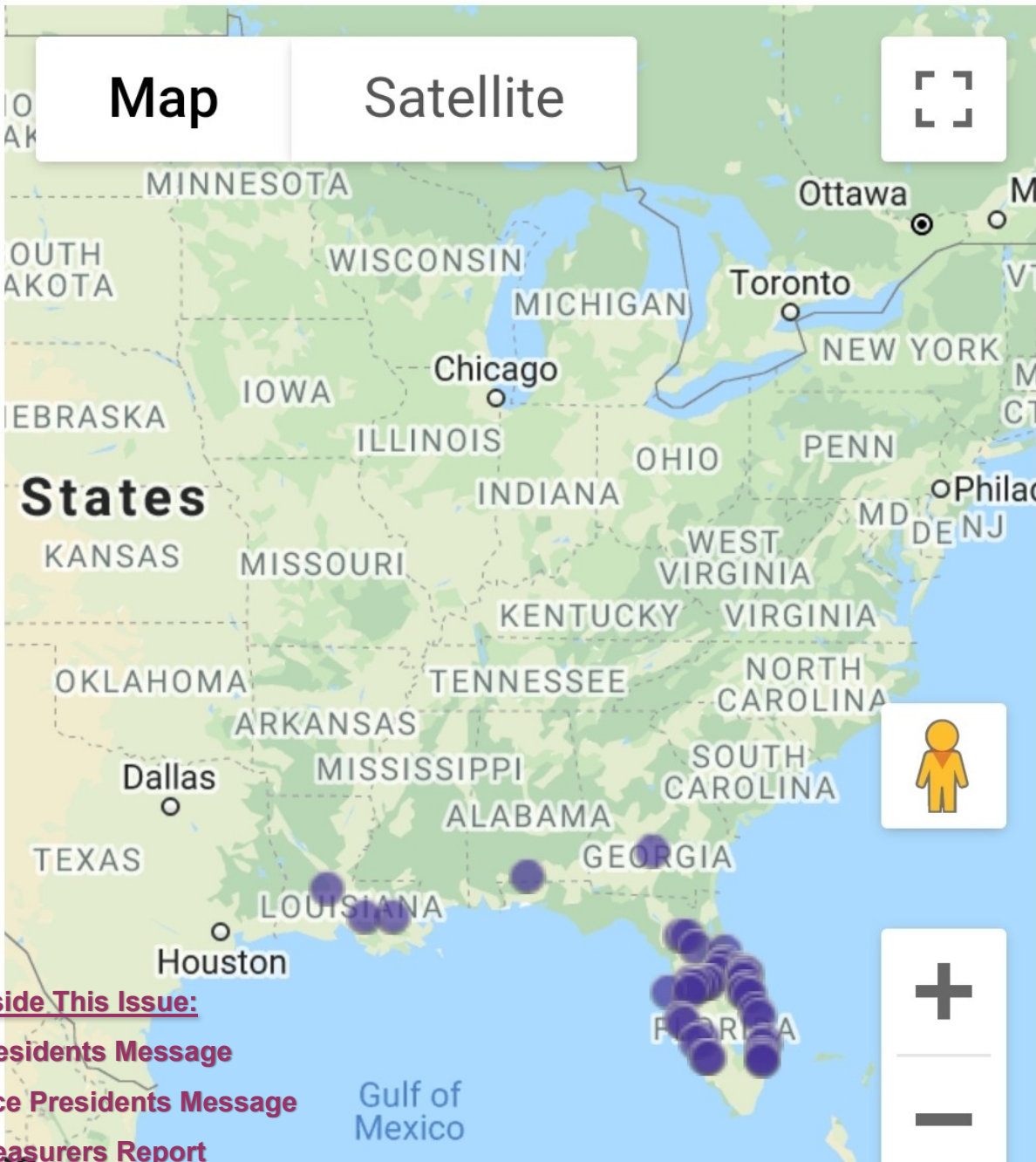


Purple Martin Chatter

A Publication of the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association

Winter 2021



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A Message from the President:



Greetings everyone, if I might ask, how are you doing with your New Years resolutions? Myself, personally, I try to make a few each year, and for the most part I'm able to follow through. I think its that way with most folks. As president, one of the resolutions or goals I hear most people express is that "this year I'm going to get Purple Martins." I have to admit to you that, getting Purple Martins had been one of my resolutions for many years, but this year, my goal is to keep and expand my colony of 2 pair from 2020, and that's where winter, comes in.

Winter is considered by many landlords as the "waiting time"; while that is true, winter is the best and appropriate time to prepare for the upcoming season. Last fall you may recall me saying, start making plans about improving your colony, well, now's the time to put those plans into action. As of this writing, my houses have received any needed repairs, a fresh coat of paint and are setting in my garage, along with the cleaned out gourds that will be hung under the houses and on the gourd rack.

Spring is coming, and it will be here before you know it, and even though the calendar does not say so, some signs are already starting to appear. At our house the seed catalogs have arrived, along with it the Troyer 2021 catalog and the PMCA Marketplace catalog. The PMCA Scout Arrival Study is yet another sign of spring. Personally, this is the thing that I watch the most, and it helps motivate me to get things ready; I usually look at least once a week until March, then I look daily, just like checking Facebook, I guess. If you have not done so and are not familiar with the Scout Arrival Study I would encourage you to monitor the progress of the martins as they make their migration northbound to Wisconsin.

As an organization, looking forward, we are optimistic, and are planning to host our annual MartinFest this year at Marsh Haven Nature Center located in Waupun Wisconsin on June 26. You will find a brochure about this event in this newsletter, please consider adding this event to your calendar, and join us. We hope that as the vaccine is rolled out we will be able to once again continue holding our educational and promotional events.

Additionally, this is a good time to think about starting or renewing a membership in the Wisconsin Purple Martins. The dollars that you provide allow us to continue our missions work "To Restore and Preserve the Purple Martin Population across Wisconsin". We appreciate the support that you have shown us.

With that said, its time to sit back, grab a coffee, or beverage of choice and enjoy this edition of the Purple Martin Chatter.

A Message from the Vice President:

Hello fellow Martineers! As I write this we are basking in warm weather, it's hard to believe it's mid-January. Without a lot of snow fall in the entire state of Wisconsin it's hard to get into the winter mode. My wife and I are avid snowmobilers and without snow we don't go! I'm told snowmobilers are a patient bunch of people, with that said I decided to build a new North Star 12 compartment Martin house this winter. It's made entirely out of polywood (wood imbedded in plastic) polywood has a 30 year warranty and if properly maintained it can virtually last a lifetime. So now I can't wait to get it up on a pole and watch my Martins enjoy their new house. Spring in Wisconsin can be rough on our birds so be prepared for anything that the weather dishes out. I stocked up on meal worms and I'm ready for what Mother Nature brings. Scrambled eggs are also a great meal for Martins; Supplemental feeding adult purple martins will increase survival rates when extended rain, cold or wind makes it difficult or impossible for adults to catch insects. Teaching your purple martins to accept feedings is a rewarding experience that is a lot easier than one might think. What to feed: Dead crickets available in most pet stores or online are the food recommended. Bought live and then frozen to death, the crickets are allowed to thaw completely before offering as food. Another alternative food is Scrambled eggs cooked WITHOUT using any kind of butter or oil just a teaspoon of water per egg is all that is needed and cooked in a microwave. Mealworms are also great food.

How to feed: Food is offered by being flung into the air in the direction of the martins but never at them directly. Use a plastic spoon to fling the food into the air. The motion will eventually entice a hungry martin to try the new food source. If your birds have never been fed in this manner, it may take 15 minutes before the food is accepted. Hunger and the insects' motion, as it is flung into the air, is a strong stimulus and most report that within 15 minutes the martins are eagerly accepting both meal worms and crickets. Scrambled eggs make a very cost effective and convenient alternative to insects, but are usually less successful to birds unfamiliar to being fed. That's why we started with crickets and transitioned to eggs. Eventually, once the martins learn to accept crickets or eggs in flight as a food source, they will eventually transition to accept feedings off elevated platform feeders. Purchasing crickets is easily done online; I recommend Josh's frogs their website is www.joshsfrogs.com or search for any feeder cricket online dealers. Martins are starting to arrive in our southern states along the gulf, as Martins slowly make their way north I remind you to send in your sightings to the PMCA. The data is very helpful.

Entering and viewing results in the scout-arrival study continues to be a free service provided by the PMCA, so remember to send in your scout reports!

As I wrap this up I attached a picture of my new house for all to see.

Greg



Treasurers Report:

As of January 14, 2021, we have \$1451.67 in savings

\$345.17 in checking

This after paying \$19.95 for our website hosting

We received our 1st membership of 2021 from Brad Collar.

Best for last, we received an \$838.00 donation from Carol Parsons in honor of her father, Larry Martell Jr.

We gave Carol and her brother Loren Martell a membership for 2021

So, thank you and welcome to them!

Debbie Zimmermann

We would like to hear from you! If you would like to share your purple martin story, we would like to include it in one of our newsletters. Please send it to me, Les Rhines, along with any photo's at musthavemartins@gmail.com

We are looking for mentors! We at the Wisconsin Purple Martins have had many requests for assistance from people who are interested in starting colonies. While we have a network of mentors already, we would like to add to our list. Typically, people need help with site location, types of housing to use and attraction methods.

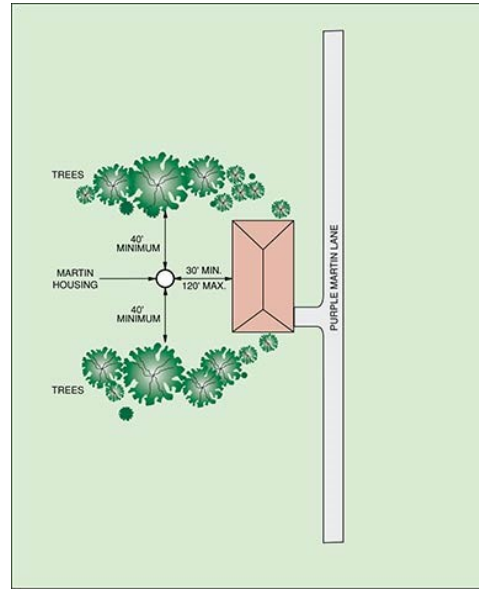
If you feel that you would like to become involved in our mentor program contact Les Rhines at musthavemartins@gmail.com



Starting a Colony

What does it take to start and maintain a colony of Purple Martins? The following article will briefly discuss what is required of a perspective martin landlord.

Location, is the first step in figuring out the puzzle. The perspective martin landlord must have a site that provides a flyway in at least 2 directions, 3 is better. The location of the house or gourd rack should be close to human housing, 30 ft. to 100 ft. and away from trees 40 ft. min.



Housing, is the next piece of the puzzle. The perspective landlord should select housing that can be safely raised and lowered on the pole using a winch. The housing should be placed between 12 and 20 feet high; 14 to 16 feet seems to be preferred by many landlords. The housing should have deep compartments to provide space for adult birds and chicks. Deep compartments also provides a safer environment from predators. The housing should also have a Starling resistant entrance hole (SREH). Popular SREH types are the Connelly II and the crescent. Popular housing types shown here from Left to right are: Northstar, T14, and a Gourd rack. Notice that gourds can be attached to the wood housing to increase the number of available compartments. Many landlords claim that they did not get martins until they hung gourds. One recommendation is to select housing that is common with martin colonies in your area.

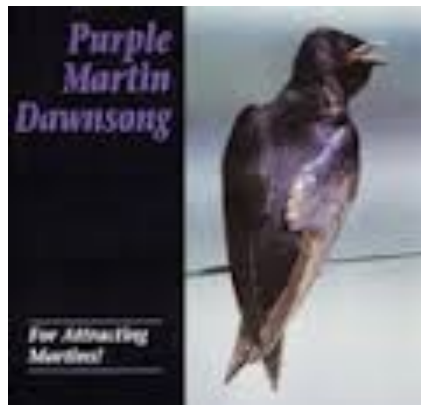


Attraction Methods: The next piece of the puzzle is to attract martins to your new site. Martins need to be lured to your site, they typically will not find it on their own, unless your new colony site is in close proximity to another established colony. The bottom line is that you are attempting to convince investigating martins that an active colony exists. There are numerous methods of attracting martins, the first is the use of decoys. Decoys, at least 2, should be placed on the house, and moved around every other day. I attach small clamps or clothes pins to my decoys to make this easy.

Next is to play "Dawnsong" using an outdoor speaker or Songbird magnet; this is probably the most powerful attraction method as the martins can hear this from great distances and are drawn to it. During the spring migration, it is best to play this in the predawn hours, also consider playing this at night, especially when strong southern winds are blowing. Martins, ride those wind currents northward during the spring migration. Playing Dawnsong during the daylight hours can also be successful, but be aware that these vocalizations can also draw in ariel predators to your site.

Another method of attraction is to use small mirrors; these small mirrors are attached inside the compartment, on the back wall. Keep in mind that martins are social creatures, and if an investigating martin lands on the house, sees its reflection, it might think that other martins are nesting there.

The last thing to do is to make the house or gourds look lived in. This can be accomplished by spreading a little mud around the entrances and inside the nest trays. Additionally, you should pre-build the nests using material that is available to martins in your area. Dried long pine needles, referred to as pine straw is a suitable material to use; typically a couple of handfuls per compartment or gourd is sufficient.



Control Nest Site Competition: The final piece of this puzzle, is to keep your new colony free of nest site competitors, namely Sparrows and Starlings. Many perspective martin landlords fail to attract martins because they are not able to or do not control these two non protected species. Adding Starling resistant entrances is the preferred method of preventing Starlings from entering the cavities or compartments; this will not work however for Sparrows. Sparrows will easily be able to enter a Starling resistant entrance; to control Sparrows you must trap them and eliminate them, do not release them somewhere else as they will soon return to your site or become a problem for another landlord. There are many types of traps available for purchase, additionally there are plans for traps available online. Common types are compartment traps, food traps, and repeating traps. Look forward to an article on Sparrow and Starling traps in the Spring edition of this newsletter.

One final thought, Tree Swallows can also be troublesome when starting a new colony. Tree Swallows typically arrive before martins in the spring and are eager to claim compartments or the cavities of gourds. If you are experiencing Tree Swallow interference be sure to offer some housing for them;; place the housing 30 feet away from your colony and 5 feet off of the ground. This is important, do not raise or open your martin housing until the Tree Swallows have accepted their new housing. Entice them with a flasher and place some feathers in the Tree Swallow house or gourd. Note: a flasher is a 2x 4 piece of blue and white plastic tied to the Tree Swallow house . A cottage cheese lid works great for this. The action of this flasher swinging in the breeze entices the Tree Swallows to find it, and investigate the house or gourd. Personally, I use an old horizontal gourd for my tree swallows.



Thank You to everyone that has decided to take out a membership with the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association; if you are considering a membership please contact Debbie Zimmermann.

You can become 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.



Martell Family Honors Larry Martell Jr.

Mrs. Janet Martell and family have made a generous donation to the Wisconsin Purple Martins in memory of Larry Martell, age 90, who passed away November 7th from covid 19 and underlying heart problems.

Larry and Janet had been married for 69 years this last September and have lived on their acreage for 65 years and raised 9 children. Larry loved the family farm and it was a wonderful place to raise crops and animals, to hunt deer and for the children to grow up.

Besides raising children and farming, Larry was a commercial truck driver and a proud army veteran. Larry used his many skills to work hard and support his family.

About 18 years ago, Larry became interested in Purple Martins and up went his first martin house in the yard. He studied and built his colony and the interest grew into a passion. These last few years as Larry's health declined and he had mobility difficulties, he would still sit outside and watch the beautiful, agile Purple Martins for long periods of time. The Martins acrobatic flaps and glides always lightened Larry's heart and spirit.

Larry, husband, Dad, grandpa and great grandpa, will be greatly missed but the family vows to improve and build on his Purple Martin colonies for all the family to enjoy for years.

We at the Wisconsin Purple Martins extend our deepest sympathy to the Martell family for the loss of their husband, father and Purple Martin landlord., and express our gratitude for the generous gift that they have provided us.

MartinFest 2021

Marsh Haven Nature Center
Waupun, Wisconsin
Saturday, June 26 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 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 Nikolai. 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.

9:00 AM	MartinFest 2021 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 (WDR 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



WPMA New Member Information Form

Please Print Legibly

Name: _____

Address below:

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: _____ (Home/Cell)

Email Address: _____

Paid Date: _____ **Received By:** _____

Cost of 1 year membership is \$10.00 (memberships run from January 1 to December 31)
Payment by cash or check. Do not send cash in regular postal mail.

You will be contacted by someone from WPMA to complete your membership.

Send to WPMA Treasurer, N6018 Hwy 32, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085



WPMA Officers and Board of Directors Contact Information:

Les Rhines, President musthavemartins@gmail.com (920) 889-0060

Greg Zimmermann, Vice President grgz52@yahoo.com (920) 467-6253

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Joe Francis, jnfrancis44@gmail.com (920) 918-4466

Larry Lienau, larmon@tds.net (920) 565-2780

Dick Nikolai, prairiechicken@att.net (920) 734-0828

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



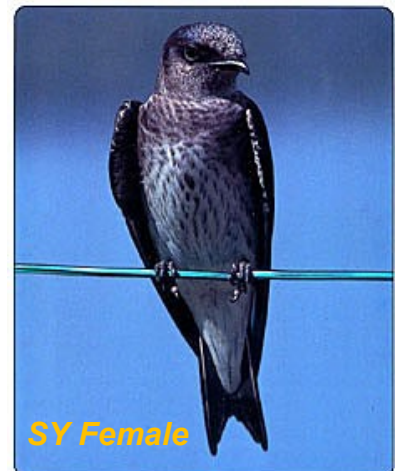
ASY Male



ASY Female



SY Male



SY Female