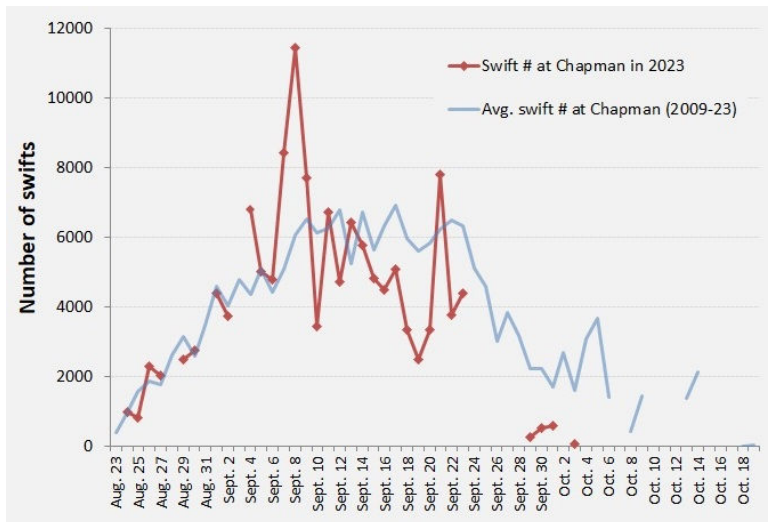


Swift Count 2023: 15 years of community science!

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.

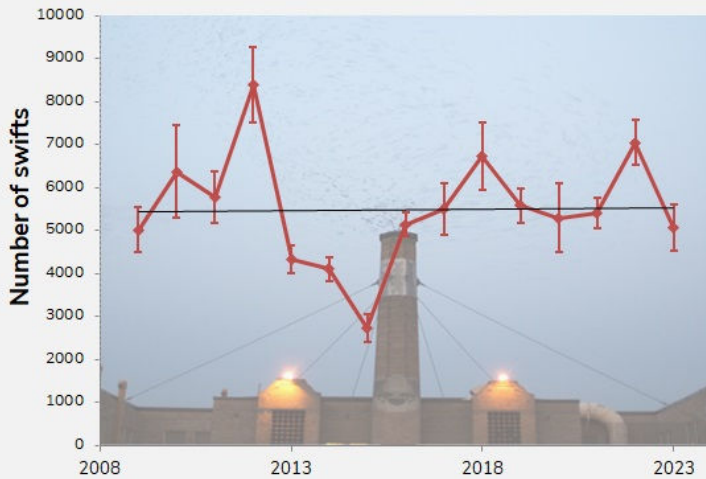


2023 at Chapman Elementary

In 2023 a team of 19 experienced volunteers & staff monitored Chapman on 32 nights between August 24th and October 3rd. Our peak of 11,440 birds was recorded on September 8, which represents an early peak for this site. Nightly totals were in line with expectations through September 23, when seasonal rains began. By late September, when we resumed counts, swift numbers had plummeted--we wrapped up the season with 45 birds on October 3.

Annual Trend at Chapman

The average nightly count at Chapman varies from year to year, but the overall trend line is relatively flat, indicating stable roost numbers over the past 15 years. This trend line is based on counts during the 4-week period between September 3 and 30, which is when community science surveys have been most consistently conducted since 2009.



Swifts Detected at Other Sites in or Near Portland

6 additional volunteers monitored sites throughout the Portland metro area. In the Oregon City area, the swifts returned to the old High School chimney, though in much smaller numbers than appeared in 2022. The peak of 1180 swifts occurred on September 11, then tailed off quickly.

Many other sites in the area hosted smaller roosts, including churches in SE and NE Portland, and a surprise revival at Mackin's Autobody in North Portland. We did not reach 1000 birds at any of these satellite sites in 2023.

Site	Peak#	Days surveyed
Oregon City: old high school (Jackson Campus)	1,180	8
Mackin's Autobody	700	3



Predators at Chapman

Evening predation by raptors was robust in 2023, with Cooper's Hawks present on 19 monitoring nights and a Peregrine Falcon appearing at least twice. 18 swifts were successful predated. We also continued our morning exit surveys and observed multiple predation events by American Crows.

People and Swifts

Goodness, there were a lot of folks watching these birds at Chapman! Portland Audubon and Chapman Elementary School hosted the public throughout September. Average attendance was nearly 900 people with many gatherings exceeding 3,000 enthusiastic spectators!

Chimney Conservation

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