



ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION

www.ontariopurplemartins.ca

www.essexpurplemartins.ca

SUMMER 2018

Message from Paul:

Hello again fellow Martin enthusiasts! It is that time of year when we keep in touch by sending you our Summer Newsletter and sharing about the OPMA's activities since our February meeting and the Spring Newsletter.

Since that time, we have had three general meetings, and the Purple Martins are now raising and fledging their young. We also held our first ever "MartinFest" (more detail on that in the Fall Newsletter), and immediately following MartinFest, 31 Motus tracking devices were placed on Purple Martins at our Holiday Beach colony.

It started off as a very questionable year in April because of the poor weather conditions. Many of us were worried that our numbers were going to be down because of the cooler than normal conditions that the Martins were experiencing in their journey north and the poor conditions when they arrived. As time went on, however, many colonies reported a higher occupancy rate than last year. In fact, many colonies have had significant increases to their population. We anxiously are waiting to find out what our final numbers will be when we get the statistics on the colonies in September. *Don't forget to bring these to our last meeting in September or email them to me or John Balga.* These will then be sent to Nature Canada so we can keep track on how Purple Martins are doing in Ontario.

I am very pleased with the attendance we have had at our four general meetings this year, beginning with our February meeting at Colasanti's, our April meeting at Orchard View Golf Course, and then our two member host meetings. It is an indication that our members want to support our association by attending the meetings. Thank you for your continued interest in the Martins and our association.

I particularly want to acknowledge our two member host meetings this year. The first was at MarieAnne Knapp's home in McGregor. MarieAnne was an excellent host, providing us with many treats and coffee, and taking us on a very informative tour of her set-up which showed us how good management can develop a very successful colony. Thanks MarieAnne for being such a gracious host!

The next member host meeting (our annual potluck get-together) was in June at Elaine & Henry Wolting's home in Blenheim. The weather didn't look too good at the beginning but Elaine and Henry had everything covered ☺. We started off in their barn's beautiful indoor room which also has a porch that offers protection from the elements. No matter, we had over 50 people attend and we all enjoyed great comradery and wonderful food. The weather cleared and Henry took us on a tour of his colony and offered excellent advice on how to maintain and manage our own colonies. Thank you to Elaine and Henry for being such great hosts for our annual get-together!

Claude Radley, Ron Delcourt, John Balga, Richard Carr, Ted Cheskey and his assistant Brodie Badcock from Nature Canada, and Dr. Kevin Fraser from Winnipeg, attached 31 Motus on Purple Martins at the Holiday Beach colony. This took place on the evening of July 7th and on July 8th. (This immediately followed our MartinFest on July 7th, so kudos to all the above who attended our event and then went to Holiday Beach to work many more hours.) There was a great deal of time given for this project and hopefully it provides us more information on what Martins do when they are in our area. Thanks to all for your dedication toward the preservation of our beloved bird. *(Please see detail about this project on our website!)*

We now turn our attention to the HBMO's Hawkfest which will be taking place over two weekends: September 15th / 16th and 22nd / 23rd. We have been involved in this festival for many years and it definitely is a place where we can share information about Purple Martins with many people. **We always need volunteers!** If you can help, let me know by calling 519-738-3476 or emailing kp_hamel@live.ca. Any time you could help on these dates will greatly be appreciated. More information will be coming in late August or early September. Take a look at your calendar now and plan on attending.

Our next meeting is September 29th at Orchard View Golf Course in Ruthven. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and we hope to see you then!

Paul Hamel Chairperson, OPMA

OPMA Board: Contact anyone below with questions:

The OPMA consists of 4 executive positions, and up to 5 directors-at-large.

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.caChairperson
Richard Carr 810-706-2344.....2009.wipmp@gmail.com Vice-Chair
Al Hamill 519-738-6932.....alhamill70@gmail.com Treasurer / Finances
Mary Wilson..... 519-326-1710.....helenmwilson@yahoo.com Secretary / Member Records

(Board) Directors-at-Large:

Fern Bellavance
Audrey Festeryga... 519-712-9708.....afesteryga@yahoo.com
MarieAnne Knapp .. 519-726-6180.....marianne1937@yahoo.ca
Lyle Papps
Dennis Shady

(Non-Board) Volunteer Functions:

John Balga 519-800-2504.....martinman@hotmail.com Advisor / Website
Fern Bellavance 519-257-0013.....fern.bellavance@gmail.com Lending Library
Richard Carr (see above) Walpole Island / Banding / Geo-Locators
Lyle Papps..... 519-354-6404 Natural gourds
Nancy Robson..... 519-326-8557.....nancyrrobson@gmail.com Media
Carolyn Recker..... Goodwill Ambassador
Dennis Shady 519-738-4411.....dennisshady@yahoo.ca New Member Advisor
Mary Wilson..... (see above) Newsletters / Cricket Ordering

Welcome to our new members!

*Craig Barrett, Orillia
Sherri Wiebe, Ingersoll
Patrick Kramer, PMCA
Ryan Hoelke, Eganville
Edward Bendig, Woodslee
Steve & Vanessa Vogelaar, Amherstburg
Jerry Tucker, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Dale & Sharron Morency, Harrow
Karen Staples & Brian Drew, Wheatley
Elizabeth & Hans Kamin, Brechin*

*Jon & Ann Taylor, Harrow
Ross Snider & Mary Simpson, Glencoe
Ralph & Rosemary Bosse, Kingsville
Mary Windibank, Belle River
Ruth Ann Pettapiece, Leamington
Dale Nantais, LaSalle
Dave & Kelly Levy, Ruthven
Glyn Gilmore, Woodslee
Lynn & Carol Quick, Harrow
Lou & Bill Kociuk, Port Rowan*



April 21st Meeting: Orchard View Golf Course, Ruthven

After a few marginal weather days, the Martins at Orchard View Golf Course were ready to put on a show for the members who were interested in seeing crickets being flipped. Several members had a try at flipping and were successful. The Martins at O.V. are very used to human activity, as their colony sits a few yards away from a path which is constantly in use by golfers on foot and/or in carts. So when we gathered in a fairly large group, it didn't take them long to come out of their compartments and sit on the perches – they knew food was coming! They are, indeed, a very social bird, and it is fun to see their aerial gymnastics and hear their "Chirbles". (Someone told me that they thought a Martin made a sound somewhere between a Chirp and a Warble! 😊)



The new Gemini Gourd Rack at Orchard View Golf Course

We ordered this rack, and bought 24 Troyer Vertical Gourds, from Harrow Feed Store. We installed it just before the birds returned, and as of the June 21st nest check, there were 18 gourds taken by Martins!

These birds transitioned to it from their old homes (a unit of 3 modified Trio Grandpas mounted on one pole, with 3 gourds underneath - total of 21). Very different accommodations, but Troyer Vertical Gourds have proven to be well liked by Martins – we chose these for the 3 Geminis that we have at Erie Shores Golf Course as well, and we are at about 95% PM occupancy there!

In April of 2018 we began a new tradition: a yearly draw for two prizes. Every member's name goes into the draws, and you don't have to be present to win. **Congratulations** to our winners!

The PMCA One Year Membership: *Rene & Yvette Janisse of St. Joachim.*

The OPMA Membership for 2019: *Cy & Monica Poisson, Essex.*

Elections:

After a process of seeking persons willing to stand for nomination to our Board of Directors, we filled the 3 vacancies that we had this year. The structure and details of our Board and Volunteers is shown on page 2. **Thank you** to our Board members who have served their term and stepped down, who have joined, and those who have remained on the Board for an additional term either in their existing role, or a new one: Don Bissonnette, Fern Bellavance, Paul Hamel, Audrey Festeryga, Richard Carr, and Lyle Papps. Your contributions are vital to the ongoing activities of the OPMA!

May 26th Meeting: at the home of MarieAnne Knapp, Essex



Thirty-four of our members attended this meeting, despite a somewhat overcast and drizzly day.

Once the light rain stopped, MarieAnne did a feeding demonstration by flipping eggs, which the Martins helped themselves to and entertained us with their flight skills.

MarieAnne lowered a house to let everyone view the nest and eggs.



Here's an interesting post from the PMCA Forum. Has this always been happening, but going unnoticed unless a landlord watches their colony extremely closely? **Or**, is this an adaptation resulting from supplemental feeding – where Martins learn that they can pick up a food item in their beak rather than catching it on the fly? Something to ponder, and watch for in our own colonies!

Never seen this before....

Sun Jul 08, 2018 8:55 am

I was watching my housing last evening about 1/2 hour before dark. I have new fledges this weekend so they are comical to watch trying to navigate a landing. Anyway, I saw a martin come straight off a porch of my T14 to the ground, it looked like a jumper. No wing flap nothing, just straight to the ground. I got up to walk over and it took off and I could see it was an ASY male with a large grass hopper in its mouth. It took it up and dropped it a few times and then re caught it as it fluttered toward the ground, then it came in and fed it to a young. I have never seen a martin go to the ground to grab an insect. I guess it must have been too tempting down below the T14.

Sun Jul 08, 2018 9:35 am

I saw the same thing this morning! Guess it's easier to catch than dragonflies.

June 23rd Meeting: at the home of Henry & Elaine Wolting, Blenheim

This meeting was our ever-popular annual Potluck Social meeting, and this was no exception, with 51 people attending (even though the weather did not start out with a promise of a nice day). Our hosts Henry & Elaine have a beautiful and spacious barn with a large covered patio overlooking a pond. How perfect is that!

Prior to the meeting, Henry had given us an update on his colony stats: **“61 active nests on 271 eggs with five young already on one nest. 26 nests still on the go but really doubt they each have a pair”**, so of course we were going to see and hear an awesome PM colony. And in fact we got to see some of those nests and babies.

Here are some pictures of the day: *(Except where otherwise indicated, photos are by Henry, Elaine, or Jeremy Wolting)*



..... On the porch of the barn



..... Inside the barn, enjoying a feast!



The Martins ate well too! Henry had cooked up some eggs, and put them on the feeding tray.

Many Martins took advantage of this “easy” food source for their young.



A female Martin and her babies in her nest at the “Round House” in the colony of Henry & Elaine Wolting in Blenheim. June 23, 2018
Photo by Scott Loffhagen (grandson of members Rick & Carol Holley).

RESOURCES

- ❖ Remember to check the wonderful OPMA website maintained and provided by John Balga, our website manager. www.essexpurplemartins.ca or 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
- ❖ **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/>

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