

**ONTARIO
PURPLE MARTIN
ASSOCIATION**

www.ontariopurplemartins.ca
www.essexpurplemartins.ca

SUMMER ... 2019

Message from our Chairperson:

Hello, OPMA! I hope that you've all had a successful year with your Martin colonies.

Once again, we had a slow start for the arrival of the Martins because of cool and wet conditions. It seems that in many cases the Martins did not start to arrive until May and they were late making their nests and laying eggs.

From early reports, it appears that some colonies had major increases and some had fewer returning Martins. Hopefully, it will average out to be a good year for the Martin with overall numbers staying the same or increasing. We won't know for sure until we take our final counts. We need to make sure to pass our information on to John Balga so he can keep track of the statistics and make a comparison to other years.

I need to let you know of the resignation of Richard Carr from the OPMA Board as of June 22nd. Richard was our co-chair and this position will need to be filled in the near future. I want to express appreciation to Richard for the time and effort he gave to the Board and OPMA. He always attended the board meetings and was able to look at ways to move the club forward. He will be greatly missed but fortunately he plans to remain a member of OPMA where he can always give his ideas to make our club better.

We had our two member-host meetings in May and June. MarieAnne Knapp hosted the one in May and proved once again to be a gracious host. We had a large turnout for this meeting. MarieAnne was able to show her off her colony and demonstrate how she feeds the Martins. Thanks once again MarieAnne for having us over at your house. Our next member-host meeting was at Henry and Elaine Wolting's in Blenheim. This was our annual Social and BBQ Potluck. The weather could not have been better, the food was great as always, and everyone was able to enjoy the company of other members. Henry demonstrated his new power winches for raising and lowering his housing and provided information on how to maintain a viable colony. Thank you to Henry and Elaine for having us over at your house and for making this member-host meeting another successful event!

We do plan to attend HawkFest with a booth as we usually do. However, the venue has been moved away from our usual location (close to the hawk tower and our PM housing), due to the severe flooding which has persisted for so long. **We will attend the first weekend of HawkFest (September 14-15)**, and will then determine whether we will participate for the second weekend, as we usually do. We will keep everyone informed.

Our membership remains very good at around 60 paid up members. We will continue to be an advocate for the Martins as long as there is an interest in our organization.

Our next meeting is October 5th (9:00 am) at Orchard View.

Hopefully, I will see you there!

Paul Hamel, Chair.

Welcome to our new members!

Stephen Premock, Port Rowan, Ontario

Rick & Carol Laskey, Comber, Ontario

Dennis Tatomir, Leamington, Ontario

Daniel Pelat, Warren, Michigan

Robert Quimby, Amherstburg, Ontario

Prue & Ron Bonham, Dashwood, Ontario

Kim Pickering & Charlene Kydd-Pickering, Ailsa Craig, Ontario

At our April Meeting

Our April 13th meeting was held at Orchard View Golf Course in Ruthven. We held our 2 annual draws and the winners were: **Les Kummer** for the OPMA membership for 2020, and **Kathryn Boothby** for the PMCA membership. Congratulations to both!

OPMA's participation in **World Migratory Bird Day** (scheduled for May 11) was discussed. This would have been our first time at this annual event which is held at many different venues. Our participation was to be at HBMO (Holiday Beach Migratory Observatory) where we have an active PM colony. Unfortunately, due to severe flooding at HBMO, we had to make the decision to cancel. The location of our PM housing was underwater, and more rain was expected. Maybe we'll have better luck next year!

We had a great "go-around", with everyone reporting their "returnees" so far.

After the meeting closed, Mary Wilson invited anyone interested to meet at the Purple Martin housing for a feeding demonstration. The Martins were not overly hungry, but several people had a try at "flinging crickets", and they were caught by several of the 15 or so PM's that were there.

PMCA Purple Martin "Movie" 2019

Below is a link to a **7-minute** (or so) recap of the entire PMCA Nest Cam of 2019.

"Jolene" & "Carl" raised 7 babies to fledge. If you didn't follow along with the live feed, you might enjoy this very nicely done movie of the season from start to finish. Watch to see the intervention by "landlords" (the PMCA staff), when a capped egg was fixed so the baby could emerge ... when a meal was served that was simply too big and the quick-as-a-wink time when a hungry hawk came all too close. Turn on the sound!

In the midst of winter, when snow has shrouded everything and the winds bluster around us, we can enjoy this short but sweet reminder of why we all do what we do.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3GLYvxV3pU>



We had a nice surprise at the June meeting with the attendance of a gentleman from Quebec – Maxine Tremblay. He had been touring our area, looking for Purple Martin housing during his vacation time. I believe he learned about us through our website.

He had prepared a map for his use of points of interest (relating to Martins) from eastern Lake Ontario down to our area. So, when he spotted the PM housing at the home of our member Nancy Robson, he stopped in to have a chat. He learned from Nancy about the upcoming meeting, and was extended an invitation to join us. I talked with Maxine, and if my memory is correct, I think he is desiring to begin a PM club in his area.

It is exciting to know that we are making an impact farther afield as well as in our own locale! Our wonderful website makes this possible.

As always at our Potluck/BBQ meeting, we had a great turnout to enjoy the wonderful weather, fantastic food, and a captivating colony! Thank you again to our generous hosts, Henry & Elaine Wolting!



One of the roomy nests inside the "Round House"

MEALS on WHEELS WINGS

This photo was taken on July 19th by our member Carol Taves at her Wheatley colony. Lots of hungry mouths waiting for Mom & Dad's catering service! Raising 7 nestlings is quite a feat in any year and colony!

Bravo birdies!!!



Wednesday, August 14, 2019 ... Purple Martin Roost ... Erie, PA

Mary Wilson



We were in attendance on the South Pier for a “**Roost Viewing Party**” hosted by the PMCA. It is estimated that about 7,500 to 10,000 Martins were there, a number that will swell to much more in the next few weeks.

The Martins favour a particular “phragmite island” among the many that seem to be available. We were there from 7:30 to dusk, and watching them was like watching an aerial dance – how they moved as one at times, and then another group appeared, wheeling in the sky. Sometimes they dipped low and skimmed the tops of the phragmite, all following in a line just above the grasses, and then up again. They swirled against the bright sky, so high sometimes that they were lost to our vision, and then suddenly they re-appeared, flying in waves and swells. Looking upward, I was reminded of times when we have driven into a driving snow which twirls and spins and is almost mesmerizing. This was like that.

A lot of people showed up to witness this. Joe Segrist of the PMCA, pictured above, was on hand to answer questions, and from what I heard, many people there were not PM landlords or knowledgeable about PMs, but were drawn to the spectacle itself. And all of us, experienced or not, stood and marveled at the birds filling the sky as Joe called them closer with a recording of Purple Martin vocalizations. And Joe explained to the crowd that all of these birds have come from someone’s colony. And I reflected on that; on the conservation effort that involves scientists, researchers, grants, and organizations spanning two continents ... all of them studying what starts with you and me, and every other landlord who just wants to have Martins in the backyard. Pretty amazing!

This is my first experience seeing a roost with my own eyes, and it is quite special. There is the atmosphere, the expectation, and the dance **wonder-full!** Well worth the long drive!



The Roost at Point Pelee.

John Balga reports recently that: *“The roost has really low numbers for unknown reasons. Numbers seem to be still under 2000 swallows so perhaps within the next week/s, numbers might peak. There are still Martins here at home with young, so I am hoping that the roost numbers are just low because they are behind by a couple of weeks. On the other hand, the roost may have moved – time will tell.”*

The picture at left shows Martins “staging” on overhead wires in the vicinity of the roost.

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. <http://naturecanada.ca/what-we-do/bird-conservation/purple-martin-project/>

OPMA Board: Contact anyone below with questions:

The OPMA Board 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
Vacant.....Vice-Chair
Al Hamill 519-738-6932.....alhamill70@gmail.comTreasurer / Finances
Mary Wilson..... 519-326-1710.....helenmwilson@yahoo.comSecretary / 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
Dennis Shady 519-738-4411.....dennisshady@yahoo.ca

(Non-Board) Volunteer Functions:

John Balga 519-800-2504.....martinman@hotmail.comAdvisor / Website
Fern Bellavance 519-257-0013.....fern.bellavance@gmail.comLending Library
Richard Carr (see above)Walpole Island / Geo-Locators
Lyle Papps..... (see above)Natural gourds
Nancy Robson..... 519-326-8557.....nancyrrobson@gmail.comMedia
Carolyn Recker..... Goodwill Ambassador
Dennis Shady (see above)New Member Advisor
Mary Wilson..... (see above)Newsletters / Cricket Ordering

2019 MEETINGS and EVENTS

- ◆ All meeting dates are subject to change as necessary. Changes will be communicated to everyone.
- ◆ We will make reminder emails **OR** phone calls prior to each meeting.

- ❖ 10 - 3 Sept. 14-15..... OPMA Booth at Holiday Beach for "Hawkfest" Definite
- ❖ 10 - 3 Sept. 21-22..... OPMA Booth at Holiday Beach for "Hawkfest" **Tentative**

Our participation in Hawkfest is definite for September 14-15, but undecided for the following weekend. We will advise everyone as soon as a decision has been made for Sept 21-22.

- ❖ 9:00 am Oct 5.... FINAL MEETING Orchard View Golf Course, Ruthven