

All About Birds (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/>)

Chimney Swift Identification



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Small with slender tube-shaped body and very long, narrow, curved wings. Dark gray-brown overall with a slightly paler throat.

([/guide/Chimney_Swift/photo-gallery/304087131](#))

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(<https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/264078391>)

Indiana, August 26, 2020

Need Bird ID Help?



Tube or cigar-shaped body with long curved wings and a short tail. Dark gray-brown overall.

([/guide/Chimney_Swift/photo-gallery/304087361](#))

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(<https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/105644211>)

Massachusetts, June 26, 2018

Try Merlin



Flies fast, often in loose feeding flocks, with very stiff wingbeats and almost no bend at the wrist. Often gives a chittering call while in flight.

[\(/guide/Chimney_Swift/photo-gallery/440546\)](https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/236860791)

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[\(/https://macaulaylibrary.org/video/440546\)](https://macaulaylibrary.org/video/440546)

Arkansas, April 01, 2004

[\(/guide/Chimney_Swift/photo-gallery/304087731\)](https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/236860791)

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Texas, May 20, 2020

[See more images of this species in Macaulay Library](https://search.macaulaylibrary.org/catalog?taxonCode=chiswi&mediaType=p&sort=rating_rank_desc)
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Compare with Similar Species

Click on an image to compare



Looking for ID Help?

Get Instant ID help for 650+ North American birds.

[Try Merlin Bird ID](#)

[Vaux's Swift](#)

[\(//guide/Chimney_Swift/species-compare/66114141\)]((/guide/Chimney_Swift/species-compare/66114141))

[Northern Rough-winged Swallow](#)

[\(//guide/Chimney_Swift/species-compare/68280781\)]((/guide/Chimney_Swift/species-compare/68280781))

[Cliff Swallow](#)

[\(//guide/Chimney_Swift/species-compare/68122521\)]((/guide/Chimney_Swift/species-compare/68122521))

The Four Keys to ID

✓ Size & Shape

Chimney Swifts are very small birds with slender bodies and very long, narrow, curved wings. They have round heads, short necks, and short, tapered tails. The wide bill is so short that it is hard to see.

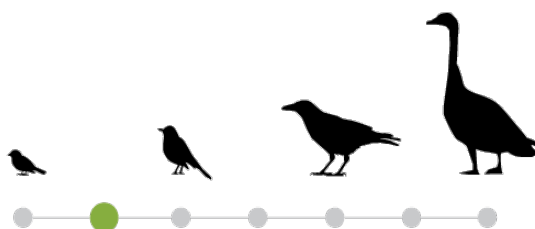
RELATIVE SIZE

About the same size as a Cliff Swallow.



© Tom Johnson | Macaulay Library

<https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/63954681>



between sparrow and robin

MEASUREMENTS

Both Sexes

Length: 4.7-5.9 in (12-15 cm)

Weight: 0.6-1.1 oz (17-30 g)

Wingspan: 10.6-11.8 in (27-30 cm)

✓ Color Pattern

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They are dark gray-brown all over, slightly paler on the throat. At distance and when backlit against the sky they can appear to be all black.



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(<https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/60595301>)

▼ Behavior

Chimney Swifts fly rapidly with nearly constant wingbeats, and often twist from side to side and bank erratically. Their wingbeats are stiff, with very little flex at the wrists. They often give a high, chattering call while they fly.

© Timothy Barksdale | Macaulay Library

(<https://macaulaylibrary.org/video/440546>)

▼ Habitat

Chimney Swifts nest in chimneys and on other vertical surfaces in dim, enclosed areas, including air vents, wells, hollow trees, and caves. They forage over urban and suburban areas, rivers, lakes, forests, and fields.



Need Bird ID Help? Try Merlin

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(https://macaulaylibrary.org/photo/33109761)

Species in This Family

[Swifts \(/guide/browse/taxonomy/Apodidae\)](/guide/browse/taxonomy/Apodidae) (Order: Caprimulgiformes, Family: [Apodidae \(/guide/browse/taxonomy/Apodidae\)](/guide/browse/taxonomy/Apodidae))



[Black Swift \(/guide/Black_Swift/overview\)](/guide/Black_Swift/overview)

[Chimney Swift \(/guide/Chimney_Swift/overview\)](/guide/Chimney_Swift/overview)

[Vaux's Swift \(/guide/Vauxs_Swift/overview\)](/guide/Vauxs_Swift/overview)

[Browse Species in This Family \(/guide/browse/taxonomy/Apodidae\)](/guide/browse/taxonomy/Apodidae)

More to Read



[How To Identify White Herons](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/how-to-identify-white-herons-excerpt-from-better-birding-book/)

(<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/how-to-identify-white-herons-excerpt-from-better-birding-book/>)



[After Birds Leave A Nest Box, Can I Clean Out The Nest For Future Use?](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/after-birds-leave-a-nest-box-can-i-clean-out-the-nest-for-future-use/)

([https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/after-birds-leave-a-nest-](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/after-birds-leave-a-nest-box-can-i-clean-out-the-nest-for-future-use/)

[Need Bird ID Help? Try Merlin](#)





I'm Seeing can-i-clean-out-the-nest-for-Fewer future-use/)

Birds In My Yard. I Something Affecting Their Populations?



Why Do Birds Leave The Nest Before They Can Fly?

(<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/why-do-birds-leave-the-nest-before-they-can-fly/>)



Project FeederWatch
Tricky Bird IDs
[🔗](#)

(<http://feederwatch.org/learn/tricky-bird-ids/>)

(<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/im-seeing-fewer-birds-in-my-yard-is-something-affecting-their-populations/>)



Should I
Worry
That My
Small,
Five-
pound
Dog
Might
Get
Attacked
By A
Hawk Or
Owl?

(<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/should-i-worry-that-my-small-five-pound-dog-might-get-attacked-by-a-hawk-or-owl/>)



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