



Field Trip: Swifts Night Out, September 21–23, 2020 The Chimney Swift Challenge

submitted by Stella Wear

Getting to see Chimney Swifts this year proved to be somewhat of a challenge. The September 17 watch had to be postponed because of the rain brought by Hurricane Sally. Then just finding roosting places became a challenge. For the past few years of watching during this fall migration, thousands of swifts were roosting at the Carolina Theater in Downtown Greensboro. On September 14, the swifts did not choose that roosting place even though birds were flying around in town near the theater.

When the viewing activities were rescheduled, three options were offered. Monday, September 21, was a fantastic virtual viewing hosted by Audubon NC and narrated by Curtis Smalling, Audubon Director of Conservation. Thousands of Swifts were seen going to roost in Winston-Salem and Durham, NC. Tuesday, September 22 was the annual viewing for TGPAS and PBC at Carolina Theater, 310 S. Greene Street, Greensboro, 27401. About a dozen participants, 100 American Crows, and 250+ Chimney Swifts were there.



photo courtesy of Audubon NC



*photo by Ann
Van Sant*

It is interesting to note how Chimney Swift patterns change. Where are those large numbers roosting now? Finally, on Wednesday, September 23, the viewing took place at a new location: Lindley Elementary School, 2700 Camden Road, Greensboro. The event attracted several neighborhood observers as well as 20 PBC and TGPAS participants. The Swifts were slow to arrive, but when they did, it was a good showing (250+). The swooping, circling, and diving into the chimney was exciting.

The Chimney Swifts will be around for a few weeks into October before they head south to the Amazon Basin for the winter. They will start to return in mid-March.