



Chimney Swifts - Quick Reference Sheet¹

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Table 1.

Common Name:		chimney swift
Other Names:		chimney swallow, American swift, chimney bat, chimney sweep
Scientific Name:		<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>
Appearance:	Size:	5.5 inches long
	Color:	brownish black above, light below
	Distinguishing features:	long and pointed wings, small flat bills, wide mouths, all four toes point forward, flies with alternate wing strokes (looks awkward)
		nests in chimneys where chattering of young is noticeable
Range:		north and central Florida
		less common in south but range is expanding
		present in state from March through October then migrate to South America in fall
Habitat:		hollow tree trunks, buildings, chimneys
Diet:		flying insects

1. This document is WEC-QRS-044, one of a series of the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville 32611. Publication date: June, 1991 as "Chimney Swifts". Reviewed: December, 1998. Minor Revisions: July, 2001. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

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Reproduction:	4-6 eggs per clutch
	breed from April to July
Behavior:	clings to side of vertical surfaces, does not perch on branches
	makes nest by breaking off twigs and gluing them to a vertical surface with saliva
	flies constantly until it returns to its roost
	migrates and roosts in large flocks
	continuous staccato chatter in flight
Problems:	nesting in chimney may block outflow of smoke
	nests may catch fire in chimney
	breeding animals may cause foul odors in house
Solutions:	install a screen chimney cap; these may often be found at hardware stores or you can cover the chimney with hardware cloth
	make sure all birds and nests are gone before you cover the chimney, best time is winter after birds have migrated south
Legal Aspects:	permits from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to destroy or move nests
Fact Sheet Available:	no