

these were "...believed to have entered the chimney several days ago and after two days of bad draft on the furnace the chimney was examined."

Robert Ridgway wrote to Widmann on two occasions regarding Mrs. Ridgway's sightings of Chimney Swifts in November at Lawrenceville. In a letter dated 6 November 1925, he noted, "...Mrs. Ridgway ...saw them every evening (this evening included) pouring down the chimneys of the High School building, by thousands. She says their numbers are undiminished..." Widmann continues, "On a later date Mr. Ridgway wrote me that Mrs. Ridgway watched the swifts carefully and found them in summer numbers up to November 13, but next morning (November 14) there were very few flying about the chimney and then disappeared."

Widmann further quotes T. E. Musselman's observations at Quincy that fall:

"In 1925 few swifts were seen about town during the day time after the middle of October; but at dusk as many as five or six hundred circled over the favorite chimneys.... On October 28 a severe snowstorm forced the swifts into the chimneys. The next morning at eight o'clock I climbed the Wabash chimney and found probably three hundred swifts.... At 9:30 A. M. on October 29, a number of birds left the chimney and circled, flying among the snowflakes for five minutes.... All day the temperature was about 32° and few birds left their retreat.... On the 30th the day was cold, but the swifts were out for exercise. On the 31st it was much warmer and many birds were out.... A few fell exhausted on the snow... The cold weather continued and on November 16 the last swift circled over the town and departed for the south."

The fall of 1925, like that of 2006, was cold. Widmann remarks that his surprise at Chimney Swifts seen on 6 November i...would not have been so great, if an ordinarily mild October had preceded, but at the end of October and the first two days of November we had seven days of freezing weather. Once (October 30) the temperature was as low as 21] here in [St. Louis], and 16] in the county—the lowest temperature of any October day in sixty-two years."

I assembled fall departure data for the years 1974-2005 from northern, central, and southern Illinois for this species based on the available records in the seasonal reports originally compiled by Vernon M. Kleen for the Illinois Department of Conservation and later continued in the quarterly publications *Illinois Birds & Birding* and *Meadowlark*. See Table 2, which also includes data from a single site (Chicago's Jackson Park), for which I have data from a slightly shorter time-frame.

The 32 years of data show mean departure dates falling 16-17 Oct for all three sections of the state, and a statewide mean of 21 Oct. There are but three previous November records in the seasonal summaries: 2 Nov 1991, Wilmette (Cook Co) (James E. Landing et al.); 10 Nov 2002 (not 11 Nov as published—Robert E. Fisher, pers. comm.), McGinnis Slough, Palos area (Cook

Co) (documented by Robert E. & Karen D. Fisher); and 23 Nov 1974, Carbondale (Jackson Co) (documented by Dan Klem). The last two dates stand out in particular, and it appears that these were indeed anomalous dates within their respective years of occurrence. The latest dates otherwise reported anywhere in the state for those seasons were 19 Oct in 2002 (at Illinois Beach State Park (Lake Co) (Alan F. Stokie)), and 20 Oct in 1974 (in west-central Illinois).

Other than the 1925 event and the three dates just mentioned, I'm aware of only two additional November records for Illinois prior to 2006. The first is a vague datum in Bohlen 1989: 6 Nov (no year cited), west-central Illinois. The other involves a dead swift "with newly exposed viscera" noted by Joshua I. Engel in a parking lot in Evanston (Cook Co) on 16 Nov 1998 (*Meadowlark* 9.2:74); just when this individual expired is unclear.

The curious late departure in 2006, like that in 1925, will likely prove to be a fluke, and one pending explanation, but there is some evidence for a modern trend toward later departure dates by Chimney Swifts.

Oberholser 1926 provides an important, old summary of Chimney Swift migration (chiefly from data in the Biological Survey) for 57 sites in eastern North America (west to Grafton, North Dakota). His average departure dates for the three Illinois sites included are substantially earlier than those found in modern records (see Table 3). Indeed, the *latest* date cited for Chicago matches the second *earliest* Jackson Park departure date in my records.



**TABLE 3:** Illinois departure dates for Chimney Swifts, from Oberholser 1926

<u>SITE</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>	<u>LATEST</u>	<u># OF YEARS</u>
Chicago	Cook	18 Sep	6 Oct 1907	5
Rantoul	Champaign	19 Sep	11 Oct 1910	8
Odin	Marion	27 Sep	4 Oct 1890	5