

LBRC Report Form

1. English and Scientific names: Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
2
3. Parish:
East Baton Rouge
4. Specific Locality:
766 Rodney Drive, Baton Rouge
5. Date(s) when observed: 1/29/2025
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 8:45 am
7. Reporting observer: Lauren Harter
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
None
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
None
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Overcast, birds were overhead and slightly south as the sun was to the southeast. The light was somewhat dispersed thanks to the overcast conditions but the birds were still fairly backlit.
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 10x42 Vortex Viper HD binoculars
12. Distance to bird(s): Birds were flying fairly low overhead, not far above the level of the sweetgum canopy, first seen roughly 20 meters horizontal distance then around 30
13. Duration of observation: Two views of a few seconds each; birds obstructed by trees between and after views
14. Habitat: Heavily wooded suburban development

15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Flying overhead together heading more or less south. A first saw one bird as it flew over the trees, got binoculars on it and quickly realized it was a swift and therefore most likely a Vaux's Swift by date. It reappeared a moment later and a second individual flew in next to it; they stayed in view long enough to be sure of the ID before they disappeared behind the trees again.

16. 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):

My description written for eBird shortly after the observation was: "Flyovers, at one point flying right next to each other. Small swifts with narrow sickle wings and tiny tubular body. Appeared all dark below with a paler throat (fairly backlit to see this well, but still visible despite the lighting)". I especially noted the small size, fluttery flight style without gliding, and the lack of a bulge in the inner primaries.

17. Voice: Silent

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

Swallows immediately eliminated by shape - these birds showed the typical sickle-shaped wings of swifts rather than the triangular wing shape of swallows, and no obvious tail when the tail would be readily visible on a swallow. Dark bellies on both birds also eliminates most swallows; martins are distinctly larger with broader wings, different flight style, long tail, and lacking a pale throat. Chimney Swift isn't likely at this time of year but these birds also fit Vaux's by apparent smaller size (Chimney often strikes me as large, being more used to Vaux's), lack of a bulge in the inner primaries, more fluttery flight style, and by what appeared to be a paler throat though that was difficult to judge.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):

No

20. Previous experience with this species: Extensive, I used to see them multiple times during spring and fall migration every year in Arizona and California

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

None

22. Identification aids used when?

None used

23. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain:

Yes

24. Date report completed:

2/2/2025

25. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

26. If yes, may we include your name with the report?

Yes