

Purple Martin Chatter

A Publication of the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association

Summer 2020

A Message from Les Rhines, President WPMA

Summer is finally here, let's hope that we have seen the last of the cold weather, especially while our birds of summer are here in our state. Normally, at this time of the year, we the WPMA, would be deep into preparation for our annual MartinFest on June 26th. But as we've witnessed, this is not a normal year, as a result we had to make the decision to cancel MartinFest. As is the case with other organizations we have to consider the safety of all participants. We regret not being able to host the event, but, we have rescheduled the event for next year at the same venue, Marsh Haven Nature Center in Waupun WI. We are planning a day long event including a silent auction and bird banding demonstration. Renee and the staff at Marsh Haven in Waupun want to remind us that even though the WPMA will not be at Marsh Haven, the martins are still there and can safely be viewed from the car or the grounds, just observe social distancing.

As of this writing SY birds continue to arrive into our state and there have been many reports of many Wanna Be landlords getting their first birds. You can count me in that group; as of the writing my wife and I are hosting two pair of birds. It's been a 5 year drought since we've had birds here, so we appropriately named the first pair Please and Thank you. Quick note, please report your SY males arrivals to the PMCA, it really helps the Wanna Be's as they can follow that migration.

www.purplemartin.org/scoutreport

Summer is supposed to be a time of nice weather but we know strong storms do happen, some with very strong winds. So, keep an eye on the weather and lower your house/s to protect them from the high winds of the storms. Also keep the crickets, meal worms, and scrambled eggs handy, as we sometimes get strings of days where it can be rainy, cold, windy and overcast. During these conditions the birds cannot find food. So supplemental feeding is required, this is especially critical when the adult birds are feeding the chicks.

Thanks, I hope that you continue to have a good Martin season and raise lots of healthy martins.



This memorial bench dedicated to the memory of Tom Rank, the founder and first president of the WPMA. It was because of Tom's vision and passion for Purple Martins that the WPMA was formed and exists today. Tom's experience began with the colony he started with his wife Candy. As the colony grew, Tom's skill as a landlord also grew and soon he was sharing his knowledge by mentoring others. Many have said, I would not have purple martins if it had not have been for Tom. Tom had a passion for purple martins and it showed. We and the martins surely miss him. This bench and the martins can be viewed at Pine Haven Christian Community, 220 Pinehaven Ln, Sheboygan Falls, WI.



To Restore And Preserve The Purple Martin Population Across Wisconsin



This memorial bench is dedicated to the memory of Ike Kumrow. Ike, was one of the founding members of the Wisconsin Purple Martins Association. Ike and his wife Jan maintained a colony of Purple martins for over sixty years. Ike built the house you see here and many others and was responsible for many others getting started with Purple Martins. Come to the Western Bird and Bat Observatory in Ozaukee county and sit for a while and watch the martins.

Please consider becoming a member of the Wisconsin Purple Martins Association

Again at this time I am asking you to consider becoming a member of the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association by contacting Treasurer Deb Zimmermann at dpierce52@yahoo.com membership fee is \$10.00 annually. Benefits of membership are; Public Meetings, MartinFest, Statewide Mentor Program, Free Site Evaluations, Managed Public Colonies, and Newsletters.

Welcome New WPMA Members:

Bard Landgren

Jean Urry

John Jurgerson

Ken VerHagen

Record Keeping—Data Sheets

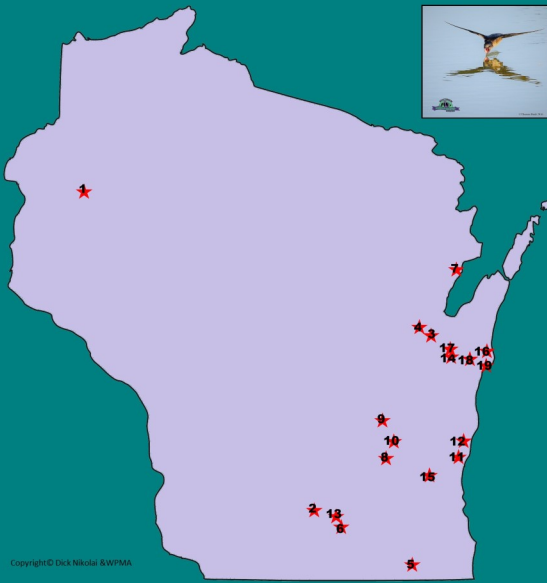
Keeping good records of your colony is an important part of being a martin landlord. Nest checks should be made frequently some say every 4 –5 days, some say every 6-7 days. Both are correct, the important thing is that you as a landlord do them; the more frequent, the more you learn about your colony. A daily walk around and under you house/s will tell you what's going on; you might find a chick on the ground or an egg, or you might see insects flying into compartments. The health of the birds is up to you. By lowering the house at an interval will reveal what's going on; and while you've got it down you might as well record what you find for each pair or compartment. You will find a PMCA form at the end of this Newsletter that you can use. Later in the season, after the birds have left we will be asking you to report your colony results, but more on that later.

Call for Mentors: The WPMA is actively seeking landlords to provide mentoring services. Most recently we have had a need for mentor in Polk, and Jefferson counties. If you are interested contact Les Rhines

musthavemartins@gmail.com



Wisconsin Purple Martin Association Public Colony Locations



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Wisconsin Purple Martin Association Public Colony Locations

- 1) Cumberland—City Hall 950 1st Avenue, Cumberland, WI 54820
- 2) Middleton—Woodside Heights Park (Tiedeman Pond) 7312 Voss Parkway, Middleton, WI 53562
- 3) Sherwood—High Cliff State Park (Office & Marina), N7630 State Park Rd, Sherwood, WI 54169
- 4) Appleton—Lutz Park, 1320 S Lutz Drive, Appleton, WI 54914
- 5) Lake Geneva—Elm Park, Library & Beach, 918 W Main St, (Hwy 50), Lake Geneva, WI 53147
- 6) McFarland—Dane County Park (Fish Camp Park on Lake Kegonsa), 3383 County Road, McFarland, WI 53558
- 7) Oconto—Oconto City Park, 5182 County Hwy N, Oconto, WI 54153
- 8) Horicon—WDNR-Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area, N7725 Hwy28, Horicon, WI 53032
- 9) Waupun—Marsh Haven Nature Center W10145 State Road 49, Waupun, WI 53963
- 10) Mayville—Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, W4279 Headquarters Road, Mayville, WI 53050
- 11) Port Washington—Western Great Lakes Bird & Bat Observatory, 4970 County Club Road, Port Washington, WI 53074
- 12) Belgium—Harrington Beach State Park, 531 County Road D, Belgium, WI 53004
- 13) McFarland—Lewis Park, 5012 Highland Drive, McFarland, WI 53558
- 14) Plymouth—Generations (Intergenerational Center), 1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth, WI 53073
- 15) Hartford—Pike Lake State Park, 3544 Kettle Moraine Rd, Hartford, WI 53027
- 16) Sheboygan—Ellwood H. May Environmental Park (Maywood), 3615 Mueller Rd, Sheboygan, WI 53083
- 17) Elkhart Lake—Sheboygan Broughton Marsh Park, W7039 County Rd SR, Elkhart Lake, WI 53020
- 18) Sheboygan Falls—Pine Haven, 220 Haven Drive, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085
- 19) Sheboygan—Kohler-Andrae State Park, 1020 Beach Park Ln, Sheboygan, WI 53081

Be Prepared to Replace Nest Bedding as Necessary.

Remember as you do your nest checks pay attention to the nest material; if it is damp and the chicks are 10 to 14 days old, it may be necessary to replace the bedding material. To do this have a pail handy with some bedding material on the bottom, put the chicks into the pail and cover it with a towel. Next, replace the bedding material with similar material. Take the time to arrange the new nest to resemble the old one. If you can place some green leaves in it as well. When the done replace the chicks placing them facing the back of the nest tray or gourd. The purpose of nest replacements is to prevent inverts from taking hold in the nest and attacking the chicks. Especially problematic are Blow Fly Larva, (see the attached picture) . Timing of these nest changes is important, one consideration, is to not do a nest change when the chicks are 21 or more days old. When the chicks are 21 days or older they could become what we refer to as “jumpers”, meaning that they could attempt to leave that compartment or gourd prematurely. Blow Fly Larva can kill baby martins.

WPMA Officers and Board of Directors Contact Information:

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 Bob Ring, ringbob@earthlink.net (920) 9892771



Date 1st ASY martin seen at site _____
Date 1st SY male seen at site _____

Date 1st SY male seen at site _____

Date 1st SY male seen at site _____

Date 1st SY male seen at site _____

Date 1st SY male seen at site _____

? = Unknown
* = See Comments on Back
B = Banded
RA = Renesting Attempt
PM = Purple Martin
HS = House Sparrow
ST = Starling
TS = Tree Swallow
BB = Bluebird
HW = House Wren

At season's end, mail forms to: *Purple Martin Conservation Association* • 301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 6 • Erie, PA 16505

Project Martinwatch

**The world's largest team of backyard volunteers
needs your participation!**

Your Help Needed: Since 1995 the PMCA has been urging martin landlords to participate in a continent-wide, citizen-science project known as "Project Martinwatch." Participants monitor their nests, record the information on photocopies of this datasheet, and mail them to the PMCA at season's end. Project Martinwatch allows us to obtain information on the range-wide reproductive success of Purple Martins.

Participation is Easy:

Participants conduct nest checks on their martin housing every 5 days all season long and record exactly what they find in each nest cavity, and what actions they may take. Participants start monitoring nests when nest building begins at their sites and continue at 5-day intervals until after all the young have fledged. It is critical for our research to have one empty nest check. If 5-day nest checks are not possible, a 7-day schedule is acceptable. Checks are done in the afternoon. Checks are avoided during cool or rainy weather, and are done as quickly as possible to minimize the time parents are kept away from their eggs or young. Nest monitoring will not cause martins to abandon their nests. Landlords who conduct regular nest checks actually raise more martins than those who don't.

Nest Check Codes: The codes to use during nest checks are listed in the "Martin Codes" box on the data sheet. Familiarize yourself with these codes and the layout of the data sheet. Record the date of each nest check at the top of each column. Use a separate line for the contents of each nest cavity. List the housing type, entrance hole type, and cavity number in the far left column (all compartments should be numbered). Use the second column for the age of each parent (if known), male first, female second. The third column is for the date the first egg is laid, which is determined by extrapolation and/or using the Prognosticator. The fourth column is for projected hatch date (see below). The fifth column is for the actual hatch date (determined by using the laminated martin photos). The sixth column is for entering the earliest possible fledging date for each nest (see below). The remaining columns are for recording exactly what you find in each nest cavity on each nest check, and for any actions you may take. More than one code can be entered in a single box and codes can be combined, as in 3Y/2do/2DYD*, for "3 live young, 2 days old, 2 dead young, discarded, additional dated comments on back."

Counting Eggs and Nestlings: Purple Martins commonly hide their incomplete clutches under a layer of green leaves. During each nest check, inspect this leaf layer gently with your fingertips to feel for hidden eggs. After hatching, nestlings huddle together, so to count them, they must be separated with a finger or blunt probe. In houses or gourds with access doors, monitoring nests is simple, but in housing lacking these features, landlords may need flashlights, mirrors, and probes in order to check nests. Adding porch dividers to all housing with shared porches will prevent older nestlings from walking between compartments and confusing your results. NEVER MOVE EGGS OR YOUNG TO DIFFERENT NESTS! This actually lowers the nesting success of host nests, shortens parental life, and can spread disease.

Martin Breeding Biology: Purple Martins lay 1 egg a day at sunrise until they've laid from 1 to 7 eggs. They do not skip a day. Incubation begins the day before the last egg is laid and requires 15 days (from the laying of the last egg until the hatching of the first egg). During cool weather, incubation may be delayed, causing

clutches not to hatch until 16-24 days after clutch initiation. Once hatching begins, it may take 48 hours for all the eggs in a clutch to hatch. Due to this staggered hatch, siblings may vary in age by as much as 3 days, causing fledging on most nests to be spread over 2-3 calendar days. Nestling martins don't fledge until 26-35 days after hatching.

Aging Nestlings: The very first time that you encounter a hatchling in each active nest, age the oldest nestling in that nest by carefully

removing it and comparing it to the life-size photos on the laminated martin photos (for sale from the PMCA). After its age is determined place it back in the nest huddled with its siblings. Record the age on the Project Martinwatch sheet. Later using the Prognosticator, align the nestling age cell with the date cell and read backwards to the hatch date. Record this in the "Actual Hatch Date" column. Use the actual

hatch date to determine "Earliest Possible Fledge Date," using the Prognosticator.

Fledged or Failed?: The only way to tell how many young have fledged from a nest is to determine how many survived to the date on which they would have reached the minimum fledging age of 26 days old. A formula for determining it follows: Earliest Possible Fledging Date = Date First Egg is Laid + [(Number of egg laid, minus one) + 15 days + 26 days]. For example: if a clutch of 5 eggs was initiated on June 1st, the last egg would be laid on June 5th. These eggs would begin hatching 15 days later on June 20th, and the oldest nestlings could begin fledging no sooner than July 16th, the day they would turn 26 days old. Using the formula Earliest Possible Fledging Date = June 1st + (5-1) + 15 + 26 = 45 days. When you add 45 days to June 1st you get July 16th. Add 43 days to a clutch of 3, 44 days to a clutch of 4, and so on.

Landlords can make these determinations more easily by using the "Purple Martin Prognosticator," an ingenious calculator wheel (available from the PMCA) that accurately tells: 1) the date hatching will begin in each nest; 2) the age the young will be on any given date; and 3) the earliest possible fledging date for the young in any nest. The back side of the wheel shows how to determine first egg dates. Using the Prognosticator, Project Martinwatch participants can accurately fill out the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth columns of their nest record sheets, and determine whether young have fledged successfully from a nest, or disappeared prematurely due to predation or other causes.

Summarizing Your Data: Fill in the three columns on the right-hand side of the data sheet as the season progresses. Once you have determined the clutch size for a nest, enter it in the Egg# column. Likewise, record the number of young that hatched and fledged from each nest in the Hatch# and Fledge# columns. To calculate seasonal totals for each sheet, total all the numbers in each of these 3 columns, and record them in the circles at the bottom of each column.

Assigning Parental Ages: Landlords with binoculars or spotting scopes who can distinguish among the four breeding plumages of martins should record the age of each parent at each nest. When unsure of the age of a parent, put a "?" in its sex/age category on the data form. Novices should refer to the color photos on the adult plumage page of the laminated color martin photos. Before assigning an age to an individual, observe it entering its cavity with nest material, to feed young, or removing fecal sacs on at least three different dates.

Housing Type Cavity # & Hole Type	Male/Female	Age	Date First Egg is Laid	Projected Hatch Date	Actual Hatch Date	Earliest Possible Fledge Date	20 May	25 May	30 May	4 June	9 June	14 June	19 June	24 June	29 June	4 July	9 July	14 July	19 July	24 July	Egg #	Hatch #	Fledge #			
WH-1 R	A	5/18	6/08	6/08	7/04	PMN 3E	7E	7E	7E	2E 5Y 1do	7Y NR	7Y	7Y NR	6Y	6Y	N	N	N	N	7	7	6				
WH-2 E	S	6/03	6/21	6/22	7/18	ST ND	HS ND	PM N	2E	4E	4E	4E	1E* 3Y 2do	1E/3Y NR	3Y	3Y NR	3Y	N	N	4	3	3				
WH-3 C	A ?	6/04	6/24	6/24	7/20	X	PM N	N	1E	6E	6E	6E	3E 3Y HD	5Y/NR 1DY/D	5Y	5Y NR	5Y	4Y	N	6	6	4				
WH-4 R	S	5/31	6/19	6/19	7/15	X	PM N	N	5E	5E	5E	2E 3Y HD	5Y NR	3Y 2DY/D	3Y NR	3Y	3Y	1Y	N	5	5	3				
AG-1 C	A	5/26-30 6/10-12	6/10-14 6/27-29	6/28	7/24	X	PM N	1E	1E	0E	3E RA	3E	3E	3Y 1do	3Y NR	3Y	2Y NR	2Y	N	1 3	0 3	0 2				
NG-1 R	A S	6/01	6/20	6/20	7/16	X	PM N	N	4E	5E	5E	5E	5Y 4do	5Y NR	4Y 1DY/D	4Y NR	4Y	N	N	5	5	4				
Using the codes below, record exactly what you find in each compartment on every nest check and any action you may take. Using the laminated martin photos, record age of nestlings on first encounter.																					Nest Record Sheet Totals:			31	29	22

A completed Project Martinwatch Nest Data Sheet from a hypothetical 4-unit wooden martin house that has one artificial gourd and one natural gourd hung underneath it. A data sheet for your site is on the back of this page, along with a key to the coding system.

Martin Codes:

X = Empty Cavity
N = Nest
E = Egg(s)
Y = Young (Living)
3do = Young 3 days old
HD = Hatching Day Aged
DY = Dead Young
NR = Nest Replaced
D = Discarded
WH = Wooden House

MH = Metal House
PH = Plastic House
NG = Natural Gourd
AG = Artificial Gourd
RH = Round Hole
CH = Crescent Hole
EH = Excluder Hole
OH = Obround Hole
A = Adult (ASY)
S = Subadult (SY)

? = Unknown
* = See Comments on Back
B = Banded
RA = Renesting Attempt
PM = Purple Martin
HS = House Sparrow
ST = Starling
TS = Tree Swallow
BB = Bluebird
HW = House Wren

MartinFest 2020

**Marsh Haven Nature Center
Waupun, Wisconsin
Saturday, June 27 9AM-4PM**



Location

Marsh Haven N. C.
W10145 State Road 49

Located on 46 acres, three miles east of Waupun on the Northwest end of world famous Horicon Marsh.



Food/ Refreshment

Provided by Friends of Marsh Haven Nature Center

Proceeds to benefit Marsh Haven Nature Center & Purple Martin Colony

www.marshhaven.org/

Booths

Purple Martin housing (Bob Shimek)

Sparrow Traps, Decoys, Aerial Insect & Food Flippers, Nesting Material, Martin Attractants, Starling Exclusion Entrances, etc.

(Wisconsin Purple Martin Association)
www.wisconsinpurplemartins.org

Free event is open to the public.



Arrive to meet purple martin landlords & enthusiasts. Be inspired with the sights & sounds of a large colony of purple martins established in 1996-97. MartinFest will be centered around you, purple martins, Wildlife Disease Specialist Nancy Businga, President WPMA Les Rhines, & Master Bird Bander Dick Nikolaj. Various vendors will be onsite throughout the day, a popular festival silent auction & much discussion with colony landlords. Bring your whole family, friends & neighbors!

Disclaimer: Event program may change due to weather, cancellations, from speaker or harm to birds.

Event canceled due to Covid 19, Rescheduled for June 26, 2021 Mark your calendar

9:00 AM

MartinFest 2020 Opens.
Sign in & Browse

10:00-10:30 AM

Seminar: Purple Martin Ecology & Housing

10:45-11:15 AM

Seminar: Dealing with Weather, Nest Site Competitors & Predators

12:00-1:00 PM

Lunch. Browse Displays & View Martin Colony

1:00-2:00 PM

Purple Martin Health, Disease & You (WDNR Nancy Businga)

2:10-3:15 PM

Nest Record Needs for Monitoring. Banding Demonstration

3:25 PM

Silent Auction Closes

3:30 PM

Award Silent Auction Items (Cash or Check)

4:00 PM

Event Ends

If you would like to be included in future e-mailings of WPMA Newsletters contact Les Rhines musthavemartins@gmail.com