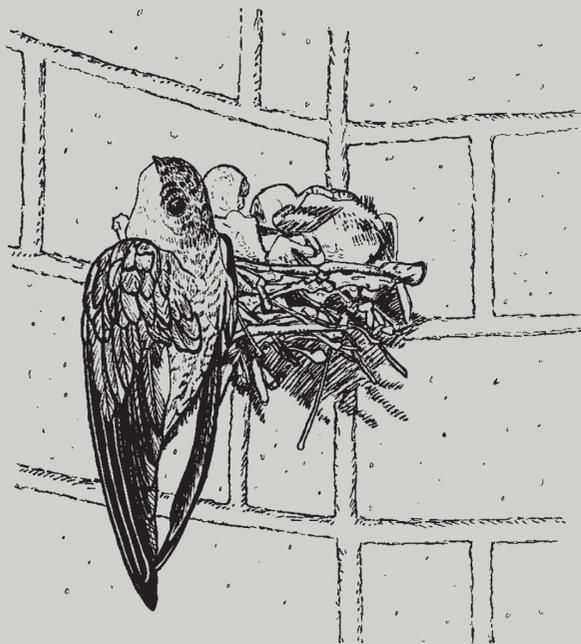


A Swift-Eye's View

Have you ever wondered what things look like from a bird's-eye view? When most of us think like this, we think of what a bird sees while it is flying. But, have you ever thought about the other parts of bird's life? What does a bird see as the best food or place to sleep?

The Chimney Swift is a Species at Risk that might be one of your closest neighbours — it may even be living in your school's chimney!



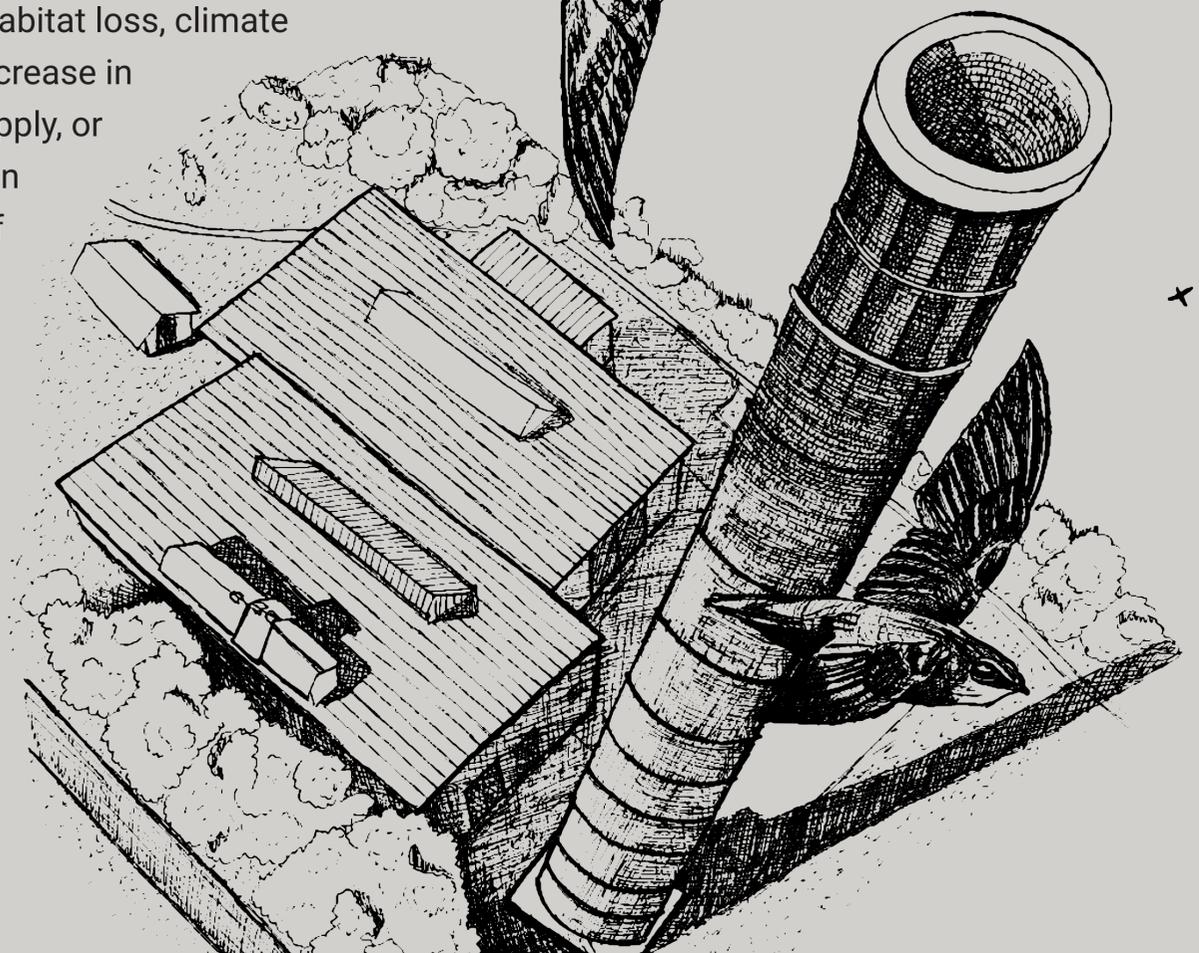
FROM A SWIFT'S-EYE VIEW, a brick chimney is the perfect place to nest and rest overnight. Unlike most birds, Chimney Swifts cannot perch or hop. Instead they have to cling to a vertical surface like the inside of a chimney. When they are not clinging, they are flying through the air catching insects.

FROM A SWIFT'S-EYE VIEW, mosquitos, biting flies, and other tiny insects look like a gourmet buffet. A single swift can eat 1000 insects a day, making them nature's perfect pest controllers.

BEFORE PIONEERS STARTED to colonize North America, Chimney Swifts lived in hollow trees. As the pioneers cleared huge tracts of old growth forests, swifts had to find a new home: chimneys. However, Chimney Swifts are now losing this new habitat, too, as chimneys are capped and torn down, and these birds will soon be homeless if we don't start protecting their chimneys.

OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS their population has decreased in Canada by 90%, which is a pretty scary trend for this little bird. We don't really know why this is happening — it might be because of habitat loss, climate change, a decrease in their food supply, or a combination of all sorts of factors.

Illustrations:
Megan Hiebert



Think like a bird.

What could you do to help Chimney Swifts and other types of birds in trouble?