
TALES FROM THE TREE

The Quarterly Newsletter of Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



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CHIMNEY SWIFT

Chaetura pelagica

Naturalist and ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson is credited with describing the Chimney Swift as a “cigar with wings” – an apt description of their stubby little bodies. Swifts are medium-sized, sooty gray birds with long slender wings and very short legs. They are incapable of perching upright – they use their feet like tiny grappling hooks to cling vertically to surfaces.



The chimney swift is a monogamous breeder and typically will mate for life. Swifts feed primarily on flying insects, including flies, wasps, bees, whiteflies, aphids, stoneflies and mayflies. It has been estimated that a pair of adults raising young may consume the weight equivalent of 5,000 to 6,000 housefly sized insects every day! These chatterboxes are wonderful neighbors to have if you are looking for natural pest control.

The chimney swift's genus name, *Chaetura*, basically translates into “spine tail”. This is an accurate description of the bird's tail, as the shafts of all ten tail feathers end in sharp, protruding points. This assists them with vertical perching.



Chimney Swifts build their half cup nest out of twigs glued together by their saliva. The nest is attached to the wall of the nest cavity, typically a chimney. The female lays 4 or 5 white eggs which are incubated for approximately 19 days. The altricial young (hatched naked, blind and helpless) develop over the next month and typically are flighted and leave the chimney at about 28 days. They are quite vocal in the last two weeks before they take off as anyone who has had a nest in their chimney can attest!

Chimney Swifts breed through much of the eastern half of the United States and the southern reaches of eastern Canada. They migrate to South America for the winter after gathering in large communal roosts. We typically have them in our area through the end of September and occasionally in smaller numbers through October. This September, we counted approximately 11,000 swifts entering the roost where we release our youngsters.

Chimney Swift populations have been declining, most likely due to a variety of factors, including dwindling habitat, lack of nesting structures and pesticide use. If you'd like to build a nesting structure for your local swifts, you can google "Chimney Swift Tower" for instructions on materials, assembly and placement.



Ziggy's Tree is the only organization in middle and southeastern Tennessee that provides long-term care for swifts. They are quite labor-intensive. Unlike our other birds that eventually learn to forage on their own, swifts must be hand-fed at least once an hour for up to 14 hours a day for the entire time they are in care. Once the swifts are fledging (leaving the nest) we provide a fake chimney, such as the one pictured above, so that they can exercise their wings as they prepare to take flight.

We admit from 20-40 swifts annually, most of those due to nests which have fallen in a chimney. Most fallen nests are an indication that the chimney needs to be thoroughly cleaned although we have had years with torrential rains that have caused nests to fall just from the excessive moisture.

On average, we release 80% of these amazing creatures. We are fortunate to have a large communal roost at the Tullahoma High School that is available in August and September when our youngsters are ready to go.

DID YOU KNOW –

(information below was excerpted from the National Audubon Society's "The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Bird Behavior")

- ❖ Swifts are members of the family "Apodidae" which means "without feet". This family of birds was likely named since they all have very short legs. But they do have feet!
- ❖ Swifts are considered most closely related to hummingbirds since they have similar wing structures – very short humerus (upper bone with the rest of the wing being more elongated).
- ❖ Swifts are the most aerial of birds, doing nearly everything in flight including capturing food, bathing, drinking and occasionally copulating.
- ❖ Swifts are found on every continent except Antarctica
- ❖ There are 100 species of swifts worldwide.
- ❖ North America has 4 species of swifts. Our Chimney Swifts are found in the eastern United States, while Vaux's Swifts, Black Swifts and White-throated Swifts are all found in the western United States.
- ❖ Adult annual survival rate ranges from 65-83% for all species of swifts
- ❖ The oldest Chimney Swift on record lived 14 years!



Thanks to our May 2020 Giving Tuesday donors, we made our goal of \$2500!

Debbie Sykes * Brenda Gunsch * Joy Chrisman
Valerie Bjorn * Angela Ziegler * Megan Johnson
Amy Fogt * Grace Hanners * Beth Terry
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Waiting Bird Art & Craft Consortium
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Mary Mulford * Jeanine Powis * Allie Piefer
Sarah Fuqua * Carol Wray * Valerie Hayashi
Louisa Hunter * Cathy Jackson * Janet Martin
Ann Shapiro * Missy Thomas * Devon Blackburn
Chelsea Phelps

The May Giving Tuesday was also known as our 10 year Anniversary fundraiser as well as the “oops, we missed signing up for the Big Payback”. We are extremely grateful to all of our donors for their support, especially in this uncertain pandemic year.



The first of our second round of Eastern Gray Squirrels

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

We've stayed busy this summer. We continued on a record pace with songbird intakes. We've already admitted 450 orphaned and injured birds through mid-September, compared to 311 for the entire year of 2019. For most of the summer, we were the only organization available for hatchling and younger nestling birds. Although baby bird season is winding down, we still expect to take in injured migratory songbirds, as well as act as a temporary facility for emergency care for injured hawks and owls until those can be transferred to other rehabilitators in our network that have the facilities for the larger birds.

Our songbird specialist, LouAnn Partington, was honored at a Tennessee Fish & Wildlife Commission meeting earlier this year. LouAnn had assisted the Grundy County wildlife officer with two injured Bald Eagles in 2019. Since receiving her state and federal wildlife rehabilitation permits, she has provided care for over 5800 birds, small mammals and turtles.



Pictured with LouAnn are Walter Cook, TWRA Captive Wildlife Coordinator, Ed Carter, TWRA Executive Director and Kurt Holbert, TFWC Chairman.

Our second round of baby mammals is in full swing, with over 50 baby squirrels currently in care. We are hopeful that most of these youngsters will be old enough for release before the cold winter months. If you are interested in providing a safe release site for any of our mammal youngsters, please text Angela at 615-631-2205.

Our turtle specialist has stayed busy with injured turtles this summer and is working to get those that have recovered out in time for them to brumate (hibernate) in their natural environment.

SUPPORT ZIGGY'S TREE

- Become a member – just complete the application on the back of this newsletter, or visit our website to download and print an application.
- Give a gift membership to a friend!
- Purchase items from our wish list.
- Donate newspapers (we use those to line cages and cover the tables under the cages)
- Contact us about volunteer opportunities, such as transport, animal releases, administrative/office work, fundraising, board membership or contributing to our newsletter
- Like us on Facebook and stay updated on releases, admissions and other news.
- Invite us to speak to your church or civic group – we love to tell people about the work we do!

Check our website at www.ziggystree.org for other ways you can support us!

WISH LIST

- Gift cards (grocery store, Lowe's, Home Depot, Tractor Supply)
- Dried Bloodworms
- High quality dry cat food
- Baby Food (fruit – apples, bananas, blueberries)
- Canned or frozen mixed vegetables
- LCD Projector
- Heating Pads (without automatic shut-off)
- Nuts (pecans, walnuts, acorns)
- Fresh Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, kale, sweet potatoes, zucchini, apples)
- Paper Towels
- Facial Tissues
- Toilet Paper
- Unscented laundry detergent
- 24, 36 or 48 inch Bungee cords

Contact us at 615-631-2205 or 931-393-4835 to arrange to drop off any of the above items.

For assistance with orphaned or injured mammals or general questions about mammals, text Angela at 615-631-2205.

For assistance with orphaned or injured birds or general questions about birds, call LouAnn at 931-393-4835 or text 931-841-9781.

For assistance with injured turtles, contact Rachel at 615-587-2977.

Looking for a project for your scout troop, church, school or civic group? We'd love to have more squirrel nest boxes, and could also use small bluebird or woodpecker boxes to use with our young cavity nesting birds. Contact us for more information.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Thanks to our 66 participating families in the Kroger Community Rewards program, we've received our second and third quarterly checks for \$330.41 and \$336.88. The funds we receive annually through this program are now covering approximately 6 weeks of our operating costs.

If you shop at Kroger and would like to support us through this program, just go on-line to www.kroger.com/community_rewards, and enroll your rewards card, selecting Ziggy's Tree as your charity. You still get gas points and discounts – and Kroger donates money to us!

Don't have an e-mail address or computer access? You can still sign up. Just call 1(800) KROGERS, OPTION 3 or 1(800)576-4377, OPTION 3.

For privacy reasons, Kroger does not provide names of those who have signed up to support us. So even though we can't thank you personally, please know that we are extremely grateful for your support.

And please ask your friends and family to enroll and support us!



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

ADVOCATE

Charles Wharton

SUSTAINING

Sandra Allinson * Linda Horecka
Sharon Butcher * Edward Spears
Bucket Foundation
Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund

SUPPORTING

Amy York * Debbie Bomar * Jack Triplett
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Dixie Stephens * Mary Etta Ward * Sharon Johnson
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Blake Sperow * Kelye Stadther
Andret Dinon * Stacy Chandler * Linn Guss
Ginger Jimenez * Karen Dean * Amy Von Alman
Teresa Tate (in memory of Bobby Bush)

VETERINARIANS

Pet Medical Center
Airport Animal Clinic

IN-KIND & CASH DONATIONS

Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund * Critter Gitter
Logan Berlinsky * Stacy Arnold * Natalie Parker
Christina Buckner * Veronica Hanners * Stacy Veros
Lisa Hart * Patricia Lee * Linda Bong * Debbie Sykes
Linda Foster * Chelsea Phelps * Jerry Vandiver
Jean Russell * Lisa Copeland * Crystal Farris
Allison White

2020 RELEASES

MAY

1 Wood Thrush
3 Eastern Box Turtles
4 Southern Flying Squirrels
1 Scarlet Tanager
34 Eastern Gray Squirrels
4 American Robins
1 House Finch
7 Virginia Opossums
3 Eastern Chipmunks
2 Canada Geese
10 Carolina Wrens

JUNE

16 Eastern Gray Squirrels
8 House Finches
4 Eastern Phoebes
9 Northern Mockingbirds
1 Brown-headed Cowbird
5 American Robins
4 Eastern Bluebirds
1 Song Sparrow
2 Mourning Doves
5 Groundhogs

JULY

3 Tufted Titmice
17 American Robins
5 Carolina Wrens
9 Blue Jays
2 Virginia Opossums
1 Tree Swallow
1 Mourning Dove
4 Eastern Bluebirds
1 Rat Snake
2 Eastern Box Turtles
1 Red-eared Slider
2 Eastern Gray Squirrels
2 Eastern Cottontails

AUGUST

16 Chimney Swifts
15 Carolina Wrens
5 American Robins
10 House Finches
2 Red-eared Sliders
4 Eastern Box Turtles

Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
92 Maple Ave.
Tullahoma, TN 37388



NOTICE: YOUR MAILING LABEL CONTAINS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE.

To avoid any interruption with delivering your newsletter, we ask that you renew at least one month before the date shown. Use the Membership Form provided below.

PLEASE RENEW, STAY INFORMED, WE NEED YOU!!!

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT ZIGGY'S TREE, I AM ...

- A NEW MEMBER**
 RENEWING MY MEMBERSHIP

Memberships are for one year
Gift Memberships are also available.

Please Mail This Form To:

**Ziggy's Tree WRC
92 Maple Ave.
Tullahoma, TN 37388**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

___ Individual \$25.00
___ Family \$40.00
___ Supporting \$100.00
___ Sustaining \$250.00
___ Advocate \$500.00
___ Wildlife Champion \$1000.00

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Home Phone (____) _____ Zip _____ -- _____
Work Phone (____) _____
e-mail _____

I would like to receive my newsletter by email.

I am interested in volunteering in the following areas:

- ___ Environmental Education
___ Wildlife Rehabilitation
___ Fundraising/Administration

Checks should be made payable to Ziggy's Tree WRC. You can also renew/donate by credit card at [Paypal.me/ziggystree](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/cgi-bin/?cmd=_express-checkout&context=express).

Not sure what to get that special someone for birthdays, anniversaries or just because? Consider giving them a one year membership to Ziggy's Tree!

Members receive our newsletter.

Ziggy's Tree strives to be environmentally conscious. If you would prefer to receive an electronic copy of our newsletter, please check the box above or e-mail ziggystreewildlife@gmail.com to be placed on our mailing list.