

Swift Count 2021:

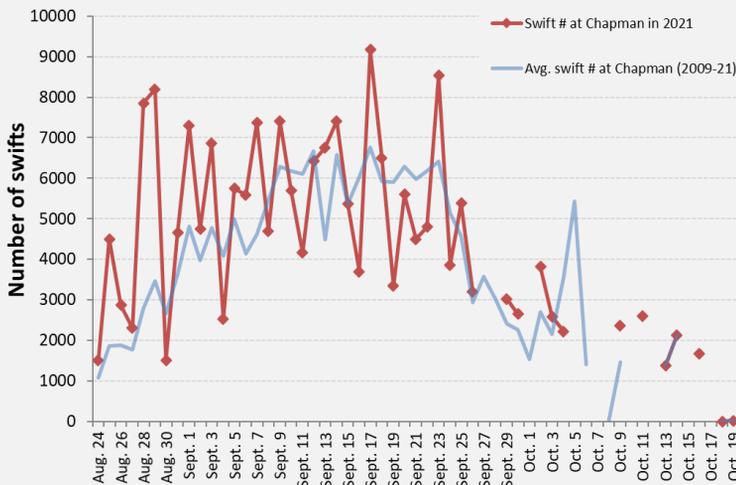
The longest year

Why We Count Swifts

Since 2009, Portland Audubon has counted migrating Vaux's Swifts at Chapman Elementary School and other sites in the Portland-metro region as part of a community science project to monitor population trends of these exciting birds. In addition to tracking local numbers, these counts contribute toward a larger [Pacific Coast-wide tracking effort](#). The Northwest Vaux's Swift population has been declining for several decades.

2021 at Chapman Elementary

For the second consecutive year, fall migration occurred during a dangerous surge in the COVID-19 pandemic. Portland Audubon worked with Portland Public School and other partners to discourage the public from visiting Chapman to view swifts, in order to respect state guidance to curb the spread of coronavirus. But our team of experienced community scientists completed a record season of swift counts: the birds arrived in late August and stayed around in significant numbers until October 15!



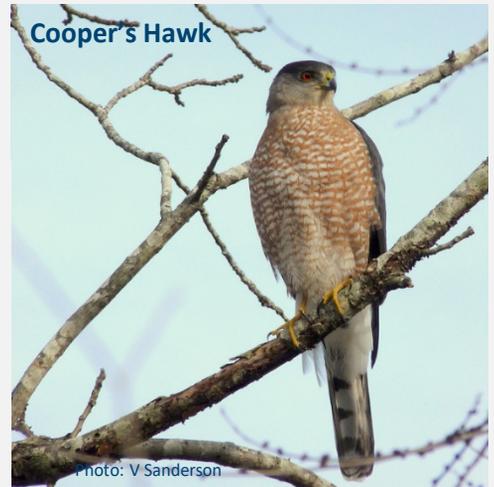
2021 Effort at Chapman

In 2021 a team of 16 experienced volunteers & staff monitored Chapman on 29 nights between August 24th and October 19th, a record-long season. While inclement weather cancelled 11 surveys, this is by far the latest our birds have roosted in the Chapman chimney. Peak numbers were modest, reaching 8500 birds on September 23, but overall numbers were robust with a late surge of 3800 birds on October 2 and numbers over 1000 per night through mid-month.



Annual Trend at Chapman

In 2021, the average number of swifts counted per night at Chapman was 4,444 swifts. This is close to the 13-year average of 4,760 swifts per night and a slight uptick from last year's average.



Predators at Chapman

Predation was down in 2021, with raptors present on 12 nights but only successful in capturing swifts on 3 occasions. This is much lower than last year's record of 25 predation events over 14 nights.

Swifts Detected at Other Sites in or Near Portland

Volunteers monitored at 2 other sites in the Portland Metro area in the fall of 2021 (see table below). In the Oregon City area, the swifts moved from their regular roost on Main Street to a new chimney at Jennings Lodge Elementary School. No birds were detected at previous years' active sites in Kenton, St. Johns or Aurora.

Site	Peak #	Days surveyed
Jennings Lodge Elementary School	2,445	8
Portland (Tabor Space)	205	4

People and Swifts

By and large, the public respected the recommendation to not visit Chapman this fall. Thank you! Peak crowd numbers totaled about 300 individuals, down from over 2000 in a "regular" year. A special shout-out to the Portland Audubon volunteers who staffed morning clean-up shifts at the site throughout the season.

Chimney Conservation

We want to protect chimneys that regularly host significant swift roosts! If you hear about chimneys in trouble, please contact Joe Liebezeit (jliebezeit@audubonportland.org)

