

# Urban Chimney Swift Conservation: Non-randomizing our acts of conservation

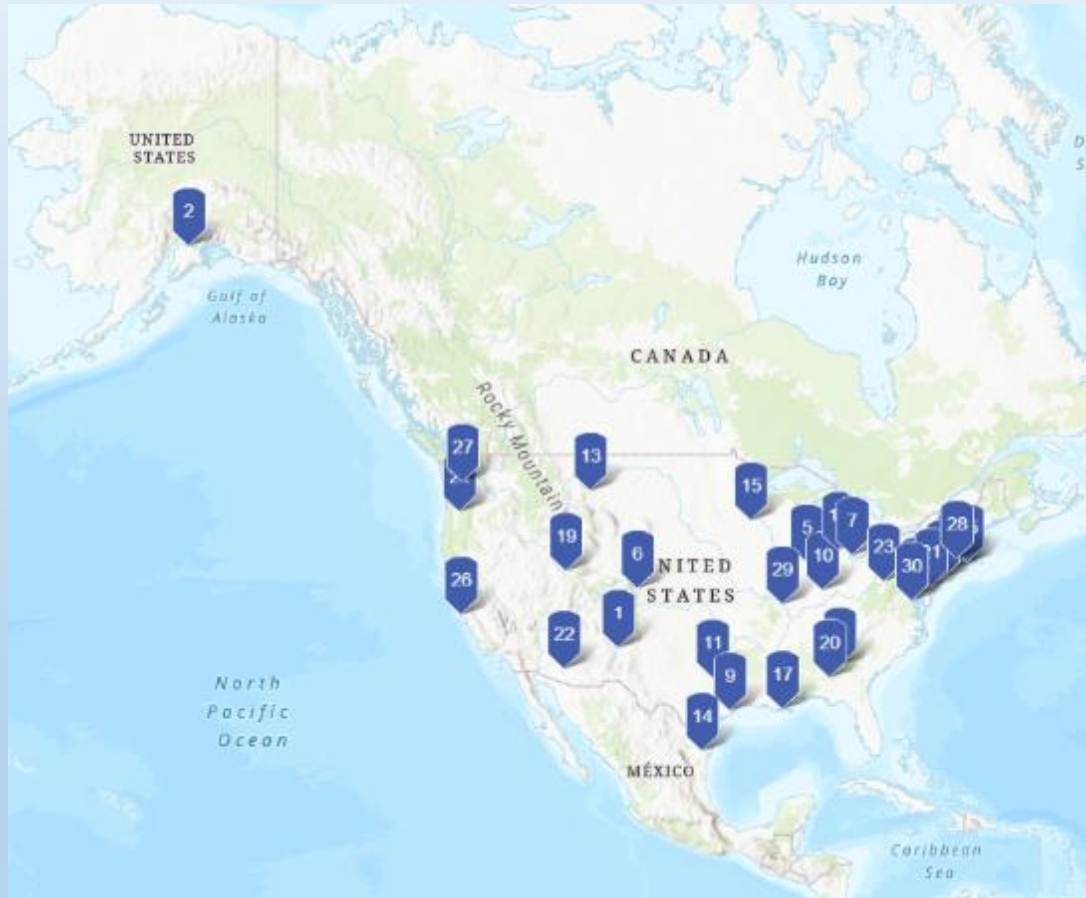
Mags Rheude

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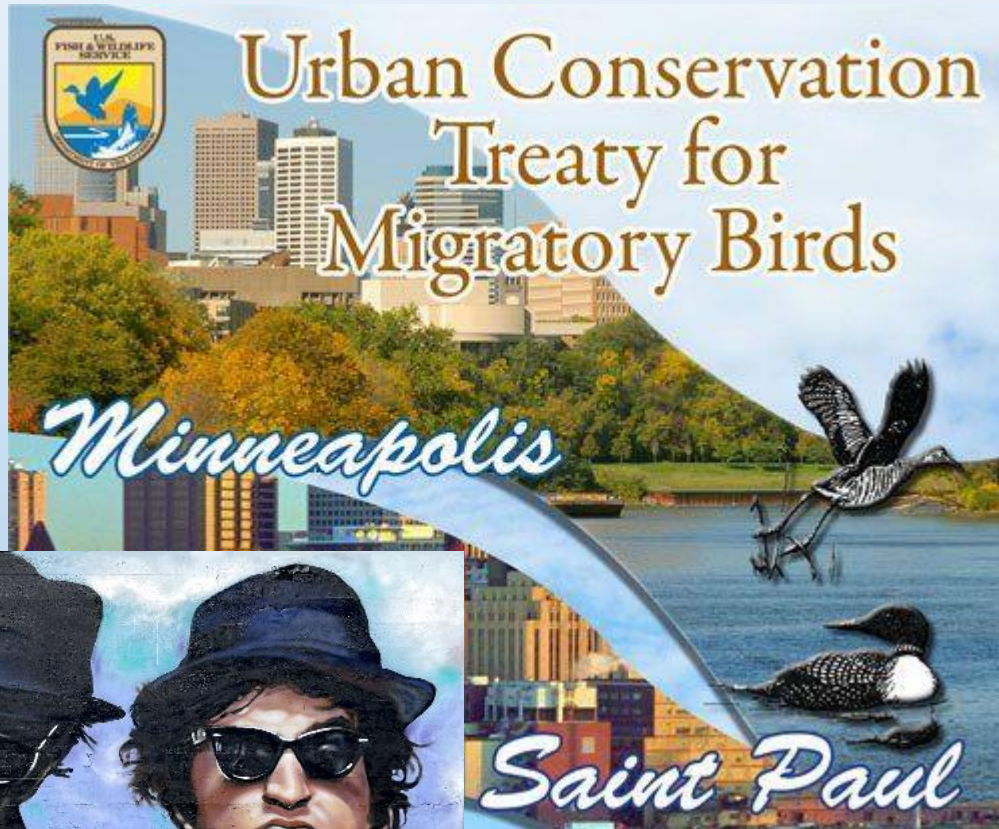
# Fish and Wildlife's Urban Bird Treaty Program



- Designation by the USFWS
- Goals are:
  - Habitat restoration and improvement
  - Threat reduction (window strikes, light pollution, toxins, cats, etc)
  - Community engagement, esp underserved
- Works with Refuge's Urban Wildlife Program
- Started in 1999; 30 cities

[Urban Bird Treaty Program](#)

# Twin Cities Urban Bird Treaty Program



- Designated in 2011
- Several years of inactivity: 2019-2021
- 2021: Getting the Band Back Together.
- What did this involve?
- What's the purpose of our group?





# Twin Cities Urban Bird Conservation Partners

- US Fish and Wildlife - Refuge and Migratory Birds
- Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources
- St Paul and Minneapolis Parks and Rec
- Army National Guard
- St Paul and Minneapolis Audubon chapters,
- American Bird Conservancy
- County Parks and Rec
- Urban Bird Collective (BiPOC Birding Groups)
- Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi (Indigenous peoples restoration group)
- University of Minnesota Raptor Center





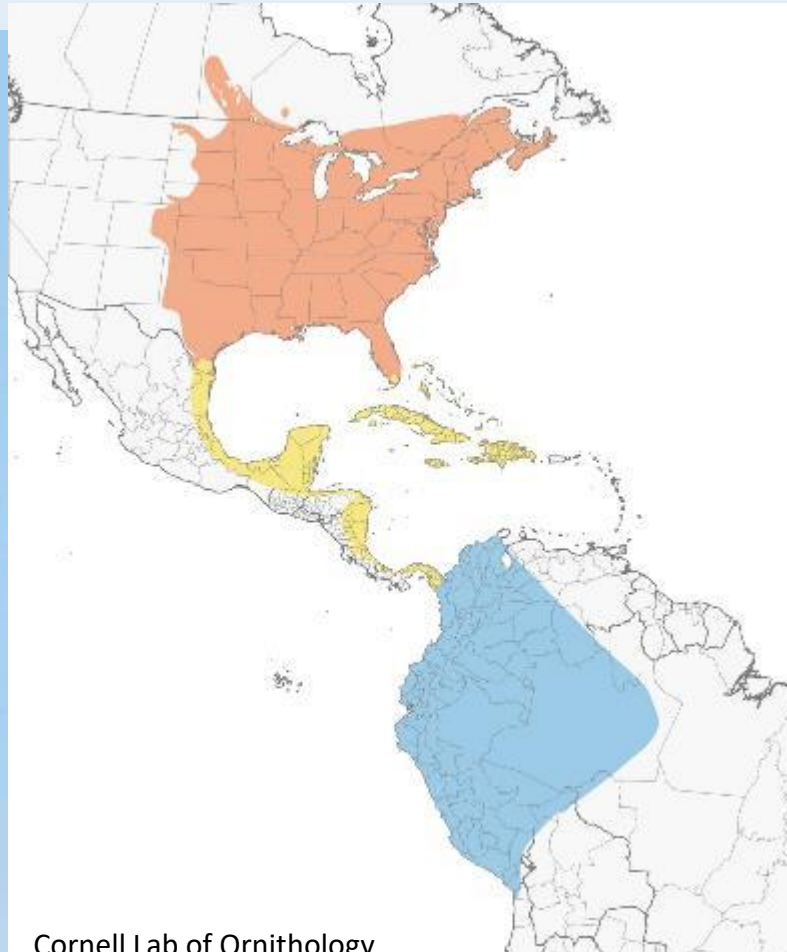




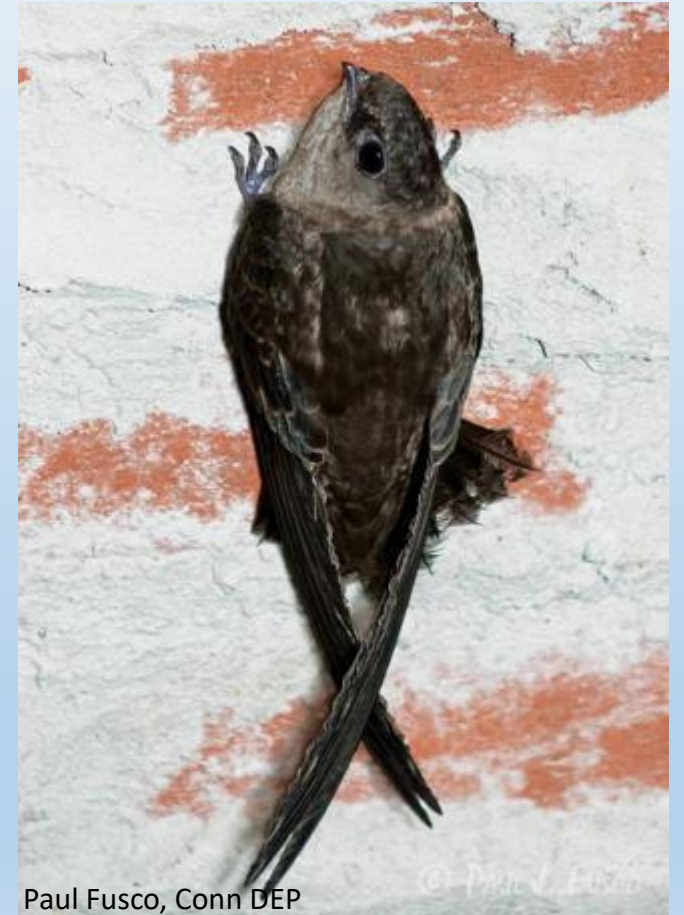
# Chimney Swift Subgroup



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Paul Fusco, Conn DEP



# Nesting Habits





# Nesting Habits



Nancy Nabek



Kay Harrison



Swiftwatch



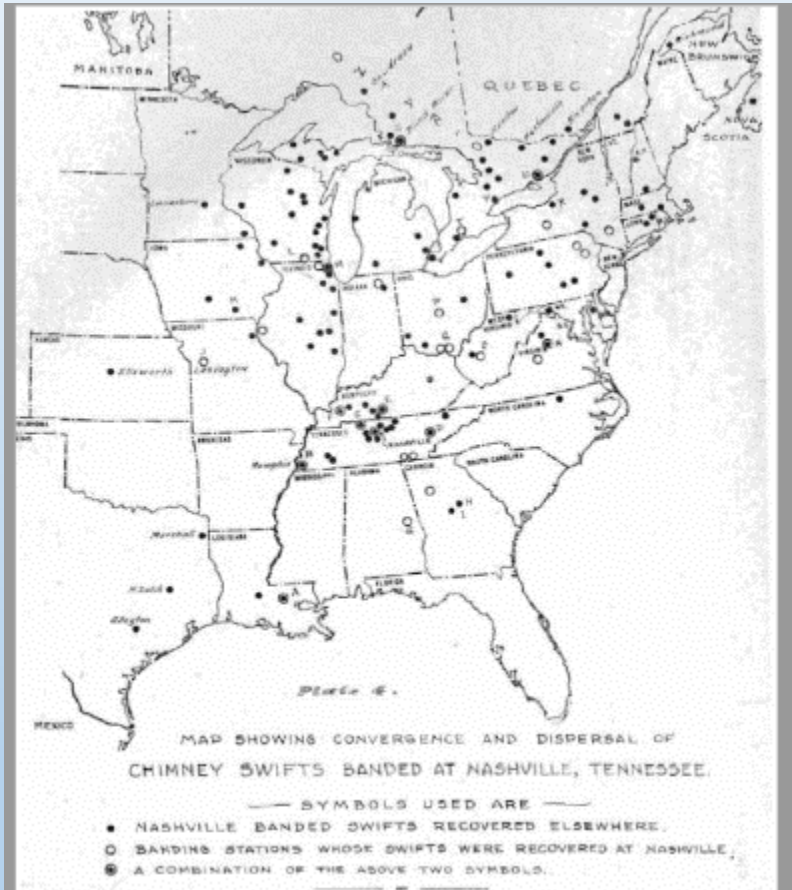
Greg-Lasley



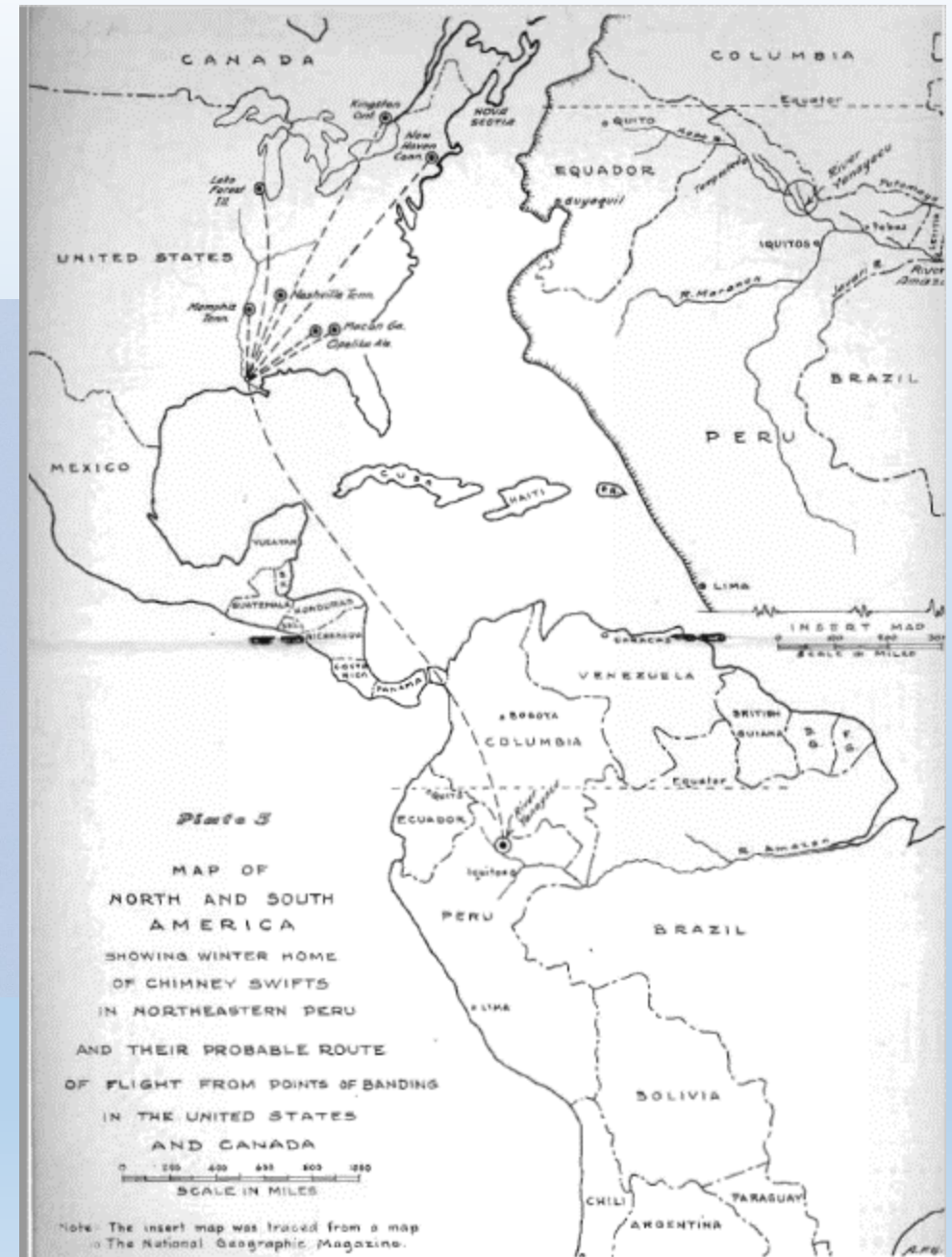
Barbara Boyle



# Wintering and Migration



Ryan Mandelbaum\_  
<https://flic.kr/p/2mq5k6p>



# Roosting Habits



Melanie-Farquhar



tjdatsrt\_ <https://flic.kr/p/6Wox4E>



Geauga Park District



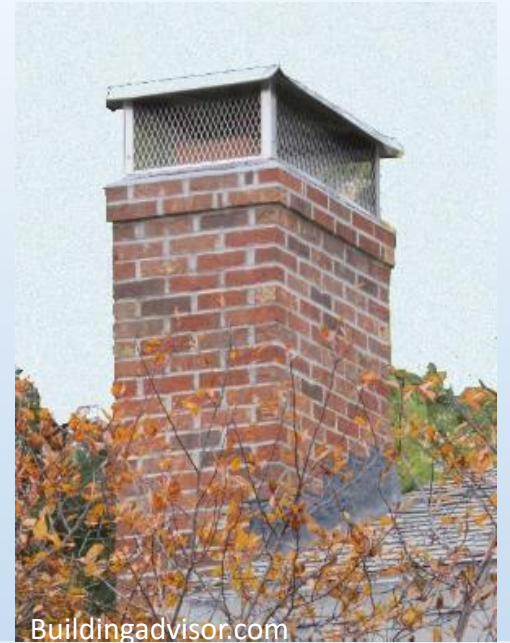
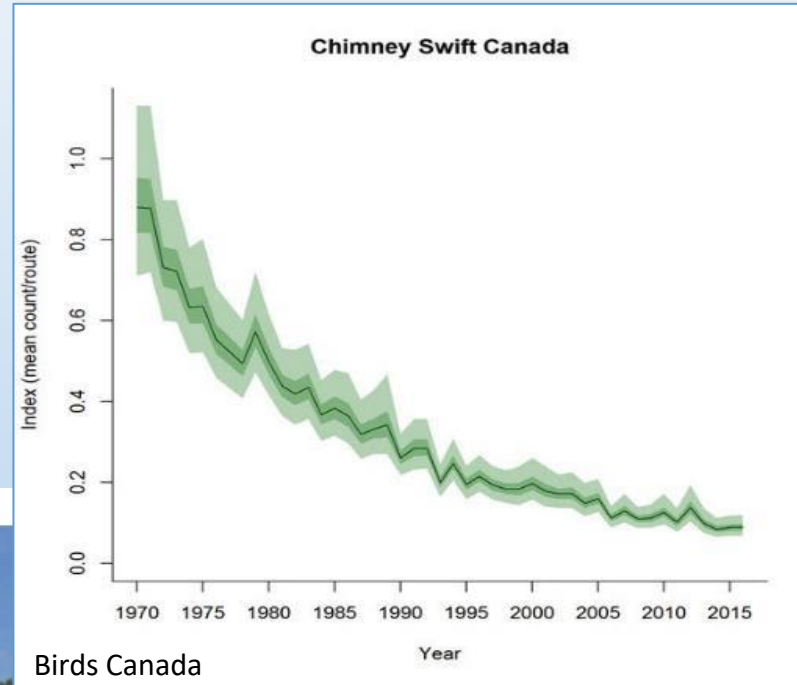
# The Need for Conservation



StockyPics\_ <https://flic.kr/p/BWXa1B>



Posted by Bruce Micheels, 8-15-2014

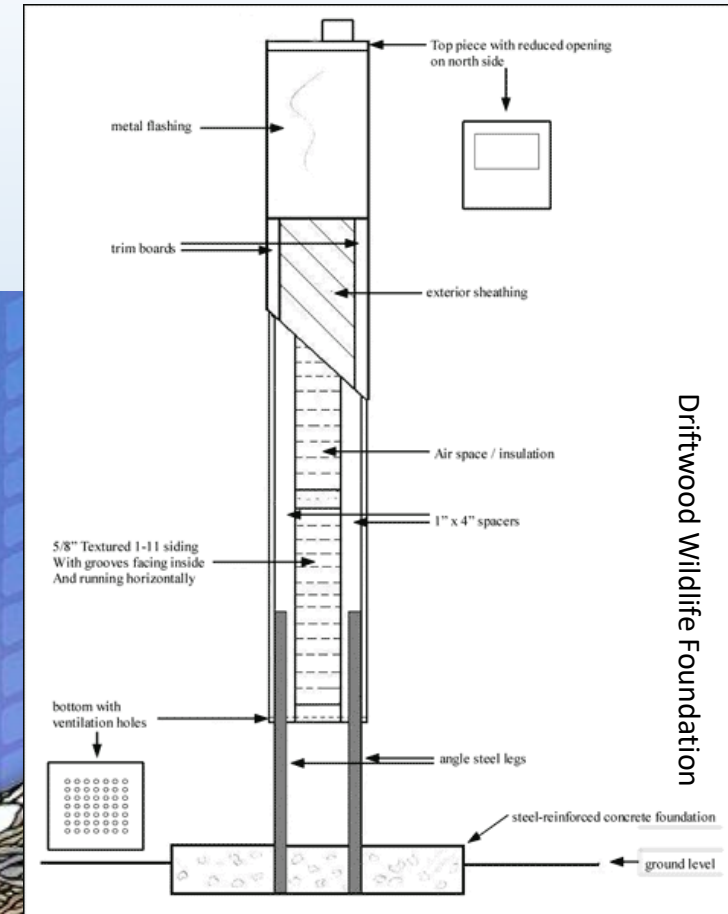
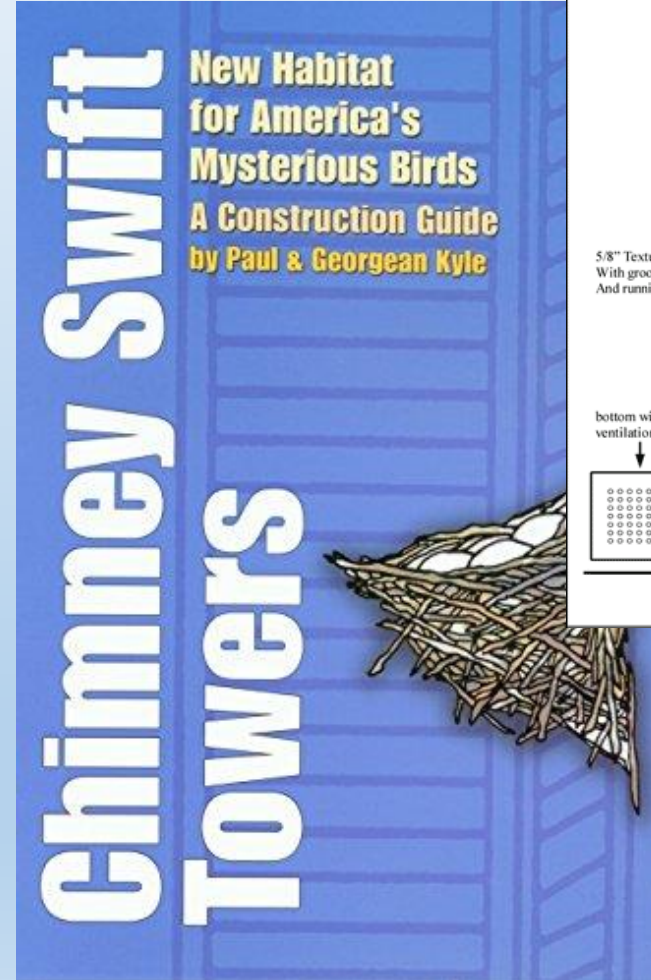
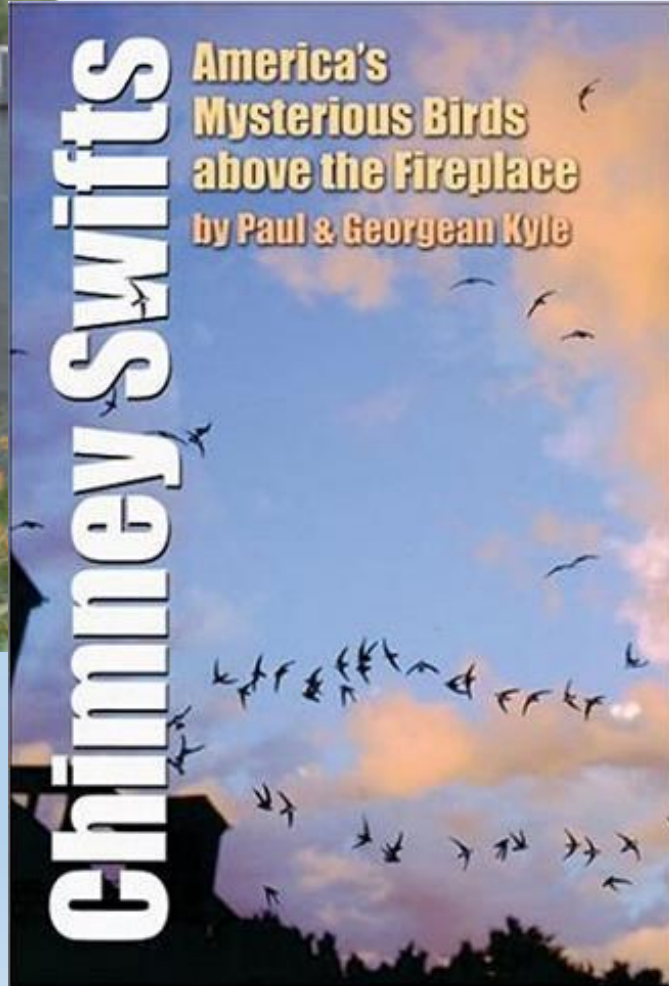


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# Conservation Efforts

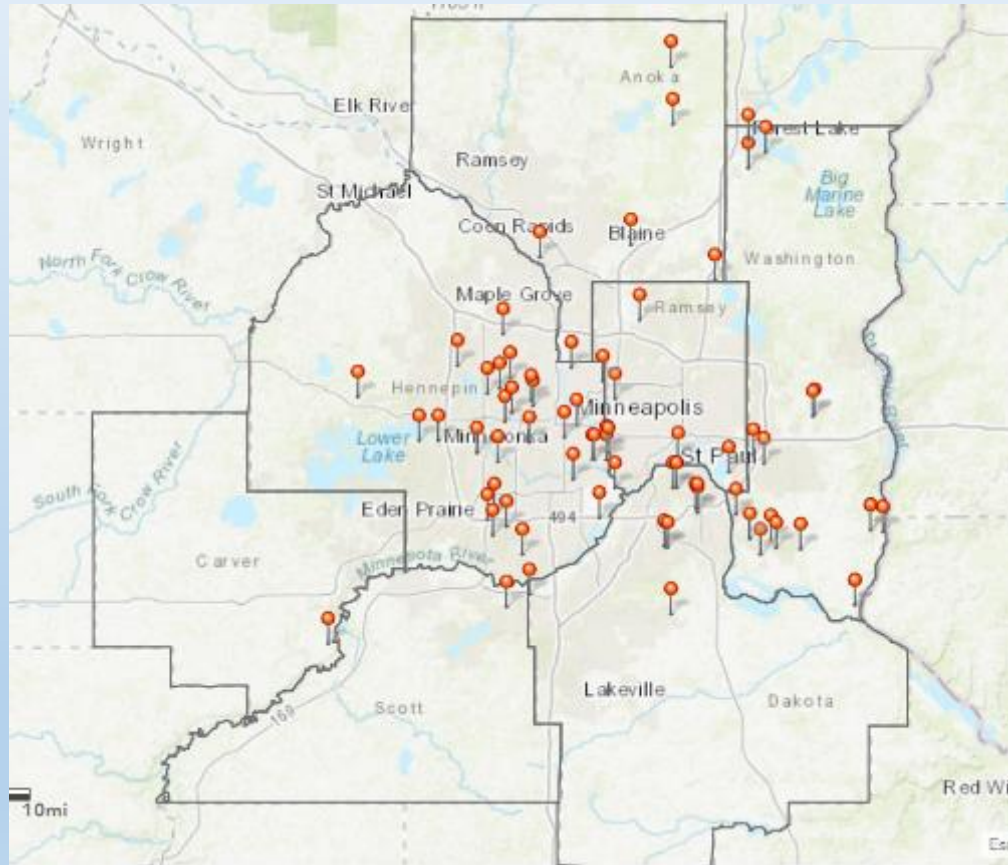




# Conservation Efforts



# Chimney Swift Effort - Minnesota



- 2011-2016: MN Audubon built Kyle-Style towers.
- 150 were planned statewide, 70 of these were planned for the Twin Cities.
- The original partners behind this effort have moved on, retired, taken other positions, etc.



# Starting the Partnership Network Lifecycle

## Big Picture Questions

- Can these towers be a useful tool for Chimney Swift Recovery?
- Should we focus our efforts on maintaining existing towers and building new towers?



# Visioning and Concept Planning



## Questions:

- Were these towers actually built?
- Were these towers monitored and maintained?
- Are the towers still present on the landscape?
- Are they accessible for monitoring?
- Did Chimney Swifts use them?



# Planning: Fall 2021- Spring 2022



- 125 Kyle-Style towers constructed across Minnesota
- 50 towers in the Twin Cities Metro
- Focus on publically accessible sites: schools, parks, etc.
- 20 towers chosen for a pilot study
- No monitoring had been conducted, no records of swifts.

# Implementation: Summer 2022



- Site Visits at these 20 towers.
- Some sites excluded
- Monitoring protocol from other Swift Conservation Groups
- We monitored 12 towers for nesting activity May-July.
- We monitored 7 towers and 4 masonry chimneys in August and September for roosting.



# Results



- General lack of interest or knowledge by landowners
- Incidental observations from landowners: no nesting or roosting seen.
- Monitoring and maintenance never part of the original planning
- Random Acts of Conservation





# Results



- No evidence of previous swift use
- During our surveys, no swifts ever observed using towers for nesting or roosting
- Swifts WERE seen in the area, even using masonry chimneys near freestanding towers.



All photos USFWS



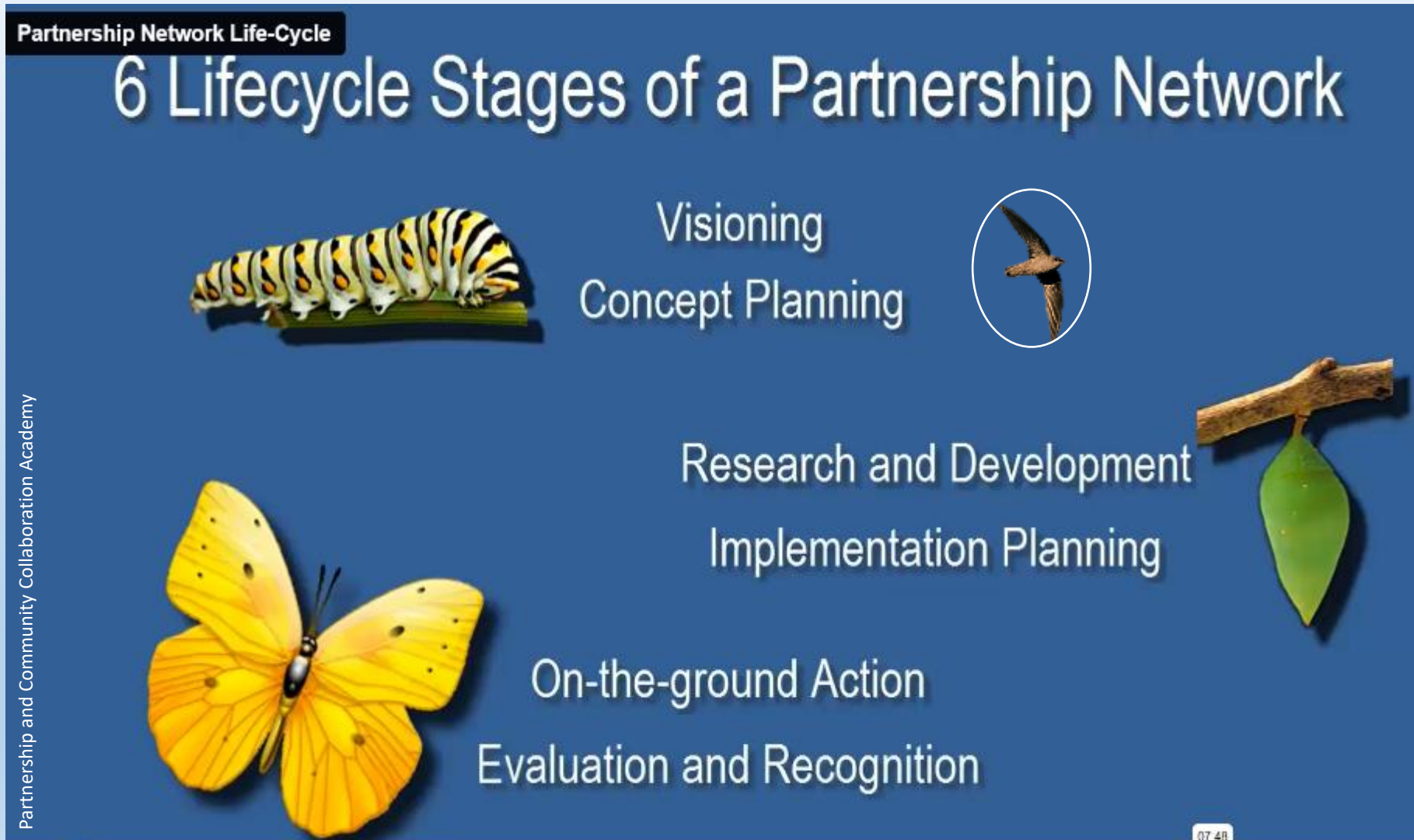
# Negative Data is Still Data



Mags Rheude/USFWS

- Nonrandomize our Acts of Conservation
- Kyle-Style towers are not a good conservation tool in Minnesota
- Community outreach about towers and swifts in general was lacking
- Random Acts of Conservation
- Advise against building new free-standing towers
- Provide existing landowners information on monitoring, if interested.

# So.....Now What?



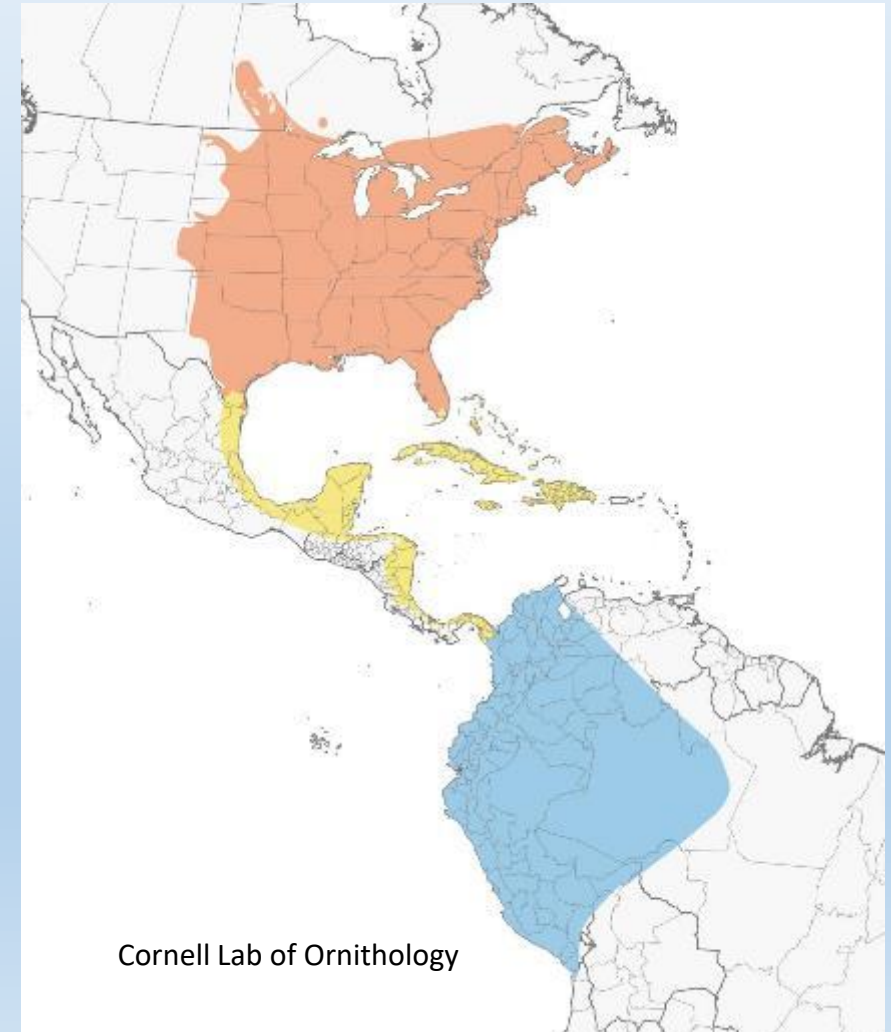


# Year Two: Same Swift Time, New Swift Channel



# Year Two: Talking to other Swift Groups

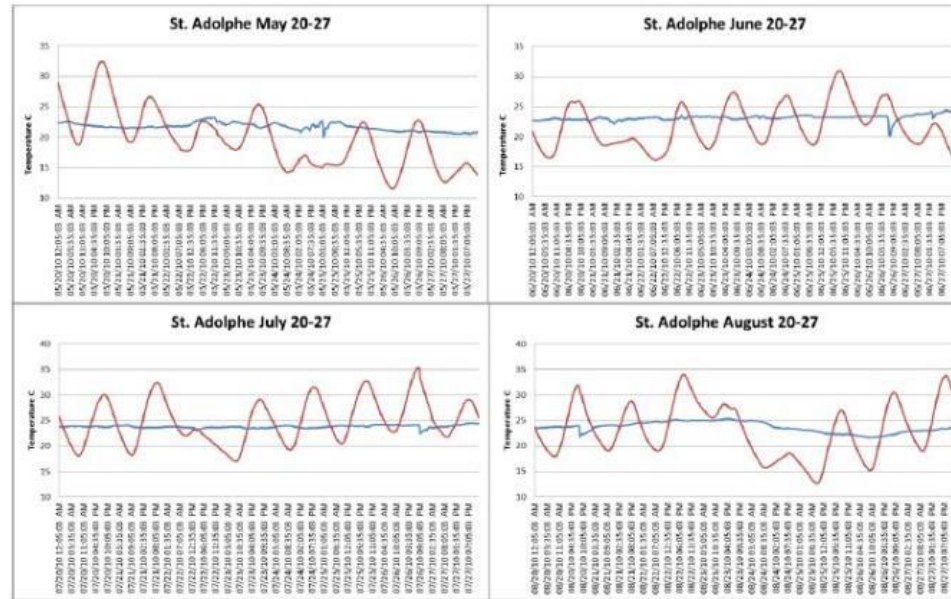
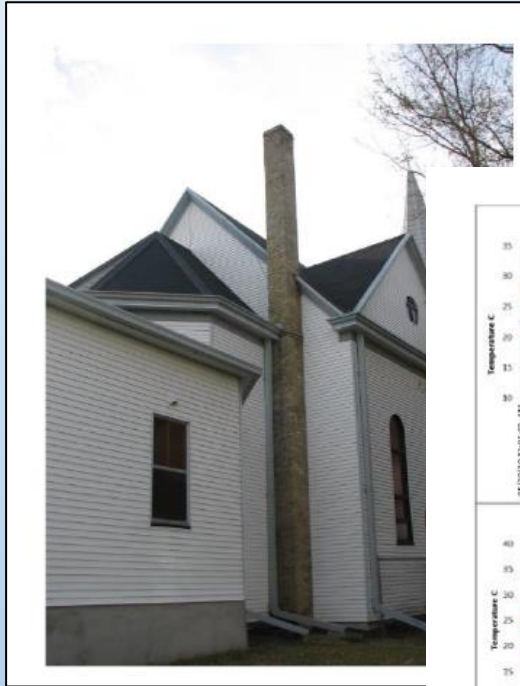
- Talking to other Chimney Swift Conservation Groups: Wisconsin, Bird Canada, etc



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# Findings from Canada (our Southern Neighbor!)



**Figure 11.** Consistent interior temperatures (blue) of the Main St., St. Adolphe chimney, which is surrounded completely by an occupied residential building, and variable temperatures (red) in a cinder block tower approximately 15 m to the NE.



**Figure 2.** HOBO Pendant Temperature Data Logger deployed in structures occupied and unoccupied by nesting Chimney Swifts in 2017 and 2018 in Ontario, Canada (left). Example of data logger positioning inside a structure (right).

# Year 2: Moving Forward



- Focus on community outreach
- Community Swift Sits
- Identify existing nest and roost sites
- Develop data portal
- Train community to ID and monitor sites
- New Partners: Geotagging, Historic Buildings
- Sharing What We Know



# Concluding Thoughts

- Being intentional with conservation (not random acts)
- Documenting and sharing data
- Leveraging our Partners
- Keeping our goals but changing our strategy, moving forward from “Now What”?



David Schrab \_ Macaulay Library

# Thank you!!!

