

# Purple Martin CHATTER

Fall 2022

Preserving and Restoring the Purple Martin Population in Wisconsin

Volume 10 Issue 4

## Inside this issue

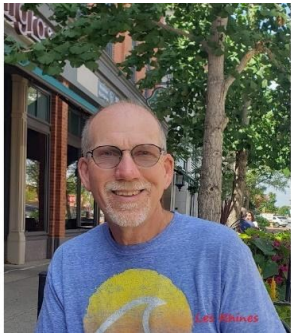
President's Message	2
A Word from the V.P.	3
Treasurer's Report	3
Statewide Mentor Initiative	4
WI Nest Reports Due	5
Around Wisconsin	8
Meet the Landlords	9



High Cliff State Park

Photo Gail Bolden





## A Message from the President

*Les Rhines*

Hello everyone, welcome to fall and welcome to another issue of the *Purple Martin Chatter*. I hope that all of you have had a successful martin season. Fall, as I have written in the past is the time to finish up on cleaning and putting the martin housing away while thinking about the future. One of the things that I do as I'm taking down the housing is to take notes of what worked well and what did not. The *what did not* portion of my list becomes the source of my winter projects. As an example, I noticed that some of my gourds had not been vented as well as others, so during this next winter I will remedy that. Also, after seeing some posts about preventing gourds from wicking water into the nest during rainfalls I'm going to see what I can do to keep my gourds dry. Fall is also a good time to submit your nest data sheets to both the PMCA and to the Dick Nikolai of the WPMA. Dick has been collecting data for the *Breeding Bird Atlas* for many years and if you have not done so, I would strongly recommend that you send in your data. While the PMCA gives us data on a larger national scale, Dick's research gives us data that is regionally based. We will provide you with Dick's contact information at the end of this newsletter, you can submit it to him either in email form or send it USPS.

In other news, the WPMA will be making a return to the Madison Garden and Landscape Expo. The (Friday through Sunday) dates of the expo are February 10-12, 2023. This year we hope to have our booth located next to another Wisconsin bird organization, the Bluebird Restoration of Wisconsin or BRAW. If you're not familiar with this show, thousands of people come from all over the state to get a taste of spring, if you make the trip, stop in, and see us. Dick Nikolai is also planning on making a presentation on Saturday, February 11, 2023, we will be able to provide more detail about Dick's presentation in the December newsletter. Many of the WPMA board of directors will be at the booth during the three-day event, but we could use some additional help. If you are interested in helping let me know at my email: [musthavemartins@gmail.com](mailto:musthavemartins@gmail.com) and I will arrange to have a ticket sent to you in advance.

At our fall Board meeting one of the items that we discussed was the policy of sending out newsletters. In the past we have electronically sent out newly published "current year" newsletters to everyone on our mailing list. After much discussion we have agreed to change our newsletter mailing policy. Beginning in January 2023 we will electronically send out "current year" newsletters to our board members and only to our paid membership. All previous year's newsletters will still be available on our webpage. Please consider becoming a member, memberships are \$10.00 annually and run from January 1 through December 31, please contact Deb Zimmermann – Treasurer if you would like to become a member. Deb's contact information is provided at the end of the newsletter. Please note that this is the only change in services that we have made, we will continue to offer: public meetings, annual MartinFest, Statewide Mentor Initiative Program, free site evaluations, and managed public colonies.

Finally, April 2023 will mark the end of my 6<sup>th</sup> year as president of the WPMA, which according to the terms of office means that I have served two, three-year terms. Upon reflecting on my service to the WPMA, I have decided to officially announce in this document, that I will be stepping aside to allow others the opportunity to serve. Let me say this, it has been a pleasure to serve as president of this organization and I welcome the opportunity to continue to work in other capacities as a board member. My hope is that by making this announcement in a timely manner a candidate can be found to lead the WPMA forward. I look forward to working with the future president during a period of transition. If you are interested in serving as President or Secretary, please contact Deb Zimmermann.

A big thank you to all the contributing writers, for sharing your stories with us, and to our editor Gail Bolden for taking all the pieces of the puzzle and arranging them into a cohesive publication, the work that all of you do is very much appreciated.

And if you're counting, it's approximately 159 days before PM's start to arrive back in the state. I don't know about you, but I can't wait.

## A Word from the V.P.

*Vice President Greg Zimmermann*

Fall, it's a great time to relax and reflect on our season. As a landlord, for me it was a great season that lasted from April 5<sup>th</sup> until September 3<sup>rd</sup>, when the last of 3 fledglings finally left for the year. This was due to a late nesting pair, and the weather certainly held up and provided plenty of food for them. My season started the first week of April. My colony endured 2 significant snow falls, and that with the lack of insects available made for a tough 3 weeks. But, as the temps slowly warmed up, and with supplemental feedings 3 times a day, my birds managed to stay healthy.

As spring moved to summer, my colony grew to 36 nesting pairs with 156 eggs laid, of the 156 eggs 8 didn't hatch. I only lost 3 young all the way to fledging, so all in all this was a very successful season. Our Martin fest was a hit as it was well attended, and for next year's Martin fest our board of directors is workingZ on something new for next year. That's what will keep us busy through the winter months planning for Martin fest 2023. I attached a couple of pics from Martin fest for you to enjoy. If you haven't gotten a chance to attend any of our fests check it out next year. We aim to please our attendees. That's pretty much it for now. I hope you all get a chance to enjoy your fall season because winter is just around the corner.



MartinFest 2022 Silent Auction

*Photo Greg Zimmermann*



MartinFest 2022 Registration Booth

*Photo Greg Zimmermann*

### Treasurer's Report

*Treasurer Deb Zimmermann*

Checking	\$604.03
Savings	\$3097.54
Total	<b>\$3701.57</b>

*Currently, 37 paid members*

# WPMA Statewide Mentor Initiative Program

*Les Rhines*

What is a mentor? From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, a **mentor** is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person in an organizational setting, a mentor influences the personal and professional growth of a mentee. Most traditional mentorships involve having senior employees' mentor more junior employees, but mentors do not necessarily have to be more senior than the people they mentor. What matters is that mentors have experience that others can learn from.

As stated above a mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advise to a less experienced person. That's what we, at the WPMA, try to accomplish with our Statewide Mentoring Initiative Program. While, I do not know how long this program has been "officially" in existence, un-officially it's something that we have been doing shortly after the WPMA was formed. Tom Rank, our founder is credited with officially starting the statewide program through the creation of contacts from around the state, and as president I felt it important to continue the program. From those humble beginnings we have grown, and continue to grow, we now have twenty-nine individual mentors that include all our board members, covering twenty Wisconsin counties as far northwest as Polk and St Croix and as far southeast as Racine and Kenosha, and along the east shore up through Door County.



Most often people request mentors help to aid them in selecting a suitable site to erect martin housing. This site visit can be accomplished by an in-person visit, which is preferred, or this can be achieved by using technology (Google Earth). The use of Google Earth has been useful in the cases where a mentor is/was not available. Other, topics that mentors address during the visit are selecting suitable housing, houses vs gourds, pest control, sparrows/starlings, attraction methods and record keeping just to name a few.

The number of mentor requests that we receive varies from year to year, and we are usually able to match up a request with a mentor, however we still have a need for more mentors. By offering this mentoring program to interested new landlords is just another way that we work toward fulfilling our mission, *To Restore and Preserve the Purple Martin Populations Across Wisconsin.*

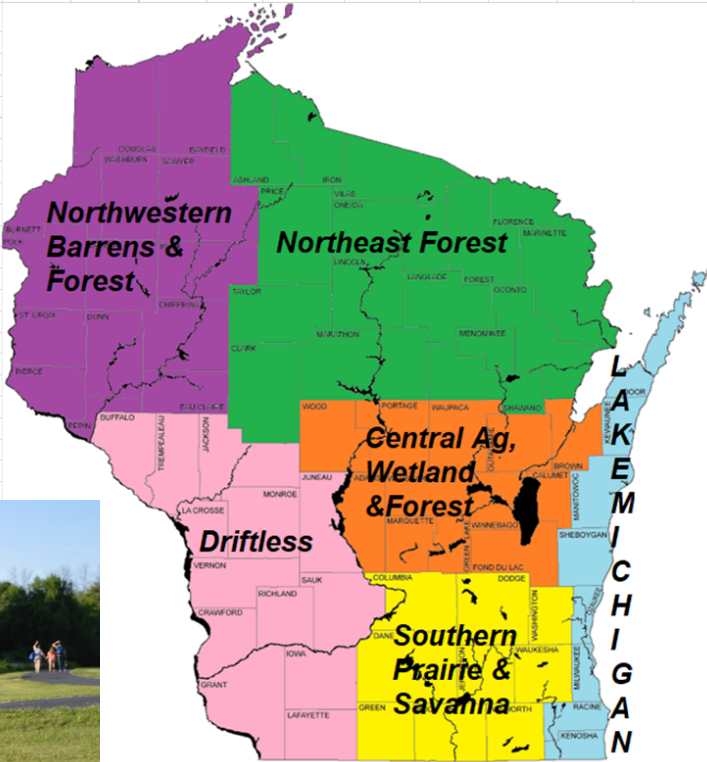
If you would like to request the services of a mentor, or if you would like to become a mentor, please contact me at [musthavemartins@gmail.com](mailto:musthavemartins@gmail.com).




# 2022 Purple Martin Nest Reports

Dick Nikolai

Statewide Wisconsin Reports for 2022			Statewide Wisconsin Reports for 2022													
Name	Place of housing	County	1st martin	Pairs	Nests	Nests with eggs	eggs laid	Eggs/ nest	Hatched	Hatched /nest	% Hatch	Fledge	Fledged /nest	% Fledged	Fledged from eggs	Last Fledgling
Dick Nikolai	Sherwood	Outagamie	4/5/2022	58	58	52	257		208			162				8/12/2022
Region of Reports		Reports as of October 5, 2022														
Northwest Barrens & Forest		1														
Northeast Forest		1														
Driftless		0														
Central Agriculture, Wetland & Forest		10														
Lake Michigan		4														
Southern Prairie & Savanna		3														







Dick Nikolai banding Purple Martins

**Please send in your reports for 2022.** The data or items are very simple (see above): A) Location B) First Martins C) Pairs D) Nests E) Nest with eggs F) Total eggs laid G) How many eggs hatched H) How many fledged & I) When was the last day of fledging. These reports are not to be a competition for the individuals who send these in but rather a report on how Purple Martins did on a Regional & Statewide basis. They are to reflect impacts from weather (temperature, wind, lake impacts, number of cloudy days, rain/snow & other components), environmental hazards like spills or disease, problems from a late spring like delays in egg laying, predators and any other item you feel may have caused a problem or may have been beneficial. When we look back at records we can at least see where we were for production and where Purple Martins existed within Wisconsin. It is not placing our heads into the sand but being a part of the bigger picture.

Purple Martins lives depend on you. It’s plain and simple. We do have some responsibility in this matter for without housing those numbers would not be taking place. We may be the most important factor for this species in Wisconsin for making it, especially in the northern regions or in the driftless region. My concern is from those of you out there that do not like collecting data for it is work. It is also a reflection on a year to year on what can you do to better the population of Purple Martins within Wisconsin. *(continued next page)*



(*Nesting Reports cont.*) My concern is also in how we are treating this species in the future. Without your efforts little can be done for the next generation of landlords. Your reports for Purple Martins at least have a coexistence of your pride with a species that solely depends on you. Finally, I hear these statements most often. “My grandparents had Purple Martins when I was younger.” “My colony was doing fine and all at once they disappeared.” “My Purple Martins came in early April but disappeared and now I have none.” “My housing cannot be lowered for it is on a break-a-way pole and it costs too much to have a vertically lowered pole.” “I just enjoy the Purple Martins that come here in my housing and do not want to do anything else.” What happens when those Purple Martins never come again? What happens when we pass away? What happens when we neglect a sparrow or a starling nesting in our housing or when eggs and young start disappearing? That is my volunteer and professional job to motivate you and myself! Data does matter. Please do so!

## Bird Migration

Have you ever heard of or used the migration tool called *BirdCast*? BirdCast is an online migration tool that tracks and forecasts spring and fall bird migration in your area. One can type in any county and state to find migration forecasts, live time maps, and even the number of birds that crossed the area the previous evening. On a recent search for Fond du Lac County on 12 October, it calculated that 1,713,600 birds crossed my area overnight. Astounding! The next morning, I saw a flock of Golden-crowned Kinglets and Dark-eyed Juncos flitting around my yard.

You can access the migration dashboard through 15 November. Check it out at [birdcast.info](http://birdcast.info).  
-Ed.



Butterfly Pond @ High Cliff

Photo Gail Bolden

## Mark Your Calendars

1 January

WPMA Annual Membership dues

10-12 February

WI Garden & Landscape Expo



## Purple Martin Lakefront Initiative

Guest Columnist, Helen Pugh, Hoy Audubon Society

*Hoy Audubon Society started the Purple Martin Lakefront Initiative in 2009. The intent, to bring back and grow the Purple Martin population along Lake Michigan's waterfront in Racine-Kenosha. Below is their 2022 nesting report.*

Lots of good news this year for Hoy's Purple Martin Lakefront Initiative. The numbers of fledglings increased in both Racine and Kenosha for a total of 317!

The second-year 8-gourd rack at Gateway fledged its first brood, and two other gourds had eggs which didn't hatch. We were pretty excited when there were three nests started; we have high hopes for next year. Gateway's house doubled its production to 28. The Coast Guard house had the exact same number as last year—62. The four houses at the Water Department are, once again, nearly full and fledged 207 birds! There was a drop in the total number of eggs produced, but the hatching and survival rate went up. Kenosha held at 16.

Kenosha added another monitor this year, and they have a solid working group of three. Racine continues with their working group of four.

The season's monitoring is finished, but we will get together soon for a celebratory luncheon, and then for a final clean out later in the fall. It's a pleasure to work with this dedicated and enthusiastic group.

The only hindrance to expanding our initiative is the number of volunteer monitors. Please give me a call if you would like to join us next May. We play with baby birds!



Kenosha group: Marianne Giannis, Stephen Gifford and Debby Eisel.



Racine group: Terry Ansel, Tom (not pictured) and Karen Gavahan, and Annie Shace.



Stephen brought his grandchildren to help.



5-6 day old chicks

*If you live near the Kenosha-Racine area and would like to get involved in this worthwhile endeavor, Helen can be reached at (262) 308-6419.*



# around Wisconsin

## NEWS and NOTEWORTHY PLACES



High Cliff State Park entrance. Note the T-14 on the right.

### 1,187 acres of beauty

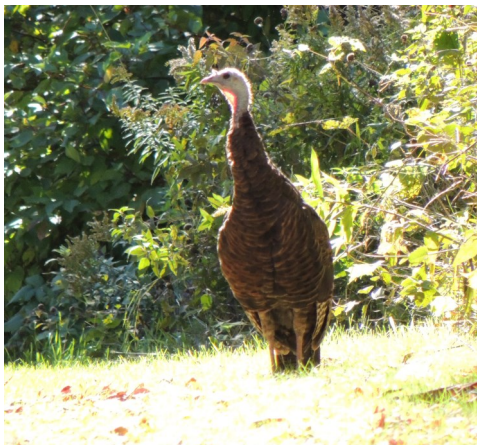
Named after the limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment, which runs along Lake Winnebago's eastern shore, High Cliff is worth a visit if you are ever in the area.



Panoramic views of Lake Winnebago along the Red Bird Trail.

### Bird Watcher

The many habitats at the park attract a variety of birds. This wild turkey was among a group of nine other hens.



An alert hen watching over others nearby who were sunning themselves.

### Purple Martins

There is an active Purple Martin colony on the premises. Two locations offer several types of housing including multiple-unit houses, single-unit houses, and gourds. There are other colonies in the immediate area on private property which makes for a sight to behold during the nesting season. The constant chortling alone would bring a smile to anyone's face.

## High Cliff State Park



Single-unit housing is removed for the winter, while predator guards remain. Lake Winnebago can be seen in the lower right of the photo.



A T-14 sits at half-mast, ready to be deployed when the Purple Martins return in the spring. This unit is located at the park entrance.

- Photos Gail Bolden



## Meet the Landlords

Larry Lienau

My 50 years of being a Purple Martin landlord started with an 18 room wooden, tip-up style house that I had built. No luck the first year, just starlings and sparrows. The following year, I bought a Trio aluminum twelve-compartment house. And, then decided to relocate the wooden house closer to my residence as well as the aluminum house. Alas, success. Six pair stayed that year. This went on for a few years. Always had martins, but not many.

After meeting Tom Rank and other Wisconsin Purple Martin Association board members, I learned so much. The meetings and MartinFest were so enjoyable. Needless to say, I was hooked – what a great hobby! I am presently a board member and have hosted MartinFest at my colony in the past. I have never stopped learning new things about the birds. This year there were forty plus pairs of martins that stayed. And, I'm hoping next year is as good. Knowing what the birds go through on migration, I can't wait to see them again. God willing, I will be here to welcome them.



Larry collecting Purple Martin nestlings to band



Larry Lienau's Purple Martin Colony

Photos courtesy the Lienau family

We would like to highlight your colony; send us your story. Submission instructions are on the back page of this issue.



*Purple Martin Chatter* is a publication of the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association, an organization dedicated to preserving and restoring the Purple Martin population in Wisconsin. It is published four times annually.

#### **Board of Directors**

*President* Les Rhines [musthavemartins@gmail.com](mailto:musthavemartins@gmail.com) (920)889-0060

*Vice President* Greg Zimmermann [grgz52@yahoo.com](mailto:grgz52@yahoo.com) (920) 467-6253

*Treasurer* Deb Zimmermann [dpierce52@yahoo.com](mailto:dpierce52@yahoo.com) (920) 467-6253

#### **Board Members**

Joe Francis [jnlfrancis44@gmail.com](mailto:jnlfrancis44@gmail.com) (920) 918-4466

Larry Lienau [larmon@tds.net](mailto:larmon@tds.net) (920) 565-2780

Dick Nikolai [prairiechicken@att.net](mailto:prairiechicken@att.net) (920) 734-0828

Bob Ring [ringbob@earthlink.net](mailto:ringbob@earthlink.net) (920) 989-2771

Gail Bolden [3rngbold@att.net](mailto:3rngbold@att.net) (540) 623-0762

Terry Mentink [tdmentink@hotmail.com](mailto:tdmentink@hotmail.com) (920) 980-9434

Membership inquiries: [dpierce52@yahoo.com](mailto:dpierce52@yahoo.com)

Desire to be a PM Mentor? [musthavemartins@gmail.com](mailto:musthavemartins@gmail.com)

Editor: Gail Bolden [3rngbold@att.net](mailto:3rngbold@att.net)

PM tips or stories? We welcome member's submissions! Please limit submissions to 500 words or less; photos must be your own for publication. Direct articles in Word format and jpeg photographs to editor.

## *Our partners in bird conservation:*

