

More generally, of the 22 sites at the latitude of Chicago or farther north, all show average departures in September or late August. The most northerly site showing an average departure date comparable to the recent Jackson Park average comes from a site 6½ latitude south of Chicago—Athens, Tennessee (13 Oct in 8 years of records). Three of the four November late dates noted by Oberholser come from southern states (Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina) and are confined to the first five days of November. The one striking late date comes from Richmond, Indiana, on 13 Nov 1906.

I have not re-reviewed Oberholser's sources from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but his data doubtless suffer from small sample sizes (averaging 7.7 years of records for the 57 sites, with extremes of 2-30 years), and I don't know the specifics on the very important variable of consistency of field surveys during, in particular, the month of October for the reporting sites.

For northeastern Illinois, however, we are fortunate to have William Dreuth's detailed study of bird migration at Chicago's Lincoln Park for the years 1928-1943, as summarized in Clark & Nice 1950. Dreuth never recorded a Chimney Swift in October, despite the fact that he averaged 24 dates of field surveys each October over his 16-year study. By contrast, my table of records from Chicago's Jackson Park for the period 1979-2006 never failed to include Chimney Swift data in October. Dreuth's average departure date from the first half of the last century is 12 September, while mine from the latter quarter and into the current century is 13 Oct. Dreuth's latest date of observation was 30 September 1936, while the latest for Jackson Park (prior to 2006) is 30 Oct 1988. These discrepancies are significant and are not based on any increase in dates of field surveys.



Three observers posted their personal late Chimney Swift sightings from recent years to IBET with data for the years 1994-2005 at various sites in northeastern Illinois from Urs W. Geiser (mostly Du Page County) and from Douglas F. Stotz (mostly Cook County), and for the years 1999-2005 from Geoffrey A. Williamson at Chicago. Their results are similar to the Jackson Park records and consistently show departure dates in October (averaging 9-11 Oct).

It is worth underscoring here an important and unusually irrelevant factor when it comes to comparing modern bird records to those from the first half of the last century. Namely, as there is no other colorless, small bird in eastern North America that is both so visible (given its preferred habitat as open sky) and so readily identifiable to the naked eye as the Chimney Swift, modern advances in field identification and optical equipment would seem to have notably little bearing on the comparability of records over time for this particular species.

Under the heading, "Priorities for Future Research" on Chimney Swifts, Cink & Collins (p. 20) remark, "Also unknown is how the timing of migration is influenced by local weather events." The phenomena of 1925 and 2006 render this an understatement.

#### Literature cited

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All Chimney Swift photos were taken by Michael Brown, Indiana Audubon Society.