

Maritimes SwiftWatch: chimney swift roost trends

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Chimney Swift populations have suffered a 90% decline in Canada since 1970. SwiftWatch is a Birds Canada Citizen Science program focussed on encouraging stewardship and monitoring of important nest and roost sites, which can include chimneys, buildings, and hollow trees. With the efforts of dedicated volunteers and staff, we locate and monitor Chimney Swift roosts and nests across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. We will share broad roost trends based on Chimney Swift count data from up to 28 roosts across the Maritimes since 2011, and detailed roost trends from the Bridgetown artificial roost chimney since its construction in 2019. Based on roost count data, the number of Chimney Swifts have increased in Nova Scotia. In New Brunswick, swift numbers have fluctuated, but generally increased. Despite a similar number of known roosts in each province, Nova Scotia has had consistently higher numbers of roost surveys than New Brunswick during National Roost Monitoring count days each year (from late May to early June). Number of roost counts have increased in both provinces since SwiftWatch began in 2011, with the exception of a decrease in surveys in 2020. Roost surveys, especially during the National Roost Monitoring effort, provide a minimum population estimate that allows us to track population trends, and act as a measuring stick for impacts of conservation action.

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