



# *Spring 2022*

## **ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION**

[www.ontariopurplemartins.ca](http://www.ontariopurplemartins.ca)

### ***Message from our Chair:***

It is the time of year when we start to anticipate the return of our Martins. By the time you get this newsletter, we'll be only a few weeks away from some of the early arrivals. I am sure many of you are anxious to get out and check over and prepare your housing for the future arrival of the Martin but until the weather gets warmer this may be a difficult choice to make at this time. Rest assured that warmer weather is coming soon and we will be able to once again get involved with one of our favourite hobbies.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well. It has been over two years since we have been able to meet in person. I am hoping this soon will change and we will be able to meet as a group to discuss our favourite bird. You will notice in the newsletter that we have some tentative dates for us to meet. One of these is in April at Orchard View Golf Course. If we feel it is safe and Orchard View lets us book the room, then we will have our first meeting. If this does not work out, then we will be looking at our member host meetings in May and June which are outside. We have a plan to meet and I am sure this is the year that our organization will be able to gather in person once again. We will let you know as we get closer to the dates mentioned.

We have two vacancies on the board right now. One is for the vice-chair position and the other is for a board member at large. If you are interested let me know. In order for our club to continue in a successful manner, we need new people to step forward and take on the responsibilities to help run the Ontario Purple Martin Association.

I was in discussion with our treasurer Al Hamill and he informed me that our membership renewal is lagging behind last year, a situation probably caused in part by our lack of in-person meetings. Hopefully, this is going to change in the near future and we will be able to offer our membership this important aspect of membership. The options available for payment of membership fees are included in this newsletter. Remember there will be a draw at one of our future meetings for a free membership in the OPMA and for a purchased membership in the PMCA (Purple Martin Conservation Association), and all members who are up-to-date with member dues will be eligible.

Our association has been and continues to be an important promoter of the Purple Martin. We provide a website which has a wealth of important information about the Martin. I have to thank John Balga for his efforts to maintain the website for all to enjoy. We provide information free of charge to anyone who is interested in starting and maintaining a colony in their yard.

Our association provides assistance and expertise with monitoring the many colonies in Essex County and Chatham Kent. These areas include Holiday Beach Conservation area, Colchester Harbour, three Essex community centres, two golf courses, and two new areas that ERCA provided to us. Also, Henry and Elaine Wolting have placed housing in Rondeau Park and in Shrewsbury. I truly feel that we are doing our part in helping the Purple Martin continue to be successful in our area.

Hopefully we will meet soon, and continue to make our association a successful one so the Martin can enjoy a future in our area.

*Paul Hamel, Chair*

## **2022 MEETINGS and EVENTS**

**Start times 9:00 am unless specified otherwise.**

***Our meetings remain "tentative" due to the unknowns of the Covid situation in the future. We'll let everyone know as soon as possible if any meeting will be held.***

- ❖ Apr. 23 .. . . . Orchard View Golf Course, Ruthven
- ❖ May 14 .. . . . OPMA Booth at Holiday Beach for "**World Migratory Bird Day**"
- ❖ May 21 .. . . . "Member-Host" Meeting
- ❖ Jun. 25 .. . . . "Member-Host" Meeting - Social Potluck & BBQ
- ❖ Sep ?? .. . . . (date TBD) OPMA Booth at Holiday Beach for "**Hawkfest**"
- ❖ Oct. 15 .. . . . Orchard View Golf Course, Ruthven

## **UPDATE ON THE NEW (2021) COLONY AT RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK**

... by Henry & Elaine Wolting

We are very pleased with how the Rondeau Park colony turned out, especially when you consider the fact it finally went up on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, and first pair was seen entering cavities on May 18. For us to get 11 pairs - (2 ASY pairs, 3 mixed ASY/SY, 6 SY pair) - to settle in at that late of a date was definitely fantastic.

The data reflects a large fledge rate (11 pairs, 52 eggs, 2 dud eggs and only 2 dead on cleanout), so 48 fledging on 11 pairs, but without constant or regular supervision like all of our backyard colonies, a few more could have jumped or disappeared and not really fledged on to HY status (4.36 per pair is doubtful).

On an even brighter note, we are putting up two more 18 gourd rack systems this spring at Rondeau Provincial Park, hoping much earlier than what we did last spring. If those go up according to plan, that would bring the total cavities at the Park to 68 in the course of one year, and they are looking into plans and funding for two more systems to be installed in 2023. Certainly a win/win for the Purple Martins, the OPMA, and hopefully a door opener to go into other Provincial Parks that could have the same or even better “habitat” for our special little purple friends, like Long Point Provincial Park, Port Burwell, Turkey Point, etc.

To say the least, we have the ball rolling in the right direction for more colonies in southern Ontario Provincial Parks, so as the Park Biologists share that amongst themselves, it could expand out. Start with what we call “our” park, and hope it moves along to other parks for many other people to see; that was really the end goal for Elaine and I.



## The importance of **HEAT** in rehabilitation of birds – The story of a downed Martin (... Mary Wilson)

While cleaning out my emails I found an email exchange from 2012, between myself and a rehabber in Texas. She was very willing to spend time with me, via phone calls and emails, to help me through the rehab experience with a male Martin that was found unable to fly in the spring.

Being in Texas, she had lots of experience with the rehabilitation of Purple Martins, and I learned a lot from her, particularly about the importance of heat. I thought this information could be useful to others as well, so am printing much of our conversations here.

This was a nice walk down memory lane, since I'd forgotten some of the details of these 6 days (Saturday through Thursday) with a Martin in my care.

Initially I had put the bird in a tall bucket. In my first phone call with her in the evening on Tuesday May 1<sup>st</sup>, she gave me some advice about what to put him in instead of the bucket – something large enough to hold a **heating pad**. My cat carrier was big enough for a heating pad, so I tried that, although it turned out to be problematic.

*The following email to the rehabber was my “recap” afterwards of the experience of trying to help this Martin, using her excellent advice.*

**From: Jim & Mary <helenmwilson@yahoo.com>**

**Sent: Friday, May 4, 2012 11:23 AM**

**Subject: Re: downed martin update**

Hi Penny !

Well, happy ending (this guy had me fooled, though).

Saturday afternoon, till Tuesday morning, he was self feeding from the crickets I gave him.

Tuesday morning, he couldn't fly - I tried letting him go because he'd been eating well, but he couldn't get airborne. So, back in the bucket he went. But then he seemed to stop eating on his own; probably didn't eat much at all on Tuesday.

Tuesday evening we spoke on the phone, and right afterwards, per your advice, I put him in our cat carrier with a **heating pad**, and moved him into our small bathroom. I force fed him about 10 crickets too.

Wednesday morning I put him back in the bucket with the heating pad underneath the bucket. (The cat carrier was too difficult - he would jump out every chance he got when I opened the front grid.

I managed to stick some food down his throat when he squawked at me as I held him to weigh him. Other than that, he didn't eat anything on his own, although it was available to him, so probably only about 10 crickets during the day.

I didn't want to give up, since I had already invested much time and effort to help him, so I resigned myself to force-feeding him 4 times a day as you had suggested. So on Wednesday night, he had his first force-feed - about 7 large crickets.

I wasn't happy with the bucket - rather confining, I felt, so I found a deep wooden drawer that the heating pad fit in perfectly, with some "unheated" space at one end, which is where I put the water dish and the food tray. Covered the heating pad with an old thin towel and then with a doggie pee pad, plastic side up, making clean up easier. Fed him about 8 large crickets, put him in, where he perched on the piece of driftwood I had in there, and covered the whole thing with several grids. That was about 7 in the morning on Thursday. I fed him again at about 2:00 pm, 7 more crickets. He hadn't eaten anything on his own. Feeding was an ordeal - no willingness to open his mouth at all.

Then we had to go out for several hours, and when we came back I went to check on him – BIG SCARE - he wasn't in the box! He had managed to get out a small opening in the grid and was on the bathroom floor in the corner. When I began looking around, I discovered poop in places where it couldn't possibly be unless he was able to fly - like in my sink and on the toilet tank!

So, feeling rather hopeful (yet puzzled, since he didn't seem to weigh nearly enough to sustain flight if the norm is 55 grams), I took him out to the open area behind our house, armed with a butterfly net on a long pole in case I needed to retrieve him. He struggled all the way to escape my grasp. I put him on the ground, in case he really couldn't take off - I didn't want another crash landing.

But he launched himself, flying low at first, then a little higher and a little higher, and then went in a big swoop up over the treetops! Goodbye Martin!

This was such an interesting experience, and I am so thankful for your help, because I feel **the heating pad made all the difference**. I didn't understand how warm a bird would need to be - after all, my garage is warm compared to the outside, but as soon as I began using the heating pad, he became warm in my hands, and he wasn't before that. So I am grateful to have this knowledge and experience.

My other observation is that a person needs a very accurate scale, and probably a Martin needs less food (less than the normal recommendation of 40 crickets a day to maintain a healthy adult bird) when he is immobile in a container (?).

Thanks again, Penny !!

Mary

**To:helenmwilson@yahoo.com**

**Thu., May 10, 2012 at 6:34 p.m.**

Mary,

Sorry it's taken so long to get back to you. We have been just over-whelmed at the Center putting in about 11 hours a day. Needless to say my days off are filled with feeding babies at home with very little time to do much of anything. Plus, still trying to recover from my bout with bronchitis has left me with very little energy, so I've been trying to nap as much as possible.

I was SO PLEASED to hear that your Martin has taken flight and has joined his family. These guys can be REALLY TRYING at times but well worth the effort regardless of the outcome because each and every bird is a learning experience. No two will EVER be the same. I'm sure you were totally beside yourself when you found that he had escaped. They are great at doing this. It's a heart STOPPER!

Just a little hint the next time you have to force feed a Martin.....

If you're right handed (like me) hold them in your left hand and using your index finger and thumb apply a slight squeezing pressure at the corners of the mouth and this will "break" the "lock" they have on refusing to opening their mouth. This will allow you to use a finger on the right hand to gently pry the beak open for giving food.

\*\*\* It's always important to remember for any situation with any bird whether it's a nestling, fledgling or adult and you suspect any illness, injury or just kicked out.....**HEAT is always the best course.** (If you think in humans term and you don't feel quite right.....a good warm, quiet snuggle makes everything better.) It always provides you the time to gather what you will need for rehab and set it up, observe, and determine the right course to take and prevents the bird from going into shock or dying because his body temp is too low. **Immediate treatment OR food is NOT the first priority.**

**The rule of thumb to follow is this:** Heat first .. .. treatment second .. .. food third.

- If a bird is too cold, it won't eat or beg for food.
- If a bird is too cold, it can't metabolize food.
- When nestlings are kicked out, pushed out, bail out and found on the ground **it never hurts to get it inside on heat for at least 30 min.** If immediately returned to the nest and its cold, it won't feed until its warm and every feeding missed gives it less of a chance at survival.

Good Luck to You and your Martins this Season.

Penny

## *Time-Lapse Photography of Purple Martin Nestling Development*

The following link is from PMCA and shows the daily changes that occur as a nestling first pips the egg through to fledging age. (Thank you to Henry Wolting for sending the link!)

<https://www.purplemartin.org/blog/2021/06/30/martin-101-growth-of-the-purple-martin-nestling/>

.. .. PM Trivia .. ..

### **PURPLE MARTIN featured in US coin**



The Design Story behind the new Maya Angelou Quarters

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90715936/the-fascinating-design-story-behind-the-new-maya-angelou-quarters>

*“Maya Angelou’s poetry is filled with inspiring imagery,” says artist Emily Damstra, who prepared by reading Angelou’s autobiography, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, and one of her most iconic poems, “Still I Rise.”*

*Inspired by the meaning behind the poem, Damstra portrayed Angelou in an uplifted pose. Her arms are outstretched against the backdrop of a bird in flight; rays of the sun appear to rise above her, like a crown.*

*A bird in flight and the rising sun were common themes in Angelou’s writing, but for Damstra, they are also “symbolic of the way she lived.” The bird is modeled after a **purple martin, a songbird native to Arkansas, where Angelou grew up.** “Purple martins are elegant aerial foragers that spend their days swooping and gliding high in the sky,” says Damstra. “I thought this would be a good species to illustrate Dr. Angelou’s poem.”*

# RESOURCES

Remember to check the wonderful OPMA website maintained and provided by John Balga, our **website** manager: [www.ontariopurplemartins.ca](http://www.ontariopurplemartins.ca)

**The Feed Store** in Harrow carries many Purple Martin products. They are located at 2564 County Road 20 East, in Harrow, and can be contacted at 1-519-738-2261

**The PMCA** (Purple Martin Conservation Association) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of Purple Martins through scientific research, state of the art management techniques, and public education. **The PMCA forum does not require sign-up, is totally free, and is a wealth of information from landlords all across N.A.** [www.purplemartin.org](http://www.purplemartin.org)

**Nature Canada:** Nature Canada's Purple Martin Project is part of an international initiative between university researchers, naturalist groups, Purple Martin landlords and citizens to help protect and recover aerial insectivore populations. The OPMA are partnered with NC in this endeavour and they are the recipients of our end-of-season colony statistics that are collected by John Balga.  
<http://naturecanada.ca/what-we-do/bird-conservation/purple-martin-project/>

## **OPMA Board: Contact anyone below with questions:**

**Volunteers are NOT Board members, but Board members may also be volunteers.  
Volunteer functions are separate from board functions.**

### **(Board) Executive:**

Paul Hamel..... 519-738-3476.....kp\_hamel@live.ca .....Chairperson  
.....Vice-Chair  
Al Hamill ..... 519-738-6932.....alhamill70@gmail.com .....Treasurer / Finances  
Mary Wilson..... 519-326-1710.....helenwilson@yahoo.com .....Secretary / Member Records

### **(Board) Directors-at-Large:**

Fern Bellavance ..... 519-257-0013.....fern.bellavance@gmail.com  
Audrey Festeryga ... 519-712-9708.....afesteryga@yahoo.com  
MarieAnne Knapp .. 519-726-6180.....marianne1937@yahoo.ca  
Lyle Papps..... 519-354-6404  
Ron Delcourt ..... licensed bander  
Dennis Shady ..... 519-738-4411.....dennisshady@yahoo.ca

### **(Non-Board) Volunteer Functions:**

John Balga ..... 519-800-2504.....martinman@hotmail.com .....Advisor / Website / New Member Packages  
Fern Bellavance ..... 519-257-0013.....fern.bellavance@gmail.com .....Lending Library  
Ron Delcourt ..... Bird banding  
Lyle Papps..... (see above) .....Natural gourds  
Nancy Robson..... 519-326-8557.....nancyrobson@gmail.com .....Media  
Carolyn Recker..... Goodwill Ambassador  
Mary Wilson..... (see above) .....Newsletters / Cricket Ordering

**Options for payment of 2022 member dues ----- \$20** (Per our Treasurer Al Hamill)

Dues can be paid by cheque, cash, or e-transfer, and receipts will be issued for all.

**Cheques:**

Please make payable to **Ontario Purple Martin Association** or **OPMA** and mail to the Treasurer:  
Al Hamill, 2643 County Rd. 20, RR #1, Harrow, Ont. N0R 1G0

**E-transfer:**

To do an e-transfer from **most** financial institutions (*some will charge a fee for e-transfers - others may not.*)

1. Log onto bank site.
2. Go to **Interac** transfer.
3. Set up a recipient name (this can be whatever you want) **Suggestion:** Ontario Purple Martin.  
(This will stay there until you delete it.)
4. Put in the email address as [opmamembership@gmail.com](mailto:opmamembership@gmail.com)
5. You will need to confirm this email address.
6. Go back to the **Interac** transfer page and:
  - o put in your bank account from which the money will be withdrawn;
  - o the amount (\$20.00)
  - o fill in the recipient name (you can put in a message for me if you want (2022 OPMA membership) but it is not necessary.
  - o Usually it then says "**SEND**" or "**NEXT**" and it is done.



***Coming to your neighbourhood soon!***