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**Welcome to our new members !**

*Doug Grant ..... London  
Miriam McLean ..... Aylmer  
Wain Trotter ..... Orillia  
Dan Gahwiler ..... Leamington  
Jim Wilson ..... Ayr  
Charlene Lalonde .....*

The **OPMA Board** thanks and welcomes **Ken Winter** and **Ted Postma**, who have filled our 2 vacancies. And we also thank our long-term Board members **Lyle Papps** and **John Balga**, who have contributed so very much with their expertise and participation on the Board!

**May 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Colchester Community Room**

Thirty people attended, at this **new** (for us) **venue**. With a wonderful view of the harbour, a very pleasant, comfortable, and well equipped meeting space - and even cliff swallows posing on the railing just outside of the expansive wrap-around windows - this was a great place for us to gather!

- OPMA Participation in the June 15<sup>th</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup> Garden Markets at the Heritage Schoolhouse site: We've been invited to have an information booth at these events, from 10 am to 3 pm. It's a great opportunity to share information and interact with the public, close to the sights and sounds of our newly established PM colony (at least 4-6 pairs as of this meeting date!).
- We'll also be participating again in September at the 2 day Festival of Hawks event at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory. More information will be provided closer to the date.

- During our “go-around”, the majority of members reported that their colony sites seem to be off to a good start with very promising numbers so far!
- A question about whether bird-banding can be arranged at an individual’s colony resulted in an interesting discussion about bird banding classifications. Many of us learned something new - there are **2 classifications for bird banding**, and different training is required for each of them: **NESTLINGS** only, or **NESTLINGS+ADULT** birds (additional information is gathered when banding adults – such as weight, gender, wing-span, etc.). The OPMA is fortunate to have a member in each of these classifications (Ron and Tiffanie).

The answer to the original question was: Considering the preparation, time required to do the banding, and the limited age-related window of opportunity for banding, all that effort is maximized when it is done at a large colony versus a smaller individual colony.

- One member suggested replacing house sparrow eggs with small similar looking stones. The female sparrow actually incubates them for a time before giving up!
- The issue of nuisance birds was raised. We all were reminded by a member that a huge positive impact can be made for native birds in one’s own area by simply removing HOSP nests and eggs and not allowing them to breed. (With a house sparrow’s ability to breed about 5 times per year, and an average of 5 eggs, it is easy to see how they explode in numbers in a local area if left alone to do so.)

Congratulations to the winner of our annual DRAW for a PMCA membership!!!

**Michael Conway, of Normandale, Ontario.**

This concluded the meeting, but everyone was invited, if interested, to view the very active original Colchester colony located in the park directly across the road from the Community meeting room, and also to have a look at the new Heritage Schoolyard colony site just a short drive down the road.



## EGG DUMPING ?? OR ??

Sometimes we find nests with an unusually high number of eggs, as shown here. Is it “egg dumping”?

(photo courtesy of John Balga, 2024)



### **The deliberate laying of fertile eggs in another bird's nest:**

“Through some highly-sophisticated genetic testing, Dr. Eugene Morton of the Smithsonian Institution recently discovered that Purple Martins occasionally “brood parasitize” neighboring martins by egg dumping in their nests. Egg dumping benefits the parasitic egg-layer, but costs the host egg-recipient in terms of wasted reproductive effort.”

The text above is from the following website, which goes through the **A-Z** (literally!) of Purple Martin Terminology.

<https://www.purplemartin.org/purple-martins/biology/41/terminology/#:-:text=Egg%20Dumping%3A%20The%20deliberate%20laying,egg%20dumping%20in%20their%20nests.>

## OR: Second nesting?

Here is an excerpt from a 2022 PMCA Forum members' question and answer:

*“I was doing a nest check this morning and found a nest that has 9 eggs in it. I have had many nests with 7 but never 9. Is this very unusual or is it seen often?”*

*Well perhaps it's either a very fertile female or it's a second clutch. I found 11 in one nest once. It turned out to be a second attempt. Only 4 hatched.”*

From the PMCA: Purple Martins have one brood per season. Two broods during one breeding season are considered rare. They will re-nest if nest failure occurs early in the nesting cycle



### **SUBCUTANEOUS EMPHYSEMA**

This is generally a non-life threatening condition that is caused by "excess accumulation of air under the skin".

But it is horrifying to find a nestling that looks like this.

They usually deflate on their own.

This picture and information is from the July 2013 OPMA Newsletter - available on our website. As this is a rather shocking discovery when doing a nest check - to say the least – it seemed worth revisiting.

According to an article in PMCA UPDATE MAGAZINE Vol. 10(1), "Mild forms of the condition seem to be harmless and clear up on their own as the trapped gases are slowly reabsorbed by the bird. In more severe cases, a licensed rehabilitator may need to deflate the bubbles by puncturing them with a sterile needle or aspirating the air out with a sterile syringe, rubbing the area first with a disinfectant. Antibiotics may need to be administered. The balloon may need to be emptied more than once on consecutive days."

"If Purple Martin landlords encounter this condition in a nestling, they should monitor the bird by leaving it in the nest, and if the condition doesn't correct itself in about a week, they should take the bird to a rehabber. If the youngster is an otherwise healthy nestling that is being fed, leave it alone and allow it to fledge normally with its siblings. If the inflation has not reabsorbed by fledging time, the nestling may be doomed since the ballooning affect would likely render flying difficult or impossible."

*Note from Mary..... It is horrifying to find a bird like this amongst otherwise normal size nestlings and not know what it is, what caused it, or what to do. This happened to me a few years ago ... it looked about as big as this one. I was certain it would be dead on the next check. But it had deflated on its own, and the condition did not re-occur.*