



Wisconsin Purple Martins Christmas Greetings

Seasons Greetings to all Purple Martin enthusiasts from all of us here at the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association. Here's hoping that Santa fulfills your wish for a colony full of martins in 2020. The year's end is always a good time to look back and reflect on the previous martin season and to make preparations for the upcoming 2020 season. For many martin landlords, 2019 was a successful season, we witnessed new colonies, both public and private, get started and have had many reports from seasoned landlords that bird numbers at their colonies either remained the same or saw increased numbers. Unfortunately, that was not the case statewide, we have heard reports of some strong storms that had taken down houses; the unfortunate part is these storms seem to occur when babies are still in the nest. We had similar storms during the summer of 2018. While we cannot predict the weather, it does seem that we should accept the possibility that we could see strong storms in the future. It is best that we prepare for that; one recommendation we can make is to lower that house if you are able prior to the storm to minimize damage. Let's hope that we won't have to deal with strong storm activity in the future.

"While controlling Sparrows and Starlings continue to be an issue" these are some of the ways to mitigate the problem by adding a starling controlled entrance, making cavities smaller and expanding them when the starling seeking stage is past, and use of a vertically lowered housing to remove and trap starlings. For sparrows remove nests or euthanize them, do not open cavities until the SY martins arrive around May 7 to new colonies. Only allow opening about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the cavities and slowly open others as each pair takes a cavity. For instance it's easier to manage three cavities instead of 12. Place surrogate look alike eggs in nests that are wooden, plastic, or old ones. Shaking eggs or oiling them for either species prevents hatching when done within a few days of egg laying. One thing we do not need is more sparrow problems.

Another concern reported to us is the issue of Hawk predation; while in the past it has been a problem for large colonies, it is also becoming a concern for small colonies. The topic of predator hawks and strategies on how to discourage them and protect your martins will be addressed in a future newsletter. Again Happy Holidays and looking forward to 2020.

In reflecting back over the past year here's a little bit of what we at the WPMA have been up to in 2019:



As an organization we (the board members) have provided insight to many perspective martin landlords through personal contact via face to face and phone, text, email etc. Even though we are the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association we have taken calls from from perspective landlords in the surrounding states as well. These discussions vary from site selection to type of house to use and how to attract birds to a new site.



Dick Nikolai worked a booth and answered questions to hundreds at the Oshkosh Wild Ones Conference in January 2019.



Les Rhines and Dick Nikolai worked a booth at the Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo in Madison in February 2019. Attendance over the 3 day show was over 5000 people. We had many wonderful discussions during our time there; Dick also made a presentation to a filled room during the expo.



Bob Shimek made a presentation at Woodland Dunes in March 2019.
Nicki Schumaker made a presentation in Minoqua in April, 2019.
Dick Nikolai made a presentation at the Green Lake Bird Fest in April, 2019.



Les Rhines made presentations at Maywood Environmental Park, Sheboygan, and at the Port Washington Garden Club, both in May 2019.
Dick Nikolai operated a booth at the Oshkosh Bird Fest in May, 2019.



Martifest 2019, was the culmination of the season. This year it was held at High Cliff State Park where there are 2 nice colonies. Dick Nikolai was the main presenter, he discussed bird ecology, house types, care of martins and provided a bird banding demonstration. A silent auction was held and over \$600.00 was raised; with those proceeds going to help support Purple Martin projects. Additionally, Bird Rehabilitation Specialist Mr. John P Que provided a presentation/demonstration.



Dick Nikolai made a presentation at the Oconto Bird City Event in July, 2019.
Dick Nikolai made a presentation to the Appleton Westside Rotary in August, 2019.
Dick Nikolai made a presentation to the Friends of High Cliff State Park in November, 2019.

Again, this is not the complete list of all we did in 2019, but hopefully it gives the you an idea of the types of activities that we're involved in.

So what do we have planned for **2020**? The following will help identify the things we have planned at this time; we know that other opportunities will follow, feel free to contact any of us with your requests. You can find our contact information later in this newsletter.

January 2020

Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter – Toward Harmony with Nature, Oshkosh Convention Center, 2 N Main St., Oshkosh, Saturday January 25th, 8 am – 4 pm. Dick Nikolai will be at a Wisconsin Purple Martins Association sponsored booth.

February 2020

Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo, (Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Way, Madison, Wis) February 7-9, Friday 12 – 7 pm, Saturday 9 am – 6 pm, Sunday 10 am – 4 pm. Les Rhines and Dick Nikolai will be at a Wisconsin Purple Martins sponsored booth.

June 2020

Martifest 2020 to be held at Marsh Haven Nature Center, (W1045 State Road, Waupun Wisconsin) June 27, 10 am – 4 pm. This is an educational event where the public can see and learn about Purple Martins. Members will be available to advise fest goers on bird ecology, site selection, house selection, attraction methods, and care and maintenance of a purple martin colony. A bird banding demonstration will take place by Master Bird Bander Dick Nikolai; additionally Nancy Businga, a Microbiologist will provide a presentation on potential diseases affecting Purple Martins. Food and refreshments will be available for purchase and a fund raising Silent Auction benefiting Wisconsin Purple Martins will also take place. (cash or check only) The event is free and open to the public and children are welcome.

WPMA Lakeshore Chapter to hold Meeting

The Lakeshore Chapter will be holding an informal meeting sometime in early 2020, the date and location have yet to be worked out, we will post the details as they become available. The purpose of these meetings is to allow Purple Martin landlords the opportunity to get together in an informal setting and just “talk martins”; topics that typically are discussed are types of houses, sizes of colonies, best practices for attraction, and protection of the birds. Watch our Facebook page and Website as these plans become available.

WPMA Seeking New Members

The Wisconsin Purple Martin Association is actively seeking new members. We are an organization that is committed to the restoration and preservation of Purple Martins across the state of Wisconsin. For a membership we can offer; Public meetings, Annual Martifest, a state wide mentor program, free site evaluations, managed public colonies, website and Facebook presence. We are asking for a \$10.00 annual membership fee. Membership dollars help us promote research with the cooperation of the Purple Martin Conservation Association, PMCA and within WPMA parameters. Collected fees also help defer the cost of printed material, mailings, advertising, etc. If you are interested in becoming a member of Wisconsin Purple Martins contact:
Les Rhines at musthavemartins@gmail.com. Or
Deb Zimmermann at dpierce52@yahoo.com

Change in WPMA Board of Directors

2019 has seen changes in the makeup of the WPMA Board of Directors. In June we had a change in the Treasures position; Joe Francis who had been active as an officer in that position since the organization was formed decided to step back and accept a position as a Board Member, we want to thank Joe for many years of dedicated service to our association; Joe will continue to serve as a board member and he will continue to help us in our mentoring program. Taking over the responsibilities of Treasurer is Deb Zimmermann; Deb is married to Greg Zimmeremann our vice-president, so she is very familiar with the work of our organization, we are grateful to Deb for her willingness to accept the position.

In August Nicki Schumaker announced her resignation as Secretary. Nicki, like Joe, had been an officer since the WPMA began. Nicki has two active kids that are heavily involved in school activities and as we all know that takes up a lot of time. Nicki will continue to monitor our public colony at Jetzers Lake in Sheboygan county. Again we want to thank Joe, Deb and Nicki for all that you have done and continue to do for the WPMA.

WPMA Officers/Board of Directors

Officers:

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

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

Deb Zimmermann, Treasurer (920) 467-6253 email: dpierce52@yahoo.com

Board of Directors:

Bob Ring, (920) 989-2771 email: ringbob@earthlink.net

Joe Francis, (920)918-4466 email: jnlfrancis44@gmail.com

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

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

Once again, we would like to pass along our best wishes to you this holiday season.

The Wisconsin Purple Martin Association.

