



Photo by Alistair Fraser

Kootenay Bank Swallow Survey

Winter 2017

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

Why study Bank Swallows?

Across Canada, many birds that feed on flying insects are showing significant declines. Bank Swallows were assessed as federally Threatened in 2013, due to an estimated population decrease of 98% over 40 years. The Kootenay Bank Swallow Survey was initiated in 2015. Its primary goal is to gather data to help determine the current status of this species in southeastern BC and track trends over time.

What we found in 2016

Field surveys focused on the southwest Kootenay subregion around Nelson, Castlegar and Trail. Twenty-one active colonies were identified, ranging in size from 12 to 648 burrows. The estimated size of the breeding population in this area in 2016 was 3800 adults. Additional colonies were reported from Arrow Lakes, Creston, Cranbrook, Fairmont, and Kootenay National Park (see the map on page 2).

Life history

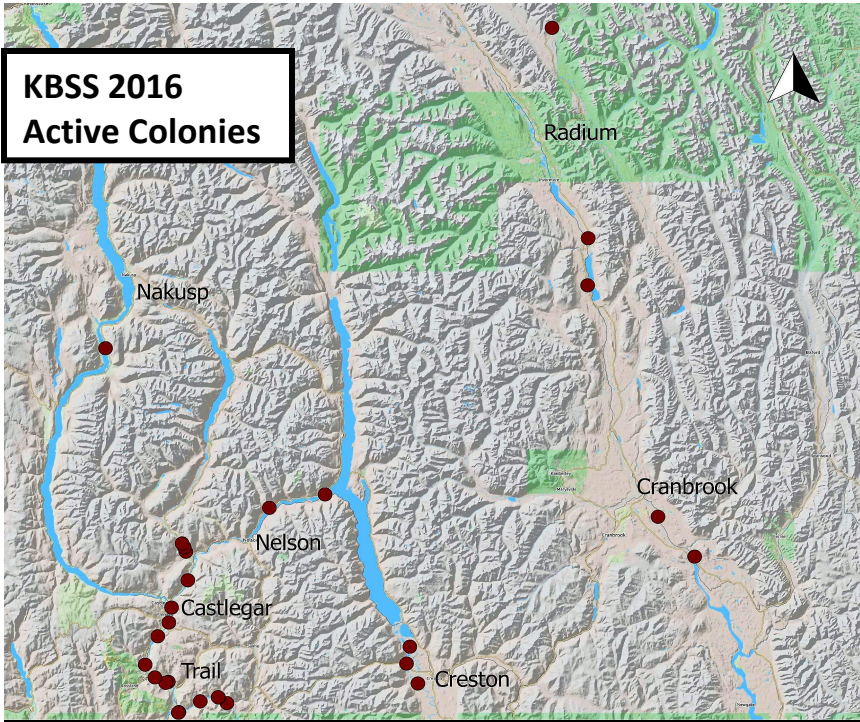
Bank Swallows nest in burrows that are dug out of banks of rivers, roads, and gravel pits. They are highly social, typically nesting in colonies and foraging in flocks. Breeding activity tends to occur synchronously within a colony. Most eggs are laid in June and chicks are in the nest from late June through July and sometimes into August. Swallows migrate to Central and South America.



•Bank Swallow colonies can consist of more than 2000 burrows

•Bank Swallows are the smallest species of swallow in North America

Assessing and monitoring regional numbers of a nationally threatened species



Our volunteers in 2016:

The following individuals participated in field surveys or supplied information on breeding colonies: Steve Arndt, Shelley Bortnick, Arlene Chapman, Shirley Coffin, Aileen Collings, Dianne Cooper, David Cunningham, Gary Davidson, Malcolm Fitz-Earle, Dwain Foster, Alistair Fraser, Dorothy Fraser, Valerie Huff, Cecilie Letting, Marlene Machmer, Kristyn MacIntosh, Irene Manley, Maryann McDonough, Peter McIver, Kristen Murphy, Gwen Nicol, Paul Prappas, Julia Roberts, Greg Ross, Craig Sandvig, David Swain, Linda Van Damme, Amy Waterhouse, Brian Wesley, and Peter Wood. **Thank you!**

Also, THANK YOU to our partners, the West Kootenay Naturalists' Association and the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program. Funding was provided by the Waneta Terrestrial Compensation Program, Columbia Basin Trust, BC Nature/BC Naturalists' Foundation, and BC Field Ornithologists.

We need your help in 2017!

KBSS is seeking information on colonies throughout southeastern BC to improve estimates of the size of Bank Swallow breeding populations in the Kootenays. Information is requested for all nest sites in 2017, including those that were documented in 2016. Please consider participating this season. Here's how:

- report colony locations
- take photographs of colonies
- count numbers of burrows (in the field or from photographs)
- record date and number of adults observed

Please contact Janice Arndt, Project Coordinator, for more information and to report colony locations. Email us at kootenaybankswallows@gmail.com, or send reports and photos to 901 Highway 3A, Nelson BC V1L 6J5.

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