

Summer ... 2021



Hello World!

ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION

www.ontariopurplemartins.ca

Message from our Chair:

I hope everyone is doing well during this time of shut down and physical distancing. It has been a long year and a half since we last met. I am hoping that we will once again be able to meet in person in early October. We will see how things progress in the next three months. Our paid up membership exceeds 60 people and I would like to personally thank those that have continued to support our organization during these most challenging times. Our club can only survive if we have the continued support of people who are willing to make a commitment to be a member in good standing. It is not too late to renew your membership for the 2021 year. All you need to do is mail a check or make an e-transfer of \$20.00 to our treasurer Al Hamill.

One item that did not change during this time was the return of the Martins to their various colonies. This year early reports indicate an increase in numbers at many colonies. This is really good news as it shows that in our area the Martin numbers are still really strong. These results are due to the commitment of our members and those in the community who take the time each year to provide important housing for these feathered friends. Keep up the good work and I will be anxiously waiting for the final statistics in September and October to be submitted.

We are still looking for an individual to step forward and take on the Vice Chair position of our club. We did not have any elections in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic but I am sure that we will get back on track in 2022. There will be some positions on the board whose term is up and it will be possible for those interested to put their name forward. More information will follow in the fall newsletter and hopefully at our meeting in October.

Well that's about it from the Chair for now. I am looking forward to hopefully seeing everyone in October! Keep your fingers crossed and maybe it will happen!

Paul Hamel, Chair

Welcome to our New Members!

*Bob & Marge Thomas, Union
Steve Jenkins, Bayfield
Phil & Julie Larade, Kingsville
Susan Dueckman, Freelon
Tom & Darlene Davidson, Kingsville
Pete Kennedy, Port Perry*

Congratulations !!

Our member *John Balga* has been honoured by Nature Canada with the following award!





March 18, 2021

Mr. John Balga
10033 Country Road 23,
Essex Ontario,
N8M 2X5

Dear John,

The efforts of volunteers do so much to increase Nature Canada's ability to reach our conservation and advocacy efforts. Annually, Nature Canada recognizes individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the organization through their talents and time.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Nature Canada, I would like to congratulate you on being the winner of our 2020 Volunteer of the Year Award. We apologize for the pandemic-related delay in contacting you. Enclosed is a certificate to express our humble thank you.

Nature Canada is so grateful to you for your remarkable dedication to our Save our Swallows work. You have contributed invaluable to many aspects of this work including your help in advising us on best practices, contributing to our blog, facilitating our relationship with the Ontario Purple Martin Association and reliably monitoring the Pelee swallow roost for three years in a row! Your efforts have not gone unnoticed!

Please accept our sincere gratitude again for your exceptional volunteerism and leadership in our swallow conservation efforts.

Nature Canada is able to achieve conservation successes because individuals like you are willing to go the extra mile to defend and protect nature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GSAUL", written in a cursive style.

Graham Saul
Executive Director

April 20, 2021

Submitted by our members Rick & Carol Holley of Vienna, Ontario. Their Martins returned on April 10th. No losses resulted from this snowfall. The 1st picture shows Martins trying to land on their North Star 12 compartment home. The 2nd one shows the hole they created in a Troyer tunnel entrance to get through the snow.



And, here is a link to a video which shows the lovely yard and Purple Martin sanctuary that is home to Rick & Carol and their birds. Beautiful ! <https://youtu.be/KJ1z-PpT14Q>

Submitted by our members Henry & Elaine Wolting, Blenheim

April snow at the Wolting colony:

“Going to be around 120 cavities at our house, 28 or so in Shrewsbury (putting up a new system there too), and 28 in Rondeau Park this year....not saying we are entirely ready, but really close to being there.

We picked up 6 giant bags of needles yesterday, have 4 leftover from last year, so for the first time we are not behind the 8 ball to start out.

Need to secure some (400 or so) eggs from our chicken farmer buddy and off we go.”



Congratulations to the winners of the OPMA's annual draws !!

- **Steve Jenkins** is the winner of the free OPMA membership for 2022,
- **Tom & Darlene Davidson** are the winners of the one-year membership to the PMCA (Purple Martin Conservation Association), purchased by the OPMA.

PMCA 2021 Nestcam Movie

[Fighting To Survive: Purple Martin Nestcam 2021 - YouTube](#)

“Watch as a nest of Purple Martins at the Purple Martin Conservation Association headquarters in Erie, PA progresses from eggs to fledglings.” This is the nestcam of 45 (or so days), distilled down to an 8 ½ minute video! Something to listen to and watch on dark winter days!

Dance of the Migrating Martins

<https://youtu.be/vMPxlXuukIg> (PMCA Youtube video)

“For the first time, we are able to visualize the movements of Purple Martins during their migration. Watch an overview of 28 GPS / Geolocator tracked Purple Martin migrations from Erie, PA, to the Amazon Rainforest and back. These migrations took place from 2011-2014.”

This was just a little bit mesmerizing! What amazing things are being learned.

MEMBER PROFILE .. . Lorraine Moon

We first met Lorraine Moon at our February 2020 meeting (as it turned out - the last meeting we would have for a while) and were delighted to see some samples of her beautiful artwork!

She joined our club at that meeting, and, having seen her work, ***we very quickly recruited her*** for our next MartinFest, which, at the time, we thought would be in 2020!

But of course those hopes were soon dashed by COVID. Thankfully, Lorraine will be a DEFINITE participant for our next MartinFest in 2022, and in the meantime, she has been featured in our local magazine called Windsor Life. **CONGRATULATIONS to Lorraine** for that well deserved recognition!. Here is just one sample of her amazing work.



Image Copied from Windsor Life Article "A Depth of Colour"

To view the Windsor Life article and see more examples of her artistry, visit:

[A Depth of Colour – windsorlife.com](http://windsorlife.com):

And check out her Facebook page: **"Moonshine Designs"**

“THEY ATE EGGS AND SHRIMP FOR BREAKFAST !”



From the PMA forum:

Thu Jun 10, 2021 9:38 pm

We are in southern Saskatchewan and have been Martin landlords 9 years. This spring we had the worst run of bad weather we have ever experienced. Our birds were rain soaked, nighttime temps dropping below 0C and daytime highs of 4C. We had never fed our colony before but knew we had to do something.

To compound things, we also were in contact with a Covid positive person and in a 14 day lockdown. A friend picked us up a batch of crickets and we started flipping. The birds were hungry and it took very little to get the first couple to catch on. Soon we had most of the birds attempting to feed. We scrambled up some egg and they went for that too. After day one we had flipped 600 crickets, but our crickets were quite small. We called the pet store and ordered another 1000. Same thing, lots of tiny crickets. Many were too small to flip, so more egg. Tried for more crickets but all that were left in town were tiny. We had freezing rain move in. We couldn't really ask anyone to drive an hour down the highway and cricket shop for us in those conditions. Hubby and I sat there staring out the window at 40 or so miserable, exhausted birds.

I opened the freezer and the closest thing to a bug in there was a bag of jumbo shrimp. I looked up the nutritional information - high protein and cholesterol and low fat, comparable to a cricket. And if you are allergic to shrimp you will be allergic to cricket meal. I soaked and drained it, laid it on paper towel to dry it out some, and chopped it up into just under ¼” chunks. Said a small prayer. We started flipping and they loved it! The batch was small and we monitored them closely. I swear they revived a bit. Their poop had gotten quite runny (eggs? hunger?) and over 2 days got much better.

All in all, we fed our birds for 6 + days and ALL SURVIVED! On day 7 the weather broke. ***They ate eggs and shrimp for breakfast***, and by lunch time they were touring the valley and ignoring our offerings. Best outcome. We have talked to other Martin landlords and lots of losses. We dodged a bullet. We will order “real crickets” and freeze prior to next year’s return, but the shrimp did work, and the birds don’t seem to be any the worse for it.

Evolution before our eyes?



The amazing **Cliff Swallow Colony** of our members

Jacques & Linda Barrette



“A large group of cliff swallows came very early this year by about 2 weeks. They showed up April 18th. The nests have been here for several years, with many of them needing repairs or rebuild because they fell down over the winter, but they had to wait for the weather to warm up first after they came - it got too cold for bugs, and they needed rain to make mud.”

By May 13th it had warmed back up and we had rain to make mud for rebuilding their colony.”



The string with the washers hanging in front of the nest entrance holes were put there as a deterrent to keep sparrows away. It really does work, but we weren't able to keep up with the number of nests being built. Some nests seem to have more than one entrance.

More birds had shown up so they started rebuilding. It takes roughly 1,000 pellets of mud gathered by the beaks of the birds and they slowly build and form the nests. They wait for the mud to dry as it shows the dark wet mud in the pictures. It can take up to 2 weeks sometimes to completely build a new nest. Our colony is lucky because most of these nests have stayed intact so they can use them right away or they just need to build up a bit of the nest.

There was a big hatch June 3rd. We have 76 nests on the north side and 112 nests on the south side, giving us a total of 188!



These birds have been coming here for 20 years building their colony under our wooden shed roof overhang and some nests are that old too. It is remarkable, and wonderful to have witnessed for so long!

As for the rest of OPMA's calendar for 2021:

In a "normal" year, we would now be looking forward to having a booth at "HawkFest" – the annual Hawk Migration Festival at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory. Check out the PM banding done this year!
<https://www.facebook.com/HolidayBeachMO/>

HawkFest remains uncertain, as does our final meeting in early October. We will let everyone know as soon as possible if either of these events end up being actualized!

RESOURCES

Remember to check the wonderful OPMA website maintained and provided by John Balga, our **website** manager:
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/>

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.caChairperson
.....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
Gilles Breton
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.comAdvisor / 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.....nancyrrobson@gmail.comMedia
Carolyn Recker..... Goodwill Ambassador
Mary Wilson..... (see above)Newsletters / Cricket Ordering

Stay safe, everyone!

We hope you have had a wonderful season of Purple Martin sights and sounds!