



For Immediate Release

## **Birds Canada and partners launch major new fund to help conserve the Chimney Swift**

**[February 14, 2022]** (Port Rowan, Ontario). The Canadian population of Chimney Swifts has declined by nearly 90% since 1970. Birds Canada is delighted to announce the launch of the Chimney Swift Chimney Restoration Fund, a major new initiative to help conserve important habitat for the Chimney Swift, which is listed as Threatened under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*. The project is being undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the federal department of Environment and Climate Change, and with help from conservation partners from Saskatchewan to Nova Scotia.

The Chimney Swift is a small greyish bird with a cigar-shaped body and crescent-shaped wings. It breeds in central and eastern North America and spends much of the rest of the year in northwestern South America. In Canada, this long-distant migrant nests in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, where its buzzy twittering calls are still a characteristic sound of summer in the skies above many towns and cities. The new Fund aims to keep things that way!

As their name implies, Chimney Swifts nest and roost in chimneys, but 400 years ago, they relied on large, hollow trees in old-growth forests. As these disappeared from the landscape, the species was able to survive by relocating to human-made structures, such as chimneys, as an alternative. As we only use our chimneys in the colder months, Chimney Swifts are able to use them safely during the spring and summer. Fortunately, they are good guests and their tiny nest poses no fire risk. In addition, they live off flying insects, so provide an insect control service.

The reduction in the number of accessible chimneys is a contributing factor to the decline of these fascinating birds. "When aging chimneys are capped, screened, lined or demolished, this represents a loss of habitat, which is a threat to the survival of Chimney Swifts," said Véronique Connolly, coordinator of the Chimney Swift Chimney Restoration Fund. "The Fund will aid recovery efforts by providing financial support for the restoration of chimneys and other structures known to be important for Chimney Swifts in Canada."

Any owner of a chimney or other structure that Chimney Swifts are known to use for nesting or roosting, and which is in need of repair, can apply for financial support. A third party, such as a conservation organization, can also apply on behalf of a chimney owner. Support from this program must be matched by the applicants.

Visit the [Chimney Swift Chimney Restoration Fund's website](#) to find out about the eligibility criteria and application process. The application deadline is April 21, 2022, and we hope to be able to support over 25 projects across the species' Canadian range. The website also contains links to stewardship tips on how to be a good host to Chimney Swifts and information about how to be a part of citizen science programs, such as SwiftWatch, that are helping fill critical information gaps about this species.

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Birds Canada is the country's only national organization dedicated to bird conservation. Every day, our thousands of caring donors, 60+ passionate staff, and 70,000+ outstanding volunteers are taking action to help us better understand, appreciate, and conserve birds and their habitats. Together, we are Canada's voice for birds.

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