



Chimney Swift Survey Report 2024

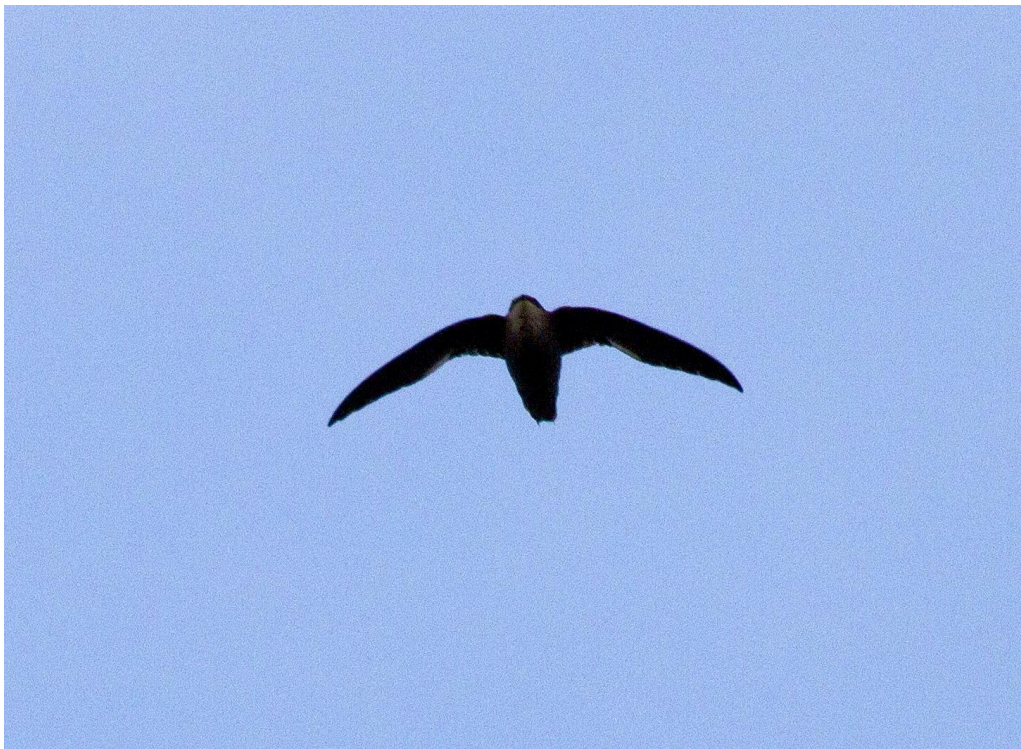


Photo by Bob Martinka

Overview and Thank You

This report summarizes the efforts of Montana Audubon, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP), local landowners, and birders.

And we would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of our wonderful volunteers, anyone who reached out with Chimney Swift sightings, and Montana FWP for partnering with us on this project.

Background

The Chimney Swift is a small aerial insectivore found in Eastern and Central Montana during their summertime breeding season. Their range across North America is declining and shifting westward in Montana, bringing up many unanswered questions about why this species is moving and declining. Efforts to answer these questions start with collecting data on their range and population, which is why Montana Audubon has partnered with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to survey small towns around Eastern and Central Montana. Unlike other Swift species, Chimney Swifts nest and roost in old brick chimneys found in small towns. They spend most of their time catching insects on the wing, returning to their chimney nesting site around sunset. Surveyors then watch potential nest sites at dusk for any Swift activity within their chosen town.

Results

This year we had 4 volunteers who were able to collect occupancy and nesting data at 11 sites in 4 towns, finding a total of 18 Chimney Swifts flying overhead, and 4 Chimney Swifts entering a chimney. Montana Audubon was also able to host an in-person Swift Night Out event that consisted of an in-person presentation on the species and survey, and a survey demonstration around Havre, in which they observed 4 Chimney Swifts entering a chimney and 6 Chimney Swifts flying around overhead.

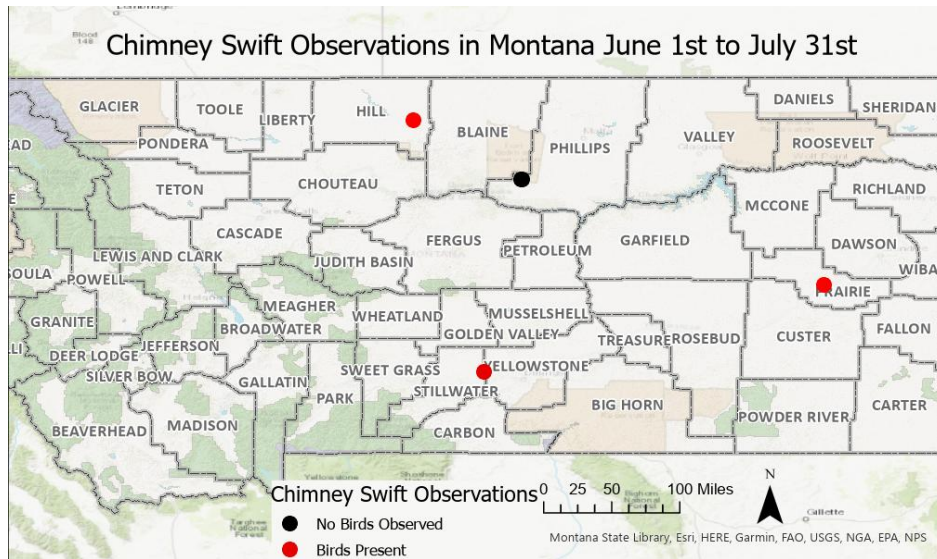


Figure 1. Map of survey locations and observations done by volunteers in 2024.

What's Next

Thank you to everyone who has participated in this effort! Although we are sad to see this project come to a close, we are excited to report that Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) has gathered and received sufficient data on Chimney Swifts, meaning that we are able to move forward with other projects on species in need of data. The data collected from this project was needed to fill the gaps of the range data for Chimney Swifts in central Montana. Now that FWP has sufficient data on this species, the range map for Montana is updated and more accurately displays the range of Chimney Swifts in the state. Updated data on this species population and distribution contributes to a more accurate conservation status leading to more specific conservation action. This would not be possible without our dedicated citizen scientists who have volunteered their time and energy on this project over the years! Keep an eye out for a new citizen science project for 2025!