

Another email highlighting an organism found here at LSW, the **Barn Swallow**, *Hirundo rustica*, was recently located at the staff doors in the B wing. This door is used extensively during the school year by staff entering from the parking lot in the morning and afternoon. We had a small family of nesting Barn Swallows the week prior to all staff returning. The babies were ready to leave the nest but not quite willing to go that extra step of leaving entirely to begin adulting. Human proximity each morning sped up that process and by Monday afternoon August 9th, the babies had flown the nest.

LSW typically gets these birds each spring and summer nesting in the eaves or alcoves of the school entrances. Nests are constructed of mud packed into small pellets and wedged next to each other. Barn Swallows used to nest exclusively in caves until man-made structures provided a more convenient and wide-spread location. Now the only remaining group of Barn Swallows nesting in caves is a small colony in Channel Islands off the coast of California.

**Description:**

Size: small, 5.9 - 7.9 inches in length

Wing span: 11.4 - 12.6 inches

Weight: .6 - .7 oz (17 - 20 grams)

**Science!**

Barn Swallows belong to a family of birds known as the Hirundinidae. We have several species within this swallow family in North America, including the Purple Martin, and all of them “feed on the wing”. This means they actively hunt flying insect prey while in the air. This is typically seen when observing an open field or above city parks while the birds dip, dive and swoop continuously to catch insects mid-air. Typically you can find these swallows attracted to your own lawn when mowing. Mowing causes many insects to take flight and the Barn Swallows will swoop all around you to catch some food.

**Something Unique!**

George Bird Grinnell, a naturalist in the late 1800s, wrote an editorial article in Forest & Stream’s 1886 issue. He criticized the impact of the millinery (hat-making) trade’s impact on Barn Swallow populations. Hats typically used bird feathers for decorative purposes, as was the fashion at the time. George Grinnell’s essay led to the founding of the first Audubon Society.

Pictures and 5 second video.





## Video of worried parent Barn Swallows at the school [LINK](#)

Joel Sartore (Lincoln's own) of National Geographic's Photo Ark project short Barn Swallow video: [LINK](#)

Some pictures of a Barn Swallow that got stuck in our garage at home. These are up close so details can be seen for identification and beauty.













Thank you and have a wonderful week/weekend.