



# OPMA Chatter

August, 2024

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

**Welcome to our new members !**

*Patricia Picard ... La Salette  
Jo-Dee Brown  
Robin Beaune ... Essex  
Doug Doey  
Gary & Nancy Shaw ... Turkey Point*

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> Potluck & Social Meeting  
Hosted by Al & Anne Hamill, Harrow**

We began this event an hour later than our usual time of 9 am and this worked quite well to accommodate our meeting business of 1½ hours or so, followed by an amazing meal.

Al had obtained a sound system which was extremely helpful to enable all of our 36 attendees to hear everything, regardless of where people were sitting within the spacious setting of Al & Anne's lovely backyard.

Paul welcomed everyone and started our "go-around" discussion. Everyone had a chance to talk about their colonies, and the consensus at the end was that so far it appeared to be a good year for most. Several people said their numbers were considerably up from last year.

- Fern has volunteered to monitor the “Colchester Heritage School Colony”, and he told us that there are least 8 pairs, and 38 eggs at last count. This is a great start for this brand new colony, to ensure that we have an active colony come next spring, and into our July 2025 Martin Festival.

Fern also added that they have 15 pairs of **cliff swallows** nesting on their house!

- Gilles & Judy Breton said they’ve been challenged by the neighbours ☹ in their new urban location about their Martins soiling their hot tubs, pools, etc. When the eggs of 1 of their 2 pairs were destroyed by sparrows, they took the opportunity to close down all compartments except the one that still was active.
- Fern encouraged several people who expressed a reluctance to lower their housing, not wanting to do any harm. He pointed out the benefits of - at a minimum - doing daily walk-a-rounds, checking the ground for any downed nestlings, and looking at openings for birds that may be stuck, the latter particularly important in the spring when returning martins are fighting over cavities.
- Banding is being done this day at Holiday Beach by Ron Delcourt.
- Lyn Quick shared an interesting event that they witnessed close to their house. They first noticed that a large number of martins (perhaps 100) were flying in a small area, and realized they were feeding on a dragonfly swarm. *(This piqued my interest, so here’s a link to some information about dragonfly swarming! <https://www.oldragmasternaturalists.org/ormn-blog/dragonfly-swarms>*

### **We were delighted to meet several members who came from quite a distance to join us!**

Jim & Maureen Wilson, from Ayr, are newly joined members and they’re excited to be part of the OPMA as Purple Martins are a new experience for them. Jim told us about his livelihood, which is **raising falcons!** He has very large pens in which the falcons are being raised.

Miriam & Ron McLean, from Port Bruce, also made the trip! Because of the detour east of Wheatley, the drive ended up being a bit longer for them than anticipated.

After the go-around, Al invited everyone to follow him to view their Purple Martin Housing, located at the back of his property, adjacent to a neighbour’s large open area of field and pasture space for horses.

Al has an assortment of different types of housing, so everyone got to see a variety of what’s available. He lowered several units for people to look into nests and see the young.

After that, our Potluck commenced. And there’s nothing more to say other than “**What a feast!**”!

Thank you, Al and Anne, for providing your wonderful space for this meeting !





One of the **neighbours** came to say hello 😊.



*Submitted by our member John Balga:*

## **Adding a Blink Camera to a Horizontal Gourd**

Having an inside view of a Purple Martin nest is not only an amazing experience but also a peek inside the life cycle of our favorite swallow. The Spring issue 2024 of the *Purple Martin Update* has an article with details on ways of Spying on your Purple Martin colony. With the advent of Wi-Fi Technology landlords can now view their martins 24/7. The PMCA has been exceptionally detailed in viewing a Purple Martin pair LIVE throughout their Life Cycle.

Today home security cameras are now used to catch a view of anything that enters a chosen viewing space both in and out of a house. This article will attempt to illustrate how a Blink camera can be mounted to view the entire season of a pair of Purple Martins in a Horizontal Gourd on a gourd rack. This camera mounting 2024 worked well for me but I am sure there are many other cameras available that can also be used within the gourd cap.

The step-by- step photograph description will be left to the very end of the article and I will explain briefly what was done to mount the camera. The gourd cap mounting has the added advantage of allowing you to move the cap from gourd to gourd to capture some of the other events throughout your colony.

Some of the equipment that was needed for the installation were: a Blink Camera without the mounting bracket, a couple of gourd caps, some Velcro pieces, masking or other mounting tape, some small wire to attach the camera, a drill to make two small holes on each edge of the cap, a pair of scissors, and a pair of snips to cut the small gauge wire, and a drill bit to cut a large hole in the cap. (The Blink camera was set up prior to the installation on a WIFI system in the house as part of a house security system.)

You may wish to begin by securing two gourd caps preferably the older soft ones which were used before the hard Troyer caps came out. Drill a large hole in one of the gourd caps to allow a secure mounting of the Blink camera. This will be used as the bottom mounting cap which will be screwed to the gourd. Actually, you may wish to measure the blink camera and mark the measurements on the cap before cutting or drilling. Drill out just the right amount to ensure the integrity of the cap. Use extra precaution when doing this to avoid any cuts or losing any fingers. **Photo 1**

Once the hole is made, tape the two caps together along the cap rim to ensure that these are secure. Once again, the second cap with the cutout hole will be used to secure it to the gourd. Test fit the cap assembly on the gourd and mark the cap with a vertical arrow on the outside to ensure that the camera can be mounted vertically. **Photo 2**

Remove the camera and drill two small holes in the top cap at 180 degrees so a wire can be inserted through the cap to ensure that the camera does not drop out of the cap. **Photo 3**

Attach the Velcro pieces to the cap and camera and mount it inside the cap ensuring a vertical alignment with the gourd cap mark. **Photos 4/5**

Cut enough wire to secure the camera and twist the wire on the back of the cap assembly to keep it from falling down into the gourd. Excess moisture may cause Velcro failure. Cover the wire with tape to not only conceal it but to avoid any injury to the birds. **Photos 6-9**

Later, you can weatherproof the lid with black tape. **Photos 10-11**

**Your camera is now set to go and can be viewed from your phone, computer, or tablet.  
Good luck in viewing you martins or whatever enters your gourds!**



Photo 1

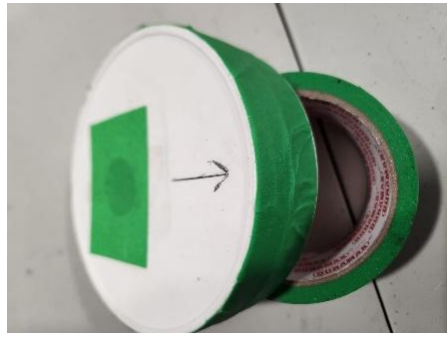


Photo 2



Photo 3

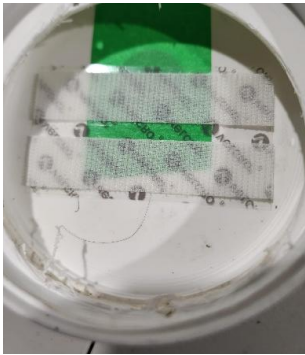


Photo 4

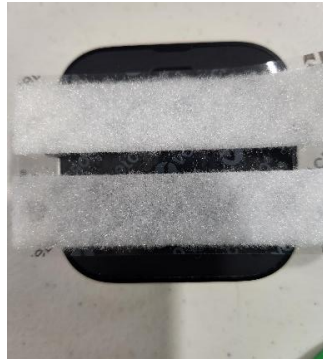


Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

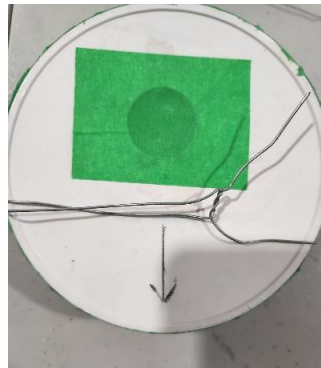


Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11

## News from the PMCA and our southern neighbours!

August 10<sup>th</sup> is now a **NATIONAL PURPLE MARTIN DAY** in the United States, and the OPMA is one of the groups from Canada who provided our neighbourly support of this initiative!.

The following is the email sent by PMCA on August 8<sup>th</sup>, to announce the success of their efforts to the many groups who got behind this idea:



*PMCA is proud to announce  
that **August 10th** is now officially*

## **National Purple Martin Conservation Day!**

For months, Purple Martin Conservation Association staff have been hard at work encouraging U.S. legislators to support a **National Purple Martin Conservation Day**. But we weren't alone! PMCA asked other like-minded organizations to support this resolution, and they rallied in response!

Thank you to all the individuals and organizations that offered their support of this resolution, including:

- Tucson Audubon, *Arizona*
- San Diego Audubon, *California*
- Best Coast Bird Club, *California*
- The Connecticut Audubon Society, *Connecticut*
- Venice Area Audubon Society, *Florida*
- Audubon Everglades, *Florida*
- Clermont Martin Watch, *Florida*
- Halifax River Audubon, *Florida*

- West Volusia Audubon Society, *Florida*
- St. Johns Regional Audubon, *Florida*
- Alachua Audubon Society, *Florida*
- Duval Audubon Society, *Florida*
- Southeast Volusia Audubon, *Florida*
- Peace River Audubon, *Florida*
- Purple Martins of Southshore, *Illinois*
- For The Birds of Acadiana, *Louisiana*
- Orleans Audubon Society, *Louisiana*
- Prairie Lakes Audubon, *Minnesota*
- St. Louis Audubon Society, *Missouri*
- Onondaga Audubon, *New York*
- North Carolina Purple Martin Society, *North Carolina*
- New Hope Bird Alliance, *North Carolina*
- Erie Bird Observatory, *Pennsylvania*
- Chalfont Borough Bird Town, *Pennsylvania*
- Presque Isle Audubon, *Pennsylvania*
- Philly Queer Birders, *Pennsylvania*
- Audubon South Carolina, *South Carolina*
- Charleston Natural History Society, *South Carolina*
- Bird Safe Nashville, *Tennessee*
- Friends of Warner Parks, *Tennessee*
- Belmont Bird Club, *Tennessee*
- Alveus Sanctuary, *Texas*
- Kitsap Audubon Society, *Washington*
- Wisconsin Purple Martin Association, *Wisconsin*

*(And even some of our neighbors in Canada threw their support in for good measure!)*

- Birdsafe University of Toronto, St George campus
- Bird Friendly Selwyn
- Bird Friendly Hamilton Burlington
- Ontario Purple Martin Association

We couldn't have accomplished this without the support of so many organizations and individuals like you! So now the real question is:

## ***How are we going to celebrate?!***

### **Send us your ideas for an annual National Purple Martin Conservation Day tradition!**

Just like our conservation work, our celebrations should be a collaborative effort! We want to establish some annual traditions for National Purple Martin Conservation Day! But we want you to help us decide what those traditions should be! Let us know how you'll be celebrating:

- Email [lydia@purplemartin.org](mailto:lydia@purplemartin.org) to share how you'll be celebrating
- Text pictures of your celebration to 814-833-7656 (or call and tell us about them!)
- Share your celebrations on social media using #NationalPurpleMartinConservationDay and tag us on Instagram @PurpleMartinConservation and on Facebook @PurpleMartinConservationAssociation

And help us get the word out about this important new holiday! When you see our posts on social media about National Purple Martin Conservation Day, please "Like" and "Share" the post to make sure it reaches as many people as possible! Or forward this email to your friends and family to let them know about this new holiday!