

# ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION

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

*FALL ... 2017*



## ***Message from Paul:***

Hello everyone! Our Martins have been gone for a few months now and you have probably reflected on the kind of year you have had. From the information gathered at our last meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>, it looks like some had excellent results and others are very disappointed with what happened with their colonies. Always remember that each new fledgling is one more added to the Martin numbers so no matter how disappointing your numbers may be you have contributed to the Martins' survival. Keep up the good work and maybe things will be better next year.

If you have not already done so, could you complete the Nature Canada Colony Survey and return it to John Balga. He needs to finalize our fledgling success and pass it on to Nature Canada. We are always interested in our annual success numbers so we can compare them to years past to see how the Martins are doing in our area. Try to get your numbers to John as soon as you can so a final statistics report can be completed.

Our club continues to reach out to interested individuals in our community. We participated in the annual Hawk Festival at the Holiday Beach Conservation Park and were able to sign up new members. Two new T14 houses were added to the Holiday Beach colony thanks to a donation made by Nature Canada. We have an agreement with HBMO so the colony will be able to have continued success.

The town of Essex put up a new house in Essex this year and we have members that monitor it. This makes two houses that we now monitor in the town. Because of this effort, we received a certificate from the town this past September for our contribution for helping the environment.

The OPMA continues to be a positive advocate for the continued success of the Purple Martin. We can take great pride in the fact that all our efforts are helping the Martins to flourish in our area. Thanks to all for continued support for our association. Together, we can make a difference!

Our next meeting will be on February 17<sup>th</sup> in the Willow Room at Colasanti's in Ruthven. Hope to see you there.

***Paul Hamel, Chairperson OPMA***

## Welcome to our new members!

Darrell J. Sampson, Amherstburg, Ont

David Munro, Windsor, Ont

James Woodiwiss, Belle River, Ont

Charlene Brocklebank & Tom Gervais, Belle River, Ont

Sandra & Carl Pardy, Windsor, Ont



## An email from PMCA to our Chairperson, with a generous offer to our members!

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**From:** Joe Siegrist <joe@purplemartin.org>

**Sent:** October 22, 2017 7:35 PM

**To:** kp\_hamel@live.ca

**Subject:** Affiliate Discussion Follow-Up

Paul, it was a pleasure speaking with you the other day. Our affiliates are truly our “boots on the ground”. Local groups are the key to spreading the story of Purple Martins. Nothing beats in-person outreach in its effectiveness.

I want to reiterate our recognition of the value of public martin colonies. We want to do everything we can to facilitate public education. Exposure is the key to sparking a love of Purple Martins. To that end, don’t forget that we will deeply discount Purple Martin housing and supplies (basically at our cost) for colonies with educational use. Also, don’t forget that we will provide educational materials and publicity for any public programs that your group offers.

***Finally, we'd like to extend the offer of a free six month membership to the PMCA for any of your members that have never been members or have let their membership lapse. We want to welcome every Purple Martin enthusiast under the umbrella of the PMCA. Please pass this offer on to your members. Together we are stronger and can better ensure the future of Purple Martins. \*\*\****

The PMCA appreciates the support of its members and affiliates. Please let me know if there is any other way in which we can support your group.

Thanks,

Joe Siegrist, President/CEO

Purple Martin Conservation Association

**\*\*\*** Joe has suggested that the easiest way to accomplish this is for us to collect the names of our members who want to take advantage of this offer, and then forward the names and addresses to PMCA. So, please respond to Mary Wilson ([helenmwilson@yahoo.com](mailto:helenmwilson@yahoo.com)) to be on the list which will be forwarded. Be sure to include your address so I can update my records where needed and ensure that PMCA gets the most updated mailing addresses.

## The Colchester Site



**Colchester Purple Martin Project**

Thanks to the Ontario Purple Martin Association, Colchester is now home to this elevated Purple Martin house.

**What are Purple Martins?**

Purple Martins are the largest of 9 swallow species that make their home in North America. Every spring they travel from South America to their breeding grounds in the north. They are aerial insectivores, feeding exclusively on flying insects such as flies, dragonflies, damselflies, grasshoppers, butterflies and beetles. The adult male is identified by its glossy blue-black plumage, while females and young martins are purplish-brown. At full size, a Purple Martin weighs only 2 ounces (55 grams) and measures about 7" long with a wing span of 14" to 16".

**Why do Purple Martins need our help?**

East of the Rockies, the Purple Martin is the only bird species that is totally dependent on humans for supplying them with nesting sites. They live best in multi-compartment houses or dried, hollow gourds, preferably painted white to reflect sunlight and keep nestlings cool. Entrance holes are designed to discourage starlings from entering. The house sits on a tall pole in a large open flight space and is equipped with a predator guard to discourage squirrels and raccoons.

Find out more about Purple Martins from the Ontario Purple Martin Association website: [essexpurplemartins.ca](http://essexpurplemartins.ca)

Community in Bloom Committee for Essex

**essex**  
Where you belong

A small logo for the Ontario Purple Martin Association is visible in the bottom left corner of the sign.

This house was installed in 2016. This past season it was at full occupancy. Our members Paul Hamel, Dennis Shady, and Al Hamill are monitoring it. This location is prime Purple Martin territory, and a great spot for a possible future "Martinfest" ..... The Board is investigating this possibility .....

**Stay-tuned!!!**

## The Essex Site



The plaque above was awarded to the OPMA in recognition of our conservation efforts on behalf of the Purple Martin. This followed the donation and installation of a Purple Martin House in the Essex Sports Field.

One ASY pair nested here and fledged only one young from this house despite the efforts of John Balga, Marianne Knapp, and Tim O'Hagan.

Perhaps they'll do better next year. It's a great location, with open flyways and lots of overhead perching wires which Martins love.

## Update from Les Kummer

In the [January 2016 newsletter](#), the innovative barn swallow shelter of our member Les Kummer was featured. Here is a quick revisit of the picture and details:



“The shelter is made out of 2 x 10’s and measures 4 feet wide x 10 feet long.

The inside contains 2 x 10’s every two feet to provide more opportunity for more swallows to nest.

It stands 9 feet tall. Apparently you can squeeze in more pairs if they can’t see each other.

I installed artificial nest cups that I purchased off the internet. They are supposed to attract them.”

Les suspected, after failing to attract barn swallows for several years that it was too open of a structure for them. He enclosed it as shown, and left a small opening for them. It took them a while, but finally they nested in the first part of June 2017 and raised four chicks.

Les also has an established Purple Martin colony now at Ambassador Golf Club. 2017 saw 10 pairs, with 28 fledged! Congratulations, Les!



## **Memories of the 2017 Season .... (by Mary Wilson)**



It was an early nest check in June. I was cranking the houses back up, when about a foot above my head I heard a “crack”, and the house came crashing down onto the safety bolt (LESSON: Use those safety features !!!) I could have suffered a severe noggin re-arrangement.

Thank goodness for cell phones. “*Jim, can you please dash out to Orchard View and bring whatever you might think can anchor this house*” which was now resting solely on the safety bolt. Jim came with wire, snippers, and lots of duct tape!

We (OK, mostly he ☺ ) anchored it down, so that it wouldn’t spin - very important. The result may not have been pretty but it held that unit in place through the rest of the year. The height that you see it at in this picture is the height it stayed at until season’s end. The normal height of this unit can be seen in the background in the unit that is its twin.

Although you cannot tell from this picture, there is a path a few feet to the left. On tournament days, players and golf carts can be lined up heavily in close proximity to the martin house.

This did not deter our intrepid birds. They soon became accustomed to the people walking by, and I watched one day, soon after “the fall”, as the birds flew in, surveyed the situation, and then zoomed into their rooms to feed their young. At end of season, this house had about the same number of casualties as did the other one at its normal height. A great testament, I think, to the drive of our beloved birds to raise their young. Our Martins truly are people friendly birds, and this situation was a “do or die” (literally) experience for them. They had to adapt, quickly, and keep on going, and they did.

### **My first bird-band recovery**

In May 2017, following a week of very poor weather for our martins, a dead male was found in the housing at Orchard View Golf Course. Despite daily supplemental feeding, he either had never caught on, or perhaps was too weak upon his return to be able to take advantage of the help.

I retrieved the silver band which I noticed on his leg, submitted the number online at [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov), and received a handsome certificate for my trouble. The banding data showed that he was not even 2 years old, having been banded in 2015 at one of our local colonies.

How amazing it is that they even can survive the arduous migration!

## **Contact any of the members below with questions:**

### **Board Members:**

Paul Hamel.....519-738-3476.....kp\_hamel@live.ca.....Chairperson  
Lyle Papps.....519-354-6404.....Vice-Chair, Natural gourds  
Al Hamill .....519-738-6932.....alhamill70@gmail.com .....Treasurer, Finances  
Mary Wilson.....519-326-1710.....helenmwilson@yahoo.com .....Secretary, Member Records, Newsletters  
Dennis Shady .....519-738-4411.....dennishshady@yahoo.ca.....New member advisor  
Richard Carr .....810-706-2344.....2009.wipmp@gmail.com.....Walpole Island, Banding, Geo-Locators  
Don Bissonnette..... .....Advisor  
Audrey Festeryga ..... .....Advisor  
John Balga .....519-800-2504.....martinman@hotmail.com .....Advisor, Website

### **Volunteers:**

Fern Bellavance .....Lending Library  
Nancy Robson.....519-326-8557.....nancyrrobson@gmail.com .....Media  
Carolyn Recker..... .....Goodwill Ambassador

### ***Resources:***

**OPMA website:** [www.ontariopurplemartins.ca](http://www.ontariopurplemartins.ca) **OR** [www.essexpurplemartins.ca](http://www.essexpurplemartins.ca)

**The Feed Store** in Harrow now 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 Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA)** 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)



*Christmas decorations at the home of our member Dennis Shady*

We wish you all the joys of the Christmas Season, the anticipation of a New Year filled with hope, promise, and of course, lots of our beloved Purple Martins!

***Blessings to all!***