

Streptoprocne rutila (Chestnut-collared Swift)

Family: Apodidae (Swifts)

Order: Apodiformes (Swifts)

Class: Aves (Swifts)



Fig. 1. Chestnut-collared swift, *Streptoprocne rutila*.

[<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rainbirder/4686083447>, downloaded 10 March 2017]

TRAITS. *Streptoprocne rutila* is a relatively large swift species, usually 12.7-13.5cm in length, with a shallowly-forked tail and rather broad wings, and weighing approximately 20g. The male is partially black with a rufous collar (Fig. 1). The red feathers can appear strikingly bright in sunlight. Brown mottling can be seen in the collar, this mottling is mainly age-related. Female and immature chestnut-collared swifts' collars are incomplete or absent, but otherwise the females resemble the males. Young birds can easily be distinguished by the reddish edges to their crown feathers. This species has a chattering "chit-chit" call (ffrench, 1991).

DISTRIBUTION. The chestnut-collared swift is found in montane regions from the south of Mexico through Central America, to the Andes from southern Venezuela to Bolivia and in the coastal mountains of northern Venezuela and in Trinidad (Fig. 2).

HABITAT AND ACTIVITY. Generally seen foraging over forests such as humid montane, humid pine-oak, lowland evergreen, semi-deciduous and over partially open

areas, even villages and towns (Hilty, 2003). During the night they roost at higher elevations. Equally likely to be located in rugged ravines as over more gentle upland valleys and level ground. The chestnut-collared swifts construct a nest out of plant material such as mosses and liverworts and relatively little mud on a vertical surface that is usually located in a shady damp area near water, for example a cave, under a bridge or a culvert (Fig. 1). The shape of the nest resembles a flattened cone and the white eggs are incubated by both parents (Fig. 3). Incubation takes 23 days, with an additional 40 days to fledging.

FOOD AND FEEDING. *Streptoprocne rutila* feeds in flight on aerial insects, caught in mid-air (Fig. 4). They feed in swirling masses over mountain slopes and ridges or even over open woodland at a height of 500m or more which is often a height greater than other swifts. Flying ants are commonly eaten by chestnut-collared swifts.

REPRODUCTION. For chestnut-collared swifts reproduction typically occurs during the rainy season, only when the heavier rains have begun. In Trinidad it mainly occurs from May-August. If a second nesting attempt is made during the current season the interval between the ending of the first attempt and the laying of the egg in the second attempt is up to 25 days, with the majority ranging from 6-15 days. A clutch is always of two eggs, but one egg might be lost due to rolling out.

BEHAVIOUR. Chestnut-collared swifts are a gregarious species can be seen with other sympatric swift species, especially white-collared swifts with which it sometimes roosts. They are faithful to particular areas where they can be observed on a daily basis.

APPLIED ECOLOGY. *Streptoprocne rutila* is listed as Least Concern because there is a large population of the species with no evidence of a declining population, and the species does not approach the thresholds of vulnerable (IUCN, 2017).

REFERENCES

- BirdsNA. (2015). Chestnut-collared Swift. Birds of North America. <https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/cheswi1>
- Chantler, P. (1999). Swifts - A Guide To The Swifts and Treeswifts of the World.
- French, R. (1991). A guide to the birds of Trinidad and Tobago (2nd edition).
- Hilty, S. (2003). Birds Of Venezuela.
- IUCN. (2017). *Streptoprocne rutila*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22686424/0>

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Fig. 2. Distribution of the chestnut-collared swift.

[<https://test.neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/Species-Account/nb/species/chcswi1/distribution>, downloaded 10 March 2017]



Fig. 3. Chestnut-collared swifts nesting.

[<http://www.hbw.com/ibc/species/chestnut-collared-swift-streptoprocne-rutila>, downloaded 10 March 2017]



Fig. 4. Chestnut-collared swift in flight.

[http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p_p_spp=225371, downloaded 10 March 2017]

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