

THANK YOU to all who participated in the 7th annual Chimney Swift Sit! This event occurs over two weekends in late summer when swifts are migrating through Minnesota and gathering, sometimes in huge numbers, at communal roost sites – typically in large old chimneys.

Chimney Swifts are amazing “aerial insectivores” that spend most of their time on the wing catching insects. Sadly, they are one of many species characterized as “common species in decline”. In Minnesota, Chimney Swifts have declined by nearly 50% in the last 50 years. Our annual counts are part of a nationwide effort to track numbers and trends. The count data has also proven important in identifying important habitat (see [“Your counts matter”](#)).

The following is a summary of the observations submitted for the 2015 Sit as well as some interesting notes and observations submitted by participants.

2015 SUMMARY	PHASE 1 JULY 31-AUG 2	PHASE 2 AUG 28-30	OVERALL
COUNT NIGHTS	3	3	6
REPORTS SUBMITTED	49	47	96
OBSERVERS / YOUTH	82 / 3	104 / 5	186 / 8
DISTINCT LOCATIONS	40	40	48
CITIES	23	24	28
TOTAL SWIFTS – ALL COUNTS	2,711	13,841	16,552
TOTAL SWIFTS – adjusted*	1,874	11,877	13,751
HIGH COUNT	357	2,500	2,500
AVERAGE COUNT	55	294	172
AVERAGE COUNT – adjusted*	47	297	171

*The adjusted totals and averages reflect only the highest number of swifts counted per roost per phase. Most roosts were counted only once in each phase but in those cases where more than one count was conducted at the same roost in the same phase, only the highest count is included in the adjusted total and average.

THE LARGEST CHIMNEY SWIFT COUNTS came from Faribault and Elk River, MN where 2,500 and 2,250 Chimney swifts were observed respectively on single counts (both on 8/28).

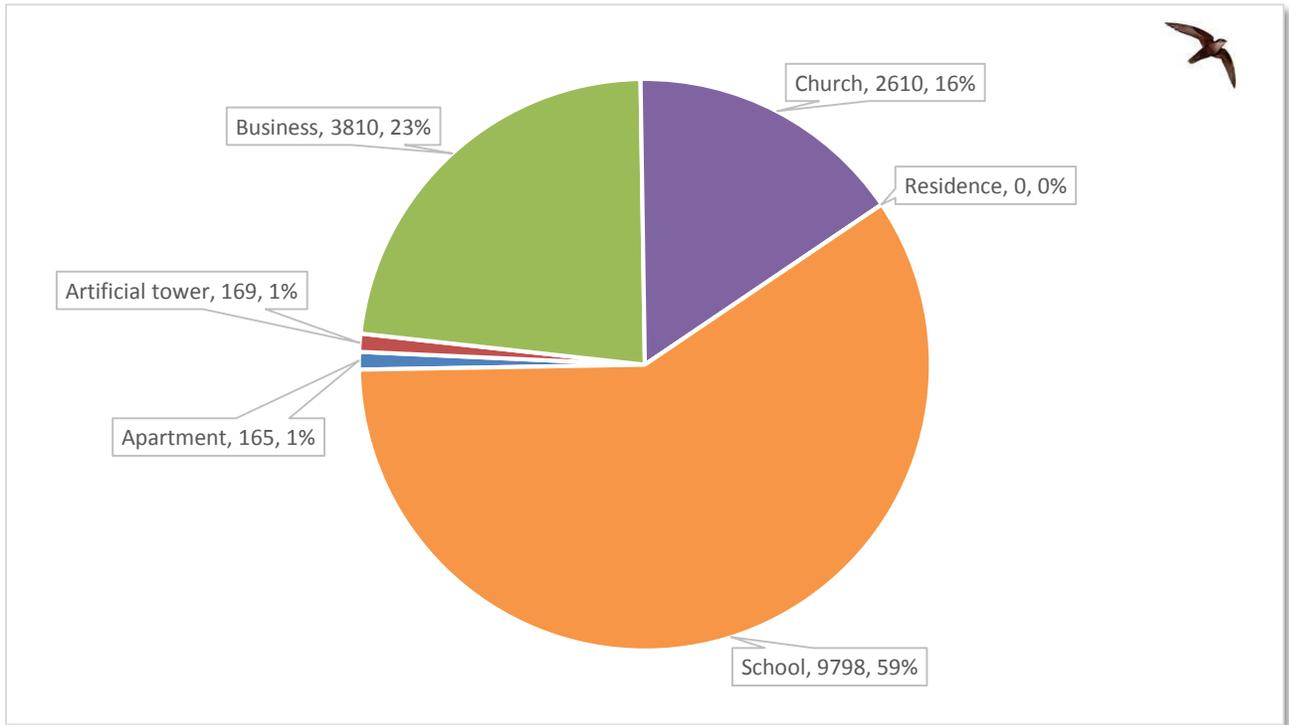


FIGURE 1. Number and percentage of Chimney Swifts using a variety of types of structures.

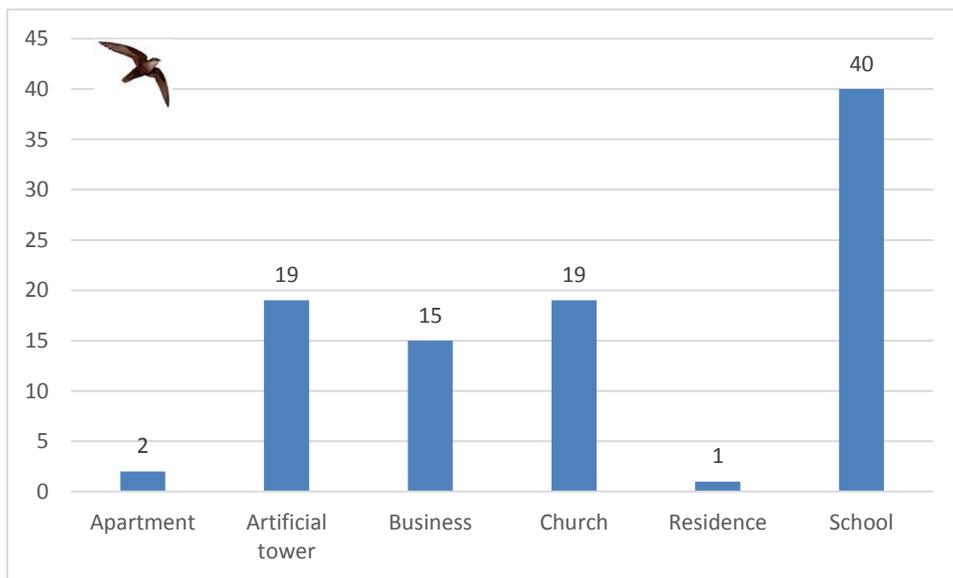


FIGURE 2. Number of counts conducted at each type of structure in 2015.

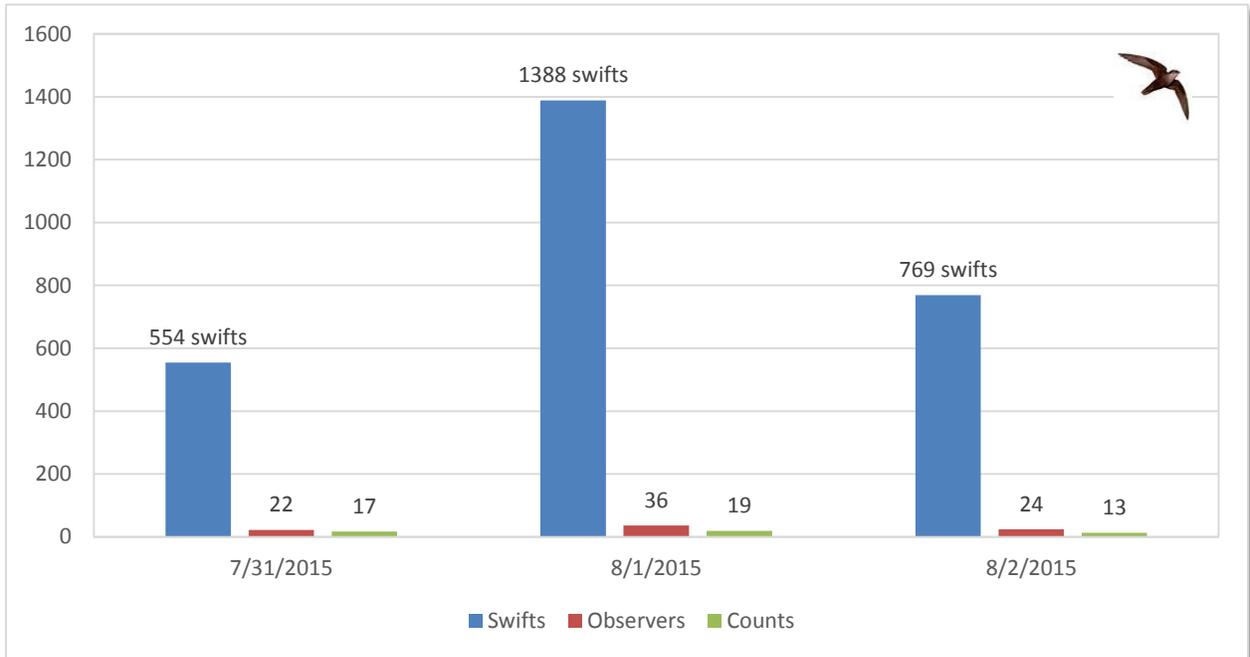


FIGURE 3. 2015 CHSW Sit Phase 1: 2,711 swifts were reported by 82 observers at 49 counts

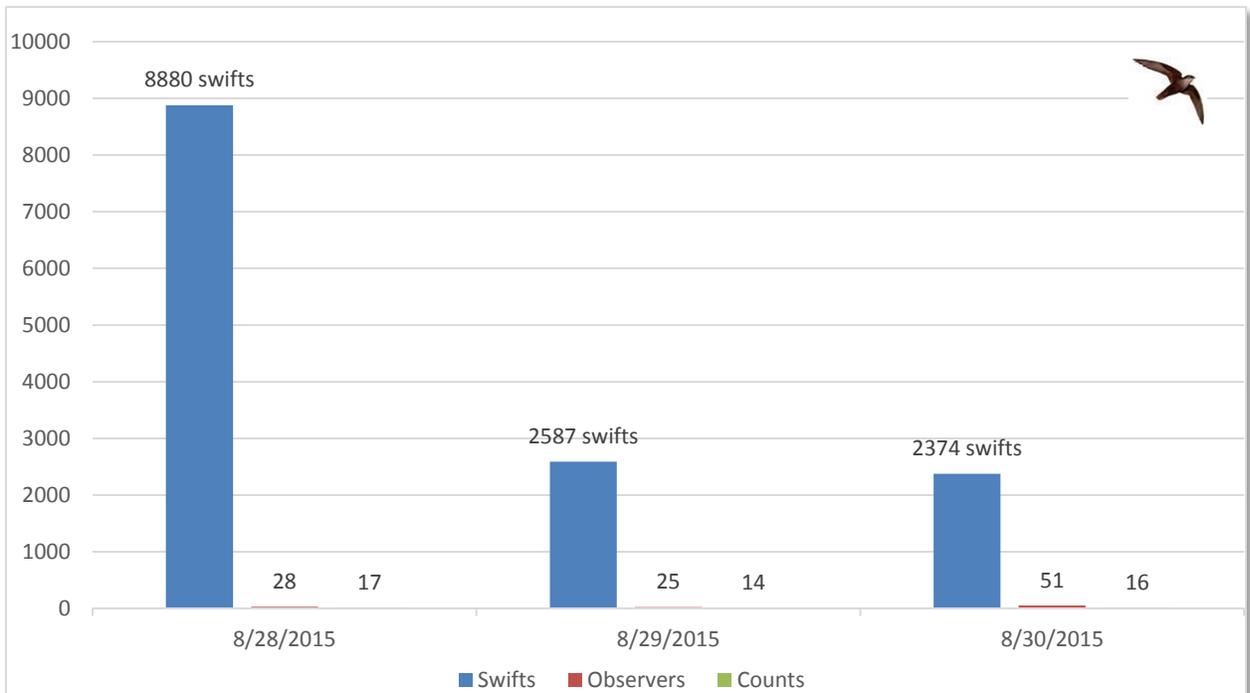


FIGURE 4. 2015 CHSW Sit Phase 2: 11,877 swifts were reported by 104 observers at 47 counts



WE ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to assist the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota in the release of seven young Chimney Swifts that had been brought in for care over the summer. By the time they were strong and skilled enough to go, migration was well underway. The Sit count history and network of swift enthusiasts helped us to find a roost that was still active in Mahtomedi where the seven birds were released to join a flock of hundreds. See our [Fall 2015 Newsletter](#) for more.

Fun comments and observations!

“I have 3 artificial chimney towers and all 3 were observed with begging chatter from nestlings as adults entered them.” (Otsego MN, July 31st)

“Large Green Darner Dragonfly migration today, monarchs on move as well.” (LeSueur, August 28th)

“Also observed a kettle of 34 Nighthawks over this location about 30 minutes before we began the swift count.” (Rochester, August 29th)

“We were totally amazed! To go from 856 on 08/26 to 477 on 8/27 to 259 tonight, 08/30..... boggles the mind.” (LeSueur, August 30th)

“Flock was twice harassed by Merlins, they went in about 9:05 pm.” (Elk River, August 1st)

“This count left me flabbergasted!!! I have been doing the Swift Sit at this school since 2009 and the highest count I ever had was 63 on July 30, 2011. Tonight, the swifts were swirling above the chimney like I have never seen before. In about 10 minutes they had all gone down the chimney. In previous years, they have floated down one at a time in no big rush and were easy to count. I use a push button counter and binoculars. I could not believe my count was accurate. I had my husband help me count the next night, Aug. 29, and we each had our own counter. He counted 227 and I counted 226. How accurate was that!” (Cologne, August 28th)

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the 2015 Sit! And to those of you who introduced new Sitters to the joys of Chimney Swifts –thank you.

Mark your calendars for 2016: July 29-31 and August 26-28