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!

B E F O R E  P I O N E E R S  S T A R T E D  t o 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.

O V E R  T H E  P A S T  4 0  Y E A R S 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.

F R O M  A  S W I F T ’ S - E Y E  V I E W, 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.

F R O M  A  S W I F T ’ S - E Y E  V I E W, 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.

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