



**ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION ---- (Founded in 2000)**  
[www.ontariopurplemartins.ca](http://www.ontariopurplemartins.ca)

**Welcome to our new members !**

*Carol Smith  
Ted & Sue Dube... Kingsville*



**Group Photo from our meeting at Colchester Community Centre (courtesy of Giovanni Abati)**

Our first meeting of 2025 was on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 32 people attended. Here's some of the "chatter". 😊

Nancy Robson of Leamington reported her first **Martin back on March 20<sup>th</sup>**. Early to be sure, but a search of the PMCA Scout Map over the last 10 years showed an even earlier arrival date of March 17<sup>th</sup> !

There is currently a vacancy on the OPMA board. If you have an interest in being part of the guidance of our association, please let anyone on the board know.

A while ago we changed from our previous style of newsletter (issued 3 times per year) to our "CHATTER", issued more frequently. Part of the plan for this change was "Member Profiles" - a description of a member's colony, written by the member, with whatever information, experiences, and pictures they choose to include.

The first Member Profile will be issued a little bit later this year. We hope it will inspire others to write about their own colony at some point in the future, so that we all can get to know a little more about our members and their experiences.

Al Hamill brought a great visual of our OPMA membership of 90 or so!!! He used a conventional map to place red dots representing every member's location.

Presentation on Housing: Dennis Shady discussed the merits of many of the types of housing available; nest trays, and the importance of being able to lower housing for nest checks and maintenance. He also stressed the importance of location – avoiding proximity to trees and providing as open a flyway as possible.

### **MARTIN FEST (July 12<sup>th</sup>) Update:**

#### Martin Fest Committee:

*Giovanni Abati*

*Al Hamill*

*Sharon Johnson*

*Karen Padbury*

*Carol Quick*

*Carolyn Recker*

*Tim Shortridge*

*Mary Wilson*

The preliminary tasks of contracts, permissions, insurance, etc., were handled by Al Hamill who was the liaison between the Committee and the Town of Essex. Everything is now completed.

Carol is handling the invitations to vendors. We hope to have around 30 vendor booths, but the site can hold many more. We are currently at 9 confirmed vendors.

Invitations have gone out to various organizations that may want to have an "Information Booth" at our event. So far we have 5 that have confirmed their attendance.

Sharon has advertised our event with various printed publications. Online advertising (vacation sites, etc.) will be handled by Sharon and Carolyn and will be ongoing as we get closer to our Martin Fest date.

We have several very interesting speakers and presentations lined up also, as well as banding sessions for Purple Martins!

**Flyers:** Three different sized versions will be used for varying purposes: (full page...1/2 page...1/4 page). These flyers will be made available to our members for their indispensable help in sharing via social media, as well as at our upcoming meetings to take a quantity for posting and using within their local communities.

***More Martin Fest details to come later!***

The Amaryllis plants brought by Al Hamill were given away via a draw of names, and Marie & Lyle Hall had the GRAPE JELLY available to be picked up by those who ordered it.

We then gathered together for our group photo prior to the meeting coming to a close.

### [Bird Flu...written by John Balga](#)

*John was contacted by a person concerned about Bird Flu in North America. He researched for information online, and put together this commentary which may be reassuring to anyone worrying about this situation within their colony. Thank you, John.*

While **bird flu (avian influenza)** primarily affects poultry and wild aquatic birds, there's currently no evidence suggesting that purple martins are particularly susceptible or that bird flu has been found in them. However, if you find a dead or sick purple martin, it's best to avoid contact and contact your local wildlife health agency for guidance.

The viruses that cause avian influenza (or "bird flu") mainly infect and spread among wild aquatic birds, such as wild ducks, geese, and storks, and domestic poultry, such as chickens and turkeys

Recent NIH research has shown HOSPs are highly susceptible to Avian flu strains. Most die within 4-5 days of infection. That is good news for their population control. But not good news for poultry farmers where HOSPs thrive on the feed and water provided to poultry (CDC warns).

## Finally, what to look for?

- Sick / Infected birds may show one, or many, of these signs:
  - Lack of energy or movement
  - nervousness, tremors, or lack of coordination
  - swelling around the head, neck, and eyes
  - coughing, gasping for air, or sneezing
  - diarrhea
  - sudden death
- Reporting sick or dead birds
  - As a general guideline, do not touch live, sick, or dead wild birds.
  - Always report sick or dead birds to the relevant authority indicated below. Reporting bird carcasses helps to track avian influenza and allows the provincial/territorial authority to provide advice.

In certain cases, local authorities may recommend that the public safely disposes of dead birds. The disposal of bird carcasses must be done in a sanitary manner by following guidance provided by the relevant authority.

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends wearing gloves or using a doubled plastic bag if you must handle wild bird carcasses, and avoiding contact with blood, body fluids, and feces. You should then wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or use hand sanitizer. Be sure to thoroughly clean and disinfect any tools (e.g., shovel) used in disposing of dead birds with hot, soapy water and then use a household disinfectant.

If you find a dead purple martin and suspect bird flu, report it to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) online or by calling **1-800-567-2033**, or your regional avian influenza hotline.

In Ontario, report to the Ontario regional Centre of the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at **866-673-4781**.

For further information refer to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/avian-influenza-wild-birds.html#toc1>

