

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I arrive?

The swifts begin gathering in the sky above the school in large numbers an hour or more before sunset. Often, closer to sunset, the swifts begin circling directly above the school chimney in a large flock before dropping in huge numbers into the chimney. They often start to enter the chimney a half-hour to an hour before sunset. If there are extraordinary numbers of swifts, they will start entering the chimney even earlier in order to get all of them in by sunset.

How many swifts will be there?

At the peak of the fall migration, thousands are expected. On May 7th of this year, during the spring migration, over 21,000 Vaux's Swifts were observed flying into the Frank Wagner Elementary School chimney. The fall migration is likely to be several times larger than the spring migration because the young swifts migrate with their parents then.

How long will they be in Monroe?

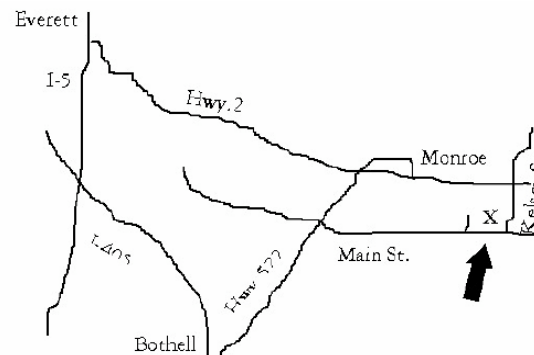
Probably until the end of September or even early October but in much lower numbers by then. The best viewing is expected to be the first weeks of September.

Monroe Sunset Times September 2008

Date	Sunset	Date	Sunset
1	7:49	16	7:19
2	7:47	17	7:17
3	7:45	18	7:15
4	7:43	19	7:13
5	7:41	20	7:11
6	7:39	21	7:08
7	7:37	22	7:06
8	7:35	23	7:04
9	7:33	24	7:02
10	7:31	25	7:00
11	7:29	26	6:58
12	7:27	27	6:56
13	7:25	28	6:54
14	7:23	29	6:52
15	7:21	30	6:50

Location

Frank Wagner Elementary School
Monroe, Washington
Old Town Monroe on
Main Street between Kelsey and Dickinson
Road



MONROE SWIFT WATCH **September 6-21, 2008**

Come to witness an amazing natural event occurring in our community!

Celebrate the arrival of the second largest congregation of Vaux's Swifts in North America!

Watch thousands of these small birds squeeze themselves into a 4-foot-square chimney in just minutes!

Frank Wagner Elementary School
Monroe, Washington





About the Vaux's Swifts

Migration

Each September thousands of migrating Vaux's (pronounced "voxes") Swifts roost in Monroe School District's Frank Wagner Elementary School chimney to rest while on their southern migration from northwestern Canada and Washington State to Central America and Venezuela.



The Swifts

These 4-5" long birds are the smallest and most numerous of the swift species in Washington State. They spend much of their time in the air and forage, eat, drink, court, collect nesting materials and mate all in flight. Vaux's Swifts prefer to roost in hollow old trees but frequently use brick chimneys as a substitute.




Interesting Behavior

Prior to entering the chimney, the swifts often gather in great numbers and circle the chimney. As they begin to enter the chimney, they change from their head-first direction and go in tail first. They overlap one another in "shingle" fashion to conserve body heat. They often slow their metabolism to a near-dormant state to conserve energy while roosting.




MONROE SWIFT NIGHT OUT

SEPTEMBER 6, 2008




Learn more about the Vaux's Swifts that gather nightly to roost in the Frank Wagner Elementary School chimney.

- Lecture at 6:30 p.m. in the Frank Wagner Auditorium.
 - Docents available from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. to answer your questions.
 - Information booth with comparative bird display.
 - Watch the swifts' aerial performances in the sky!
 - Participate in activities for children!
 - Take a chance on a raffle!
 - Enjoy snacks and drinks!
 - Come to enjoy one of nature's spectacles!
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Sponsorship


A desire to learn more about the Vaux's Swifts, to study their migration and behavior, and to preserve their habitat (in this case, the Frank Wagner Elementary School chimney) was the impetus for the creation of the Friends of the Vaux's Swifts Committee.



Monroe Swift Watch 2008, Monroe Swift Night Out, education about the Vaux's Swifts and preservation of their habitat are sponsored by Pilchuck Audubon Society, Seattle Audubon Society, Eastside Audubon Society, Monroe School District No. 103, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, PAWS (Progressive Animal Welfare Society), Wild Birds Unlimited-Monroe and many community members.

Your contribution to the Monroe Swift Watch campaign will help the Monroe School District and local Audubon Societies develop a cost effective plan to assure student safety and maintain a critical environmental resource for the future of the Vaux's Swifts. Checks can be made out to the Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS).

**For further information contact
Pilchuck Audubon Society
at 425-252-0926**



<http://www.pilchuckaudubon.org>

