the chimney)\*
- ▶ Installing an artificial chimney for the exclusive use of Chimney Swifts

**Activities likely to require a permit under SARA:**

- ▶ Activities marked with an \*asterisk above if carried out between April 15<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Capping a chimney or installing a spark arrester that would prevent Chimney Swifts from entering the structure
- ▶ Installing a chimney liner
- ▶ Making changes to the chimney or building that would alter the internal conditions (temperature, light, etc.) of the structure
- ▶ Demolishing a chimney or cutting a tree used by the species

**SARA permit applications must be submitted online (<https://splep-saraps.az.ec.gc.ca/>) at least 90 days prior to the planned start of any work.** You may also need to follow provincial requirements. Contact the provincial authorities in your area for more information.

If you want to build an **artificial chimney** to replace an existing structure that has documented use by Chimney Swifts, please contact us to find out more about building plans and features that the structure should have: [Permislep.Qc@ec.gc.ca](mailto:Permislep.Qc@ec.gc.ca)

**For more information on Chimney Swifts:**  
<https://species-registry.canada.ca/index-en.html#/species/951-650>

**Cat. No.: CW66-1516/2024E-PDF**  
**ISBN: 978-0-660-70453-1**

Photos: © Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

© His Majesty the King in Right  
of Canada, represented by the  
Minister of Environment and  
Climate Change, 2024

Aussi disponible en français

# Chimney Swift

**CHAETURA PELAGICA**

**Your obligations as  
a property owner**

