

# ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION

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

## Fall .... 2018

### Message from Paul:

Where has the year gone? It seems like we were just getting our housing ready for the arrival of the Martins and now we have been busy cleaning the housing for their arrival next spring! I hope all is well with everyone as we now get ready for the upcoming holiday season.

It appears that we had a good year from some of the final reports that have been received from many landlords. Many are reporting an increase in their colony size or at least maintaining what they had last year. Hopefully, once the colony statistics are in, we will have a better idea on how we did in comparison to years past. If you provided your colony stats at our final meeting, thank you. If we don't have them yet, please make sure you pass them on to either John Balga or me so it can be added to our statistics for 2018.

This year our general meetings were really well attended, with an average of about 40 members at each of our five meetings. This shows a great deal of interest in our club and in what we are trying to accomplish. We have a healthy membership of 78 paid up members for 2018 – an increase over the previous year! Our association with your continued support will be a strong advocate for the Purple Martin in years to come.

This past year we held our first ever MartinFest. Many people attended the event at the Colchester Harbour to learn about the joy of having a Martin colony in their yard. It was a great success because of the volunteers from our association that gave the time and effort to make it successful. We have decided to put it on again in the summer of 2020. This will give us time to reflect on how we can make improvements so we can have an even better festival in the future.

In September we participated again in the annual Hawk Festival at Holiday Beach Conservation Area. We were able to talk to a lot of people about the OPMA and the reasons for having a colony. We feel this is a really good venue for getting our message out to the general public, and hopefully we'll be able to continue taking part in Hawk Fest in future years.

We will be meeting again for our Annual Meeting on February 16, 2019, in the Willow Room at Colasanti's, Ruthven. I hope to see you there, and also hope that each and every one of you will have a joyful holiday season!

*Paul Hamel Chairperson OPMA*

# Purple Martin birdhouse hoisted high in McGregor



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**FREE PRESS**  
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June, 2018 .... by Sylene Argent

*Pictured: Members of the Essex Communities in Bloom Committee & The Ontario Purple Martin Association celebrate installing an elevated birdhouse in McGregor's Co-An Park.*

“Another elevated Purple Martin house has been installed within the municipality of Essex, which is hoped to help the song birds’ declining population to soar. Last Wednesday morning, members of the Town of Essex’s Communities in Bloom Committee and the Ontario Purple Martin Society met at Co-An Park in McGregor to officially unveil the Town’s third Purple Martin Birdhouse. There is one located on the grounds of the Essex Centre Sports Complex and another at the Colchester Harbour.

Members of the Ontario Purple Martin Association, John Balga and Paul Hamel, explained the number of Purple Martins, the largest of nine swallow species in North America, continues to decline. This type of song bird typically does not nest in trees; therefore, it is important for the birdhouses to be installed for them. In addition, those houses need to be monitored regularly, to ensure sparrows do not take over Purple Martin nests and to ensure the birds are able to freely move around in the cavities and have not become trapped. Members of the OPMA monitor the houses in Colchester and McGregor, while Town staff monitor the one installed in Essex Centre.

The Purple Martin, Hamel said, is an important member of the swallow family. This species, however, is not the only type of swallow facing challenges with its numbers. Hearing of the need for housing for the song birds, Hamel said the CIB committee approached the Ontario Purple Martin Association about purchasing the original birdhouse in Colchester. The partnership has continued since.

Balga said the Purple Martin House in Colchester has been successful. Despite returning to a rough spring for the migratory birds, all six cavities seem to be full with the birds maintaining five nests. The newly installed McGregor birdhouse has already been made home for one active pair and has received visits from another pair.

On Saturday, July 7, the Ontario Purple Martin Society will host its first Ontario MartinFest at Colchester Harbour from 10-3 p.m. A donation for a local food bank would be appreciated as admission. Visitors will be able to see an active Purple Martin colony, learn how to attract the birds to their own property, and perhaps see young birds get banded. The event will also include speakers and presentations, and youth-orientated learning activities.”



*Welcome to our new members:* David & Yvonne Hernandez, Harrow, Ont.

## **Essex Communities in Bloom wins award!** (... by Tim O'Hagan)

"Essex Communities in Bloom recently won a prestigious National award at the banquet in Edmonton Alberta. The **"Home Hardware Community Involvement Award"** is given annually to a community which demonstrates achievements in encouraging community engagement through Communities in Bloom.

All municipalities regardless of size could enter and this particular award is most highly regarded because it emphasizes the "Community " aspect of the organization. The Ontario Purple Martin Association was a very instrumental aspect of the application.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who helped in any way to further our partnership with the town. Part of winning is a day-long visit with Mark Cullen, Canadian Gardening Guru which will be announced at a later date."

***Congratulations from the OPMA to Essex Communities in Bloom!***

Our members Brian & Lisa Houston are interested in acquiring a small martin house. If you have something that you may want to "re-home", please contact him at 519-322-1116, or [brilisa@bell.net](mailto:brilisa@bell.net)

## **RESOURCES**

- ❖ Remember to check the wonderful OPMA website maintained and provided by John Balga, our website manager. [www.essexpurplemartins.ca](http://www.essexpurplemartins.ca) or [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. **Please note that individual requests for Purple Martin products to be ordered are accumulated until late January, and then one bulk order is placed. This minimizes the shipping costs for everyone.**
- ❖ **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.

# Purple Martin Festival

We had our first ever Martin Festival in July, and we think it was a great success! John Balga, our website manager, has added information about MartinFest under the tab **OPMA MartinFest Scores Big**. Go to [www.ontariopurplemartins.ca](http://www.ontariopurplemartins.ca) to view dozens of pictures of the day and all other OPMA news and updates!



## WALPOLE ISLAND PURPLE MARTIN ROOST

The “posts” below are from the Purple Martin Conservation Association Forum. The authors are our own OPMA members Henry Wolting and Richard Carr (also of the Walpole Island Purple Martin Project). The posts speak for themselves, and I urge you to view the link provided in the post. It is an amazing spectacle, masterfully put together, and is the next best thing to having been there to see it ourselves!!

**Congratulations to all who were part of this search, discovery, and witnessing!!**

### Walpole Island Purple Martin Project "Roost"

Mon Sep 17, 2018 2:00 pm ... Henry Wolting

Well, been a long time since I posted anything, and this post is for those who don't hit the PMCA Facebook page, but I believe my wife and I have had the best month of August a PM freak could ever have. I will try to keep this short and let the link below do all the talking. To preface the video, Richard and Susan Carr (Walpole Island Purple Martin Project), my wife Elaine, my two sons Jordan (drone pilot) and Jeremy (photographer and videographer) and myself spent the month of August roost hunting in a vast delta marsh area where the St. Clair river dumps into lake St. Clair.

It is a giant marsh with huge phragmite islands that was showing an enormous roost ring on radar every morning. The trouble is, you have one hour to find the birds in a 5-10,000-acre area before they go down into the phragmite for the night, and then you boat out of the marsh in some serious darkness. Regardless, after a few scouting days, some evenings flying the drone where no sane person would fly a drone, and driving our boat a few hundred miles, we discovered the roost area(s). From about August 2nd to September 2nd, the number of PMs we saw was simply incredible. This delta area must draw birds from all over the Great Lakes basin, because there is no way Ontario has this many PMs. When you hit the link, there is what looks like a gear wheel on the lower right side to change the settings, click the gear and try to watch in 780 or better yet 1080P or higher for the best quality. This is just the short version of the project, the full-length video is a whopping 1 hr and 15 min epic saga Jeremy created with all the video footage we accumulated, it is just way too big to upload from our place.

Anyways, enjoy...if there is a roost near you, go see it. Words cannot describe an encounter with 200,000 martins in a 45-minute spectacular show. Where else could you see a million PMs doing what they do best?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7grOwZn ... e=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7grOwZn...e=youtu.be)

Post by [Richard Carr](#) » Fri Sep 21, 2018 8:01 pm

It has taken 6 years to do this so I knew what I needed and one day it came to me, it was on a Saturday. I knew

Mr. & Mrs. Wolting but not Jeremy, but we became very good friends. This Roost is unbelievable. Jeremy did an awesome job! Thanks Jeremy from the Walpole Island Purple Martin Project (Richard & Susan Carr). I hope everyone enjoys the video.

## Storm Damage at Ambassador Golf Course on August 6<sup>th</sup>

This is the colony managed by our OPMA member Les Kummer. No martins were killed or injured as far as he knows. All had fledged and they were congregating on the Gemini Gourd Rack, which was newly erected this spring and did not budge in this storm (a possible tornado).



### ***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.ca.....Chairperson  
 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..... 519-354-6404  
 Dennis Shady ..... 519-738-4411

#### **(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.....nancyrobson@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



*Owl banding at Walpole Island (pictures courtesy of Richard & Susan Carr)*



*This was taken November 15<sup>th</sup>. It's hard to see her, but there is a female hummingbird having a drink the morning of our first snow fall in Leamington. She left (or at least was not seen again) several days after this. We were surprised that they stay so late (the prior week, there were two!). But a quick Google showed many pictures of hummers in snowstorms in various places.*

*I'd much rather they leave earlier – Purple Martins are enough to worry about!*

***Have a very Merry Christmas & a Happy Holiday Season!!!!***

.....The end .....