

CHIMNEY SWIFT NEST SITE OUTCOMES IN ST. ADOLPHE, MB, 2024

Chimney Swifts using five nest sites in St. Adolphe have been monitored annually since 2007. So, 2024 was the 18th consecutive year of observing breeding Chimney Swifts in town. Behaviour observations plus the physical evidence seen in cleanout traps were used to assess nesting success at the Brodeur Bros./Daycare and Main St. sites. Only behaviour observations were available to assess nesting success at the SE Club Amical, NE Club Amical, and the Church sites (there are no accessible cleanout traps associated with those chimneys).

Merci et thank you to our swift-friendly landlords and tenants: S. and A. Leclerc; Paroisse St. Adolphe; the RM of Ritchot; and the staff of the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre. Your support of this Manitoba Chimney Swift Initiative research program and St. Adolphe's Chimney Swifts is appreciated!

In 2024, breeding pairs of Chimney Swifts were established at the 5 nest sites between May 20-21 and June 3. Nest building, egg laying, incubation, and hatching occurred at all sites. Unfortunately, nest failures began in July and by mid-month four nests of juveniles were lost (SE Club Amical, NE Club Amical, Brodeur Bros./Daycare and Main St.). Fortunately, the breeding pair at the Church prevailed, assisted by helpers, and fledglings took their first flights outside the chimney July 26-27.

The movement of adult Chimney Swifts from failed St. Adolphe nest sites, and the addition of out-of-town pre-migratory swifts, into the Church chimney BEFORE the young in the nest had fledged was documented for the first time in 18 years of monitoring. It was a fascinating biological event to track but it meant for wild observation periods! The maximum count was 21 Chimney Swifts using the Church on Aug. 7. Swarms of swifts dove toward the chimney before veering off or dropping quickly into the chimney. Sometimes groups of birds burst out of the chimney like popcorn. Tracking parents, established helpers, fledglings (2 at least), relocated swifts from other St Adolphe nest sites and "birds from away" meant arriving at the Church before sunrise to catch first exits of the day, coming back mid-morning to document feeding and socializing groups, then tracking swifts in the evening for roosting or nighttime occupation of the Church chimney. The last Chimney Swift seen in town in 2024 was a lone migrant on the evening of Aug. 27th. All in all, it was a season to remember!

What should be remembered also are the years of unwavering support that Suzanne and Arthur Leclerc provided to me and the Chimney Swifts that called "Main St." home. Heartfelt thanks are extended for all of your generous contributions! On January 1, 2025 a new family moved into the house that Arthur's Grandfather built ~1920. While the Leclerc family's tenure as swift "landlords" has ended, the Main St. chimney will remain as a valuable nest site for future generations of breeding Chimney Swifts in St. Adolphe. We welcome the new family who will share their special home with the swifts.

In early March, Chimney Swifts leave their wintering grounds in the Amazon Basin and begin to migrate north. Crossing the Gulf of Mexico, the birds arrive in the southern US – Texas to Florida – then continue north as they distribute themselves through the summer breeding range. We can look forward to hearing the characteristic chittering of Chimney Swifts in early to mid-May as they race about the St. Adolphe skies. Then, another year of monitoring begins.

I look forward to seeing you by the chimney sides in the spring of '25 (year no. 19)!

Summary of Chimney Swift breeding outcomes, for five St. Adolphe nest sites in 2024. These results are based on 75 hours of observations.

SITE	NESTING ATTEMPT?	OUTCOME OF NESTING ATTEMPT
SE CLUB AMICAL	YES	UNSUCCESSFUL; failed ~July 10-16
NE CLUB AMICAL	YES	UNSUCCESSFUL; failed ~July 10-16
BRODEUR BROS./ ST. ADOLPHE CHILDCARE CENTRE	YES	UNSUCCESSFUL; failed ~July 6-15
CHURCH	YES	SUCCESSFUL; 2+ fledglings, July 26-27
MAIN ST.	YES	UNSUCCESSFUL; failed by July 17

Prepared by Barb Stewart, Sila Consultants, February 3, 2025. sila.stewart@gmail.com