

Birds in My Chimney?!

If you hear chirping or “chittering” inside your chimney, you may have nesting chimney swifts!

Chimneys that are made of stone, brick, or masonry flue tiles with mortared joints provide the right surfaces for nesting and roosting chimney swifts.

Is that a Problem?

In a word: No! A bird that eats thousands of insects a day is an asset!

Chimney swifts do not pose a disease risk for humans, and their presence does not affect the function of your chimney.

Unlike creosote buildup, swift nests in chimneys do NOT cause a fire hazard.

How Do I Become a Good Swift Lord?

Have your chimney cleaned in mid-March after the wood-burning season ends and before the swifts arrive.

Inspect your damper, then keep it closed during the nesting season (May- July) to prevent birds from flying into the house and becoming trapped or injured.

Chimney swifts are protected by law and a federal permit is required to disturb their active nests.

Learn more about research and monitoring efforts at

www.ct.gov/deep/ChimneySwift

Or contact the Wildlife Division at 860-424-3011.



Your Chimney Is a Special Resource

Chimney swifts once nested in old hollow trees, but most of these old trees have long since been cut down. The swifts have adapted to humans and now nest and roost inside chimneys. They return to the same chimney year after year, and are part of the history of your home or building. If you live in a historic home, swifts may have been using your chimney since the mid-17th century!

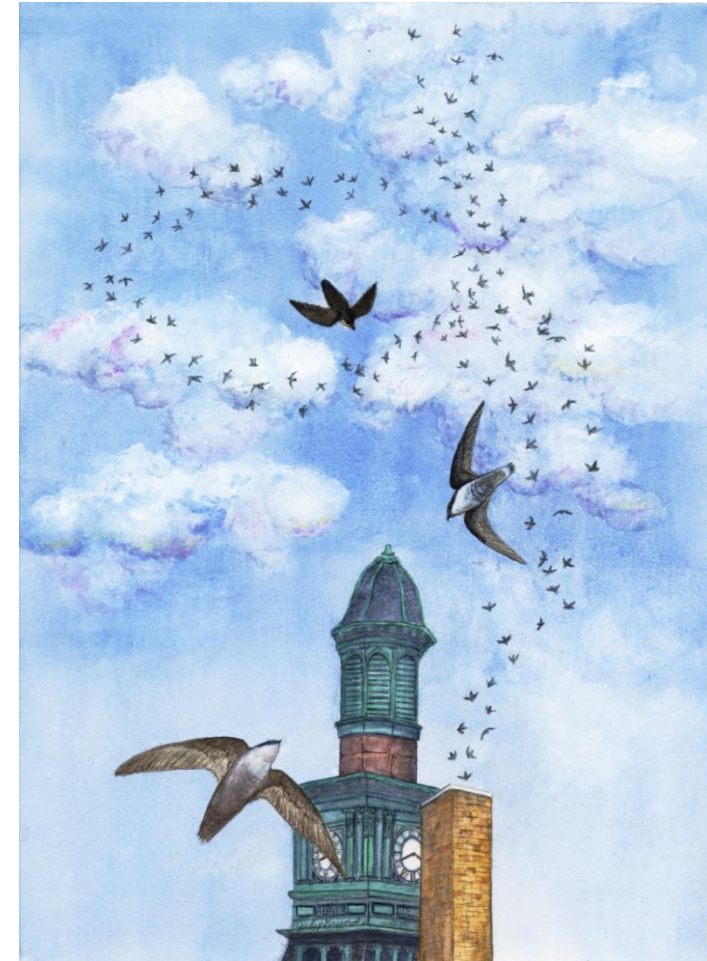
Statewide monitoring suggests that **40% of chimneys will become unavailable to swifts** over the next decade as a result of chimney renovations.

You can help this amazing bird raise its young and complete its journey to and from South America each year by simply keeping your chimney available for their use.

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Top Illustration by Bob Hines
Cover Illustration by Judy Grund, Master Wildlife Conservationist

Renovate with Swifts in Mind



Why Are You Renovating?

You may be renovating your chimney for general maintenance, to repair water damage, or because your chimney sweep suggested alterations. Increasingly, property owners are installing more efficient heating systems, which vent cooler air and require narrower, shorter flues in order to vent properly. Following are solutions for more efficient heating systems and water damage that allow you to keep your chimney available for nesting or migrating chimney swifts.

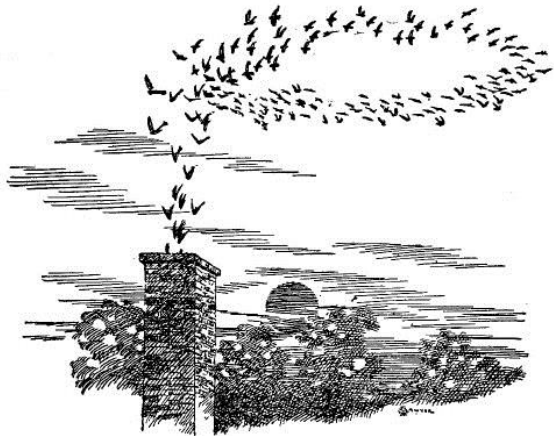
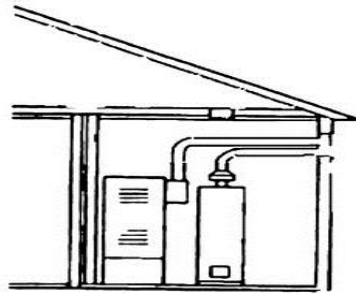


Illustration by Frank Chapman

Important!

If you are lining your chimney with a stainless steel liner, please DO NOT leave a lined chimney open for birds to access. Birds will not be able to gain a grip on the stainless steel and will become trapped. Lined chimneys should be capped.

What's a Good Swift Lord to Do?



Example gas furnace and gas water heater vented through the sidewall of a building.

Lekov, et al. 2010. Energy Efficiency. Vol.3(3).

Alternate flue option:

You may be able to vent more efficient gas furnaces through an entirely different flue. Some can be vented directly out of the side of your building. Some will perform better with a shorter rise than your chimney can provide. See the diagram above.

Share the chimney!

If you own a home with a large chimney opening, for example an antique home, consider running a new, narrow stainless steel flue along one side of the interior of your chimney, or even up the center, leaving room for birds to use the remainder of the chimney flue.

Use an umbrella to keep out rain, not a cage:

Install a cap, but leave the sides below the cap open for the birds. Most stainless steel caps have wire caging to keep animals out. Unless you have squirrels or raccoons in your chimney, wire caging is unnecessary. The cap keeps the rain out, not the caging, and you can remove the caging from one or more of the sides of this style of cap so that birds can still enter your chimney.

Alternately, you can install a slate cap that sits upon brick risers – the taller the better, but at least 3 bricks tall. Swifts will readily fly around and under this type of cap to gain access to a preferred nesting chimney.



Consult your HVAC professional to assist you with the solution that is best for your home or business and your resident chimney swifts!