

## CHIMNEY SWIFTS

Common Name: chimney swift

Other Names: chimney swallow, American swift, chimney bat, chimney sweep

Scientific Name: *Chaetura pelagica*

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

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

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Legal Aspects: - permits from the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to destroy or move nests