

Major Vaux's Swift Overwintering Site Discovered in Mexico

¹Michael Helm

²Judith Areli Nájera Núñez

³Fernando Urbina Torres

⁴Larry Schwitters

⁵Kashmir Wolf

¹Golden Gate Bird Alliance <https://goldengatebirdalliance.org/>

²⁻³ [TBD]

⁴Vaux's Happening Project <https://www.vauxhappening.org/>

⁵Veracruz River of Raptors Project

A major new Vaux's swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) mass roosting site has recently been discovered in Mexico through a collaboration between ornithologists from the State of Morelos and the Vaux's Happening Project. The Vaux's Happening project began receiving winter reports of roosting swifts from sites in and around Orizaba, Veracruz, Mexico in about 2016. In the past few years Vaux's Happening has been exploring the massive increase in Mexican eBird data, reaching out to birding clubs, and contacting known interested observers to raise awareness and to try to learn more about the Vaux's swift migration in and through Mexico. Two of these observers have discovered a nightly roosting site in Morelos, Mexico hosting an enormous number of roosting swifts - estimated at over 100000 at one observation. Swifts are using a large chimney in an abandoned sugarcane processing facility. Vaux's Happening has begun a collaboration with local ornithologists and observers (who have been observing swifts in a nearby national park) to monitor this site on a regular basis and to try to understand what role local sites in Morelos might play in the migration. There are around fifty-seven sugarcane processing facilities in the relatively small State of Morelos alone. We hope to discover how many of them shelter Vaux's swifts. Since there are both migratory and non-migratory Vaux's swifts (and even other *Chaetura* species) in Mexico, the interpretation of these observations will be complex.

[Presentation supplemented with ~3 min of video, most reserved for the end.]