

White-Throated Swift (WTSW)

Aeronautes saxatalis



Characteristics

- Dark blackish-brown plumage with contrasting white plumage on chin, throat, breast, mid-belly, and flank patches
- Length: 16.5 cm
- Weight: 32.0 g
- Wingspan: 38.1 cm
- Similar looking to the uni-colored black swift and violet-green swallow

Habitat

- Nest in crevices along cliffs, as pictured above.
- Habitat ranges from grasslands to open deserts to forests

Behavior

- Communally roosts in crevices along cliffs or in abandoned buildings.
- Return to nests in spring and partake in aerial courtship displays
- Some adults carry food for young in food in a pouch in their throat
- Flight pattern characterized by rapid forward flight with erratic direction changes
- Rarely lands except to roost





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Diet

- Aerial hunters
- Prey: flying insects such as flies, wasps, and beetles
- Usually hunt where rising air columns collect large groups of insects

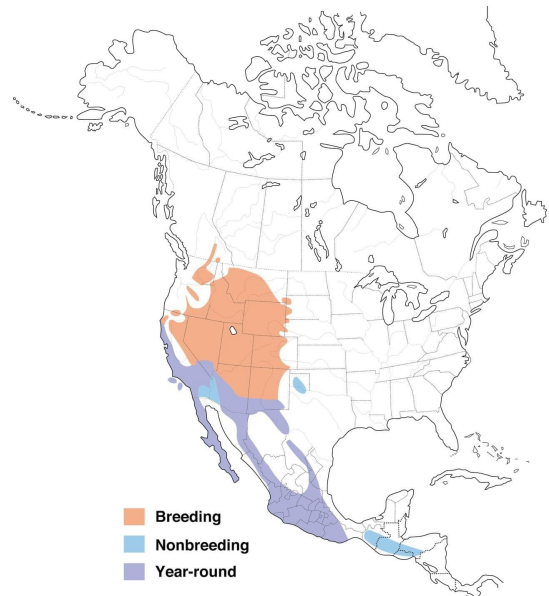
Zzyzx-Specific Information

- These birds can be seen year-round around the Desert Studies Center..
- They can often be seen flying and diving above Lake Tuendae and West Pond.

Conservation Status

- IUCN status: Least Concern
- Reasons for decline are not entirely known, but it could be due to pesticides decreasing their food source.
- Predators include: peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, and American kestrel

Range



https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-throated_Swift/maps-range



https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-throated_Swift/media-browser/66114531
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Did you know?!

- Their genus name *Aeronautes*, stands for “navigator of the sky” in Latin, which is fitting because swifts are among the most accomplished fliers!

White-Throated Swift References

- Ryan, T. P. and C. T. Collins (2020). White-throated Swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (A. F. Poole and F. B. Gill, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA.
<https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.whtswi.01>
- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-throated_Swift/lifehistory
- <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/white-throated-swift>

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