ONTARIO PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION ---- (Founded in 2000)
www.ontariopurplemartins.ca

Welcome to our new member!

Brent Flanakin

Message from our Chair :

Where has the year gone? It seems we were just meeting to discuss the arrival of the Martins and now they've been gone for over 5 months. We have had a very busy year with many good things taking place.

The Ontario Purple Martin Association remains strong as we come to the end of the year. We have over 90 paid up members which is the most we have ever had. Our finances thanks to our Treasurer Al Hamill are very good.

We have had a very busy and beneficial year for our club. Let me start by congratulating our Martin Fest committee. These members, Gio Abati, Al Hamill, Sharon Johnson, Karen Padbury, Carol Quick, Carolyn Recker, and Tim Shortridge, under the direction of Mary Wilson, planned, organized and put on a very successful event even though the day was very hot and interrupted by a thunderstorm.

There were many vendors, information booths and presenters that made the Martin Fest one to remember. I would also like to thank the Colchester Heritage School site for allowing us to use their grounds, and the church for the use of their building.

We also had some very good general meetings this year. Thanks to our member Ken Winter, the May meeting at the Cove Restaurant in Light house Cove was well attended and proved to be one of our better meetings. We had a wonderful speaker as well as great food !

We once again had our pot luck gathering in June, and thanks go to Mike & Tiffanie Rajki for hosting this event. It is a very nice way for our club members to come together and just have a very informal gathering to talk about their colonies.

In September, we were part of the Hawk Festival at the Holiday Beach Conservation Park. This event always gives us an opportunity to talk to people about the benefits of having a Purple Martin colony and ways to set one up. I need to thank John Balga for bringing our supplies to the Park and to Dennis Shady, Mike Rajki, Ken Winter, Marieanne Knapp and Ron Delcourt for coming out to help with the booth.

This year we also had a new site set up in a park in Tilbury. Members Ken Winter and Fern Bellavance installed two houses in the fall hoping that Martins will find them next spring. Fern has volunteered to take care of this colony since he now lives in Tilbury.

As you can see from the above information, the association was very busy this year and it looks like the upcoming year will also bring new and exciting opportunities for us. We will let you know about new adventures when all the plans are finalized.

I cannot stress enough the importance of people like your selves providing housing for the survival of the Purple Martin in our world. Without you, the Martin would be in danger of disappearing in our area. For the many years we've collected colony results, members have reported a total of **66,567** fledglings! The actual fledge number is undoubtedly higher than this, since our reporting is optional, but we can be confident that we contribute significantly to the stability of martins in Ontario.

Dues of $20 will be accepted by Al Hamill beginning in the New Year. Our first meeting will be at **Colasanti's** on March 21st, in one of their meeting rooms. Coffee and donuts will be provided but you can also order breakfast if you want.

Finally, on behalf of the board of directors I would like to wish each and every one of you a very joyous and peaceful holiday season.

Paul Hamel, Chairperson OPMA

June 28th – SOCIAL POTLUCK – hosted by Mike & Tiffanie Rajki

Twenty-two members came out on a rather warm day, but Mike & Tiffanies' beautiful shady back yard was a great place to sit and enjoy the tree swallows who had homes in the 11 bird boxes provided. A chickadee even graced us with a close look as it sat on a nearby wire.

The PM colony is in the front yard, where full sunshine made it a little too hot for us to sit there to enjoy all the martin activities, but Mike said their T14 was fully occupied this year!

After an update on Martin Fest progress by Mary, everyone shared about their colonies. Most reported good numbers. A few concerns about the ongoing heat were expressed.

Of particular interest was Al Hamill's report on the colony at the Colchester Heritage Site – the location of our Martin Festival coming up in just 2 weeks.

At a nest check conducted about a week prior, **135 young** had been counted. With two banding sessions planned and advertised widely, it was a relief to know that there would be a good number of young available for demonstrating and explaining the banding process to the public. And the adult birds would give our festival visitors a good view of the chatter and interactions of martins at an established colony.

To round out the day we then enjoyed the potluck spread and lots of good conversation. Thank you to Mike & Tiffanie for sharing their beautiful setting and hospitality!

Purple Martin Festival

Saturday July 12th – 10:00 am → 4:00 pm

Update from Mary Wilson

The day dawned sunny, hot and humid, following the pattern that had dominated over several weeks. Around 2 pm, weather alerts began appearing for a potentially very bad storm. Although it took a while for the rain to start, the sky turned black and the wind picked up. So our event finished about 1 ½ hours early, with everyone rushing to get packed up and leave before the worst of it.

But up until then ….. ☺ …… **:**

Our site's proximity to the lake gave us a good breeze, so our crew of member volunteers got a bit of relief through all of the setting up that had to be done.

Lots of hands were on deck by 8:00 am to set up the tables, canopies, and chairs that had been brought. The area immediately around the PM housing was cordoned off with tape to keep the public a little distance away from the housing and our set-up for banding sessions. Vendors arrived early as well to set up their own booths, and they graciously permitted us to post our Speaker Timeline at their locations to keep it easily available to everyone.

Several of our members thought to take our printed flyers to the marina parking lot down the road from our site to place on cars, and that effort paid off with a number of visitors who came because of those flyers!

Nine organizations joined us with their "Information Booths" to share their initiatives with the public:

- HBMO (Holiday Beach Migration Observatory
- ECFN (Essex County Field Naturalists)
- PIBO (Pelee Island Bird Observatory)
- RAEON (Real-time Aquatic Ecosystem Observation Network – studying Great Lakes Water Quality)
- OPMA member Gio Abati (Watershed Watchers)
- CSLT (Canada South Land Trust)
- Ojibway Prairie Reptile Recovery
- Bob Hall-Brooks (Hummingbird Banding)
- Troyer's Birds' Paradise made the trip from Pennsylvania! They are the manufacturer of Troyer Gourds, Racks, and PM accessories.

We received and appreciated permission from the Diocese of Huron to use the Christ Church, which sits on the corner adjacent to the Festival site, for our speakers/presenters. On such a hot day, speakers and guests alike were comfortable in an air-conditioned auditorium. A great variety of topics were scheduled:

- Butterflies & Moths (Janet Arsenault – Chalet Studio & Gardens)
- Bat Box Research Project (Rucha Patel & Teresa Jaworiwsky of Windsor University)
- Hummingbird Banding in Essex County (Bob Hall-Brooks)
- Falconry (OPMA member Jim Wilson) – this was outside on the church grounds.
- Essex County's Natural Environment (Giovanni Abati)
- Monitoring Great Lakes Water Quality & Ecosystem (RAEON – Edward Millar)

Unfortunately, due to the storm mentioned above, the <u>last two listed speakers</u> were unable to give their presentations.

Two **BANDING** sessions had been scheduled at 11:45 and 2:15, but the storm allowed only the early one to be completed.

VENDOR BOOTHS (19) presented an interesting variety of items: *art.....jewelry.....custom sewing, knitting, embroidery, tableware.....handmade wooden charcuterie boards.....author offering baby and nature books.....specialized soaps & skin products.....island themed outdoor wood décor.....native trees & plants.....wildlife art.....cosmetics & essential oils……binoculars, scopes, and other optics.* We had a FOOD TRUCK as well - the very popular 3 Dog Poutinerie.

Despite the weather, which likely kept some people at home, we had a steady flow of traffic throughout the site, and our speaker presentations as well as our one banding session were well attended.

Thank you ……

…… to all who took care of specific tasks, and also stayed all day to help with set-up, a rushed take-down, and many things in between:.

- *John Balga & Gio Abati:* technical and computer support for speakers.
- *Al Hamill*: placement of fencing around the PM housing, and numbered flags for vendor locations.
- *Barb Balga:* Children's activities in a welcoming spot, with games and snacks keeping kids busy while parents enjoyed a presentation inside the church.
- *Gio Abati,* assisted by *Tim Shortridge:* took care of videotaping presentations and photography.
- *Ron Delcourt, Tiffanie & Mike Rajki, and Karen Padbury:* conducted our Banding Session, demonstrating and explaining the process of banding PM nestlings.
- *Marie-Anne Knapp & Family:* for transporting the canopies, tables, and assorted other OPMA inventory from their storage facility, and setting it all up for us.
- The many who brought their own tables and chairs to provide for the OPMA booths as well as have some available for our "Information Booth" organizations who weren't able to bring their own.

- Those who were present at our OPMA booths throughout the day, greeting the public, answering questions, handling specific tasks, and being available for any needs that arose:

    - *Ken Winter* and *Nancy Robson* (Welcome Desk and Guest signing book)
    - *Dennis Shady* (new member sign-ups)
    - *Al Hamill* (Treasurer)
    - *Paul Hamel* (OPMA's contact for media interviews)
    - *Fern Bellavance, Marie Hall, Monica & Cy Poisson*

Thank you to the Martin-Fest Committee. As committee chair, I deeply appreciated the enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment of the committee members. They attended many meetings, contributed valuable ideas, and volunteered to take on the tasks that enable such an event to happen:

Gio Abati headed up the recording of Martin-Fest, with assistance by *Tim Shortridge*.

Treasurer *Al Hamill* handled the early contractual and insurance requirements, and as we went along, did all the costing, procuring and payment for various expenses incurred.

Sharon Johnson took on the considerable task of advertising, which involved social media, online websites, local travel publications, and local newspapers.

Carolyn Recker agreed to notify local EMS services of our event, and get medical kits to be used on-site if needed. (Fortunately, neither the kits nor her medical background were called upon!) *Carolyn* also assisted *Sharon* with the advertising, as did Nancy Robson who, as our OPMA media volunteer sending in our regular meeting notices, used her list of local newspapers to submit Martin-Fest details.

Karen Padbury represented our Martin-Fest in a radio interview, and also, along with others on the committee, provided important contacts through which we gained several speakers and organizations with information booths.

Carol Quick had previous experience with acquiring vendors for the monthly summer garden markets at the Colchester site, and brought her expertise to our Martin-Fest. She provided the committee with valuable information about vendor fees, site maps, electrical availability, etc., sent our official invitations to her list of potential vendors, and helped us through the numerous and very specific proof of insurance requirements.

For me as *committee chair*, one main task was the building of step-by-step documentation, which will be helpful for the next Martin Fest Committee! ☺

Our appreciation goes to every person who helped make this day happen! If I've missed anyone, I apologize, but assure you that your contribution was indeed greatly valued.

Hopefully we will be able to make more of the videos and photos provided by Gio and Tim available to all members.

<u>In the meantime, here are a few Martin Fest moments</u>:

The 2 University of Windsor students who presented their highly acclaimed study of Bat Boxes.

OPMA member Carol Quick at her vendor booth, featuring homemade Soy candles.

OPMA member Jim Wilson brought this juvenile falcon, which is in training for work in Professional Nuisance Bird Abatement programs. This bird was very tolerant of people, and actually could be petted! He entertained the audience when a young lady with a dangling bracelet came by, and he became laser focused on trying to catch the beads which were dancing from her wrist!

Janet Arsenault, of Chalet Studios and Gardens, gave a fascinating presentation on butterflies and moths.

https://www.purplemartin.org/

The 2026 Scout Arrival Map is ready and set to go on the PMCA website, which means that the start of the Purple Martin Migration is just around the corner !!
https://www.purplemartin.org/research/8/scout-arrival-study/

In 2025, the earliest report from Florida was December 30th. This map is where we can report our "scouts" – the earliest returning adult birds. As reports are made, the wave of purple dots moves steadily north, so we can always know when our birds are getting close (last year, the earliest Ontario report was March 25th from St. Catharines).

If you open the link you'll see a blank map because the current season hasn't started yet, but if you select 2025 as the SCOUT SEASON, and then click VIEW REPORTS, the map will show all the reports made last year, and you can zoom in to see what activity goes on in your particular area.

Clicking on a dot gives you the location, date, and name of reporter. If there are no dots in your vicinity, keep in mind that many people host purple martins and don't report the return of the birds.

Photo credit: John Balga

We wish you all a Merry Christmas,
and blessings in the year to come !