

Louisiana Ornithological Society's

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: Vaux's Swift *Chroetura vauxi*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): 1
3. Locality: LOUISIANA: Iberville
3.7 mi. N St. Gabriel, 545 Pecan Dr.
 (parish)
 (specific locality)
4. Date(s) when observed: 22 Nov. 92
5. Time(s) of day when observed: ~ 10:15 AM
6. Reporting observer and address: Van Remsen
LSUMMS
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
Catherine Cummins
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): excellent - sun front-lighting bird
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 10x40 Zeiss
11. Distance to bird(s): 75-200 ft
12. Duration of observation: ~ 3 minutes
13. Habitat: foraging relatively low over small field

14. **Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation** (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

See attached field notes

15. **Description** (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

See attached field notes

Although it sounds a little corny, I'd been "preparing" myself for "this moment" for two years through daily study of Chimney Swifts during my dawn and mid-morning "sky watches" 4-5 times/week, during which I've looked carefully at several thousand Chimneys. After all the "strange swifts" in Baton Rouge over the last two years, I've been on the alert for a non-Chimney. When I saw this bird, my out-loud reaction was instantaneous - Vauvau!

The reasons why this bird was not a Chimney are -

- (1) wings definitely shorter and so wingbeats definitely faster - this was instantaneously obvious
- (2) the plumage was overall much browner, not as gray/black as Chimney
- (3) the underparts were paler

16. **Voice:** silent

17. **Similar species** (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

see #15

18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained?** (by whom? attached?): NO

19. **Previous experience with this species:** Thousands seen in California 1967-78; most recent - 2 in Alaska, July '92

20. **Identification aids:** (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: none

b. after observation: LSUMNS specimens

21. This description is written from: ☒ notes made during the observation
(☐ notes attached?); ☐ notes made after the observation (date: _____)
_____ memory.

22. **Are you positive of your identification** If not, explain: YES

23. **Signature of reporter:** 13 Dec. 92

(date)

(time)

Remsen,
J.V.
1992

Vaux's Swift
Chaetura Vauxi

22 Nov. 545 Pecan Dr., 3.7 mi. N St. Gabriel, Iberville Par., Louisiana

One watched in good sunlight at ~75-200 ft' for ~3 minutes as it foraged over the field across the street, mainly 40-75 ft. above ground. — excellent views.

Recognized instantly as not a Chimney Swift — I've seen probably thousands of Chimneys ^{while} standing at this very spot, and even without direct comparison, this bird was distinctly shorter-winged, ^{with} faster wing beats, paler ventrally, and seemed more "brown" than gray-blackish. The bird lingered long enough that I was able to call to Catherine, who was able to run out to the street to see it — she also could see that it was not a Chimney. Other Neotropical swifts that might conceivably occur are darker and/or have more contrastingly colored rumps. This bird's rump was only a slightly paler brownish than back.

Notes from LSUMNS specimens 14 Dec:

- Only 4 fall Vaux's in collection, only 1 of which was collected recently — older specimens are browner in both Vaux's and Chimney — "foxing" evident
- wing-length difference is substantial (the way to key the two species).
- paleness of underparts ^{especially throat} probably better field mark than I'd previously thought, once wear and specimen-age taken into account.
- the brownness of the bird I saw does not appear to be a reliable field mark — subtle at best.
- rumps of Vaux's ^(N=4) contrast more with dorsal of back than in Chimney. This was not a mark that I had been "practicing" with Chimneys, and so I refrain from post-hoc comments except to note that I seldom observe that Chimney rumps contrast at all with back.