



ESSEX COUNTY PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION *Newsletter January, 2011*

Hello fellow martin enthusiasts !

The 2010 season is now well behind us, and it looks like it was a productive one. John Balga banded over 300 birds using 652 bands. Our fledged bird count from the members who reported is **1,851** !!!!

Good news has come from the Erie Shores Golf Club in Leamington. They have agreed to replace the two gourd racks which were damaged beyond recovery during the tornado last June.

We presently have 32 paid memberships and we continue to look for more interested people to join our club. Last March, we participated in the Leamington Home & Garden Show by setting up a kiosk to help promote our club to our community. This proved to be most successful since we were able to add a few new members and generate quite a bit of interest with our free information handouts. We are planning for the 2011 show which will be held March 4th, 5th and 6th. If you are able to give a little of your time and lend some assistance, please contact one of our Board members for more information. **We would greatly appreciate more helping hands this year.**

2011 is the 10th anniversary of the Essex County Purple Martin Association. We are in the early stages of planning a special event to celebrate the club's success over the past 10 years. So far we have a tentative date which is November 5th. We are in the process of searching out a venue to hold the event and enlisting a special guest speaker. An undertaking like this requires a lot of work and we will be looking for club members to help. Please try to attend our meetings and follow our newsletters to learn more about this important endeavour.

I would like to thank Mary Wilson for all her hard work this past year. She was the driving force behind our participation in the Home & Garden Show and she continues to put together our newsletters. John Balga also deserves our thanks for all the things he does for our club. He has created a new web site to showcase our association, and if you check it out at www.essexpurplemartins.ca you will be pleasantly surprised. Thanks also to Cy Poisson for taking over the lending library.

Let's hope for a successful 2011. We are just months away from the return of our feathered friends. Soon we'll be thinking about preparations of our colonies. Just remember the club is here to help with the continued success of every members' colony !

Chairperson,
Paul Hamel

ECPMA contacts:

Paul Hamel 519-738-3476 kp_hamel@live.ca
John Balga 519-776-5777 martinman@hotmail.com
Mary Wilson 519-326-1710 helenmwilson@yahoo.ca
Dennis Shady... 519-738-4411 dennisshady@yahoo.ca

First purple martin of 2011 arrived in Florida on January 5th, 2-3 weeks later than the average arrival date.

As of January 11th, 9 scout reports have been filed on the PMCA



CRICKETS



Again this year Mary Wilson will be taking your orders for crickets. The supplier has held their cost steady for a number of years at \$18.00 per thousand. Mary will place the order as soon as martins have arrived in northern Ohio, and everyone will have their crickets, ready to use (frozen and packaged by Mary), for when our martins start arriving home.

If you want crickets, please see Mary after this meeting, or call her (519-326-1710) before mid-March. Prepayment of \$20.00 per thousand is required; any adjustment on the price will be made when you pick up your crickets. (The larger the order, the lower the shipping cost, which is shared amongst all orders.)

Our 2010 colony results, as reported by 20 members.

If you don't see your data here and want to submit it, we'd be happy to have it for our club records. Please contact Mary (see page 1 for contact information).

- John Balga 165 fledged; from 43 pairs
- Gilles Breton..... 129 fledged; from 29 active nests out of 30 pairs
40 fledged; from 10 pairs by Gilles' neighbour Nick
40 fledged; from 16 pairs at Woodland Hills golf course
- Leo & Pauline Dunn 26 fledged; from 6 active nests; also hosting 2 nests of tree swallows
- Paul Hamel..... 23 fledged; from 7 pairs
- Arnold & Lucille VanEssen..... 60 fledged (estimated)
- Cy Poisson 55 fledged; from 17 pairs
- Mary Wilson.....591 fledged; 97 from home colony; 144 from Orchard View Colony;
and 350 (estimate) from Erie Shores colony.
Iso, 450 TS fledged from 2 golf courses, and about 12 bluebirds.
- Dennis Shady 105 fledged; from 26 pairs; also 5 TS fledged.
- Alex & Carol Smith 0 fledged; (still waiting), but fledged 5 tree swallows
- Joe & Marie Manierski..... 87 fledged; from 19 pairs and 101 eggs.
- Lyle Papps.....184 fledged; 53 pairs, 260 eggs of which 239 hatched. Also 4 TS fledged.
- Trudy Friesen 120 fledged; from 3 pairs
- Nancy Robson..... 113 fledged; from 34 pairs with 120 eggs; finally has success with QuadPod!
- Al Hamill 8 fledged; from 3 pairs
- Marie-Anne Knapp 75 fledged; from 19 pairs – 93 eggs of which 82 hatched.
- Bev Ferguson 0 fledged; still waiting for first pair.
- Don Bissonnette 3 fledged; from 1 pair, but had 2 SY pairs with nests but no eggs; fledged 31 bluebirds.
- Wes & Nancy Ford 25 fledged; from 6 pairs; also had 4 ts nests
- Rudy Dyck 0 fledged; still waiting
- Patty Segedin 2 fledged; 1 pair and 1 spare martin.

1,851 new martins flying

A look back at 2010

.....We began our year with our usual meeting in **January** - a breakfast meeting at Heritage Village, at which we got the members' support for taking part in the Leamington Home and Garden Show in March.

.....So, on the first weekend of **March**, we set up our exhibits in our designated spot in the Kinsmen Recreation Centre in Leamington, and with some members who volunteered a few hours of their time, "manned" the booth for the entire weekend. Seven new memberships came out of that weekend, and many interested persons stopped and learned something about purple martins. All who took part felt that this venue provides a very effective outreach opportunity for our club, and so, we plan to take part in the H&G show again this year.

.....**April** brought the martins and the first meeting of spring (which has become something of a tradition) at Gilles & Judy Breton's house in Woodslee. The weather usually provides an opportunity for Gilles to put on a feeding display, with his martins flying to catch the egg that he flings for them, but if memory serves correctly, last year was fine weather and there were no takers.

.....The annual **May BLUEBIRD TOUR**, hosted by Don Bissonnette, was scheduled but unfortunately the weather was horrible that day, and no one ventured out. Probably the bluebirds would have been holed up somewhere too. Thank you to Don Bissonnette, our host, for doing this each year for our club. He is very knowledgeable and has many entertaining stories to tell of his experiences as a birder, so this tour is highly recommended for anyone who hasn't been yet. Hopefully 2011 will bring a better day for this event.

.....**June** was a busy month, with an early meeting at Orchard View Golf course, and two "**member-host**" meetings at the homes of *Pauline & Leo Dunn*, and *Barbara & John Balga*. At the end of June, John Balga banded birds at the colonies of Cy & Monica Poisson, Marianne Knapp, Dennis Shady, Joe Manierski, Trudy Friesen, Nancy Robson, Liz Cornies, and Lyle Papps, as well as at his own colony. In all, 650 bands were used, including 300 of the red bands which indicate Ontario. .



.....Banding at Joe Manierski's colony, Lake St. Clair



....at Pauline & Leo Dunn's home.....

We thank our "**member-hosts**" who opened up their homes for our meetings.

On May 15th, Leo & Pauline Dunn opened their home to us and provided a delicious assortment of refreshments, and good fellowship. What a beautiful setting they have - open flyways.. a pond martins tree swallows..... and a Canada Goose sitting on her nest ! It was a lovely day, and the weather was fine as well !

On June 26th, John & Barbara Balga hosted the meeting and provided a wonderful lunch as well, to which some of the members had contributed with appetizers and desserts. They have a beautiful backyard as well, where John's creativity and ability to build things is evident pictures follow. He maintains an interesting variety of martin housing in his yard and is always testing and experimenting.



...A view of the variety of housing in John & Barbara's yard....



..... Beautiful deck and patio area.....

Our final meeting in **September** was at the Orchard View Golf Course again (strangely quiet with all the birds gone), where we shared the experiences and results of the season gone by.



June, 2010 A frightening night

...that will long be remembered by Leamington area residents. A tornado swept along the shore of Lake Erie, leaving destruction from Harrow through to Point Pelee. Erie Shores Golf Course was particularly hard hit, with so many trees down and fairways littered by broken limbs that it looked like a bomb had been dropped. Among the casualties were the two gourd racks at the end of the driving range. This one was the most severely bent, with all eggs having rolled out onto the ground or under the porches. The other gourd rack was bent less severely and most of the eggs were still in the nests.

The golf course was extremely busy with cleanup, but on Wednesday they made time to push the poles straight with a front-end loader. And we were delighted that some martins which had lost their eggs re-nested, even though the rack was unusable from Sunday night through Wednesday afternoon.

Erie Shores agreed to fund replacement racks !!! We will be installing two "Gemini" racks, shown at right. These are made by Creative Universe Enterprises in Pennsylvania, and are one of the most highly recommended gourd rack systems available. The pole is 3" high-tensile aluminum, apparently able to withstand very high winds. The gourd rings are drilled every few inches with hanging holes, and each ring can accommodate 12 – 16 gourds. We ordered their "easy-off predator guards", also, which are very well made. I am looking forward to seeing how this system looks and operates.

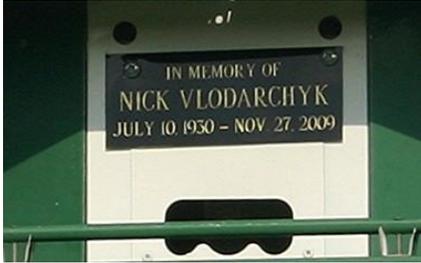


Donation to Essex County Purple Martin Association

Our club was given three purple martin houses by Carol Vlodarchyk to use as the club desired. She is a friend of Trudy Friesen's and after Carol's husband (a devoted martin landlord) passed away, she suggested the idea of the donation to Trudy. John Balga then made the initial contact and Gilles Breton assisted him with modifications and installation.

Two houses were donated to member Randy Marentette in Cottam, and the other Trio castle was modified with SREH and larger compartments and then installed at Woodland Hills Golf Course in Woodslee.

Trudy arranged for a commemorative plaque. Carol is shown here with the golf course owner. The castle will be monitored by Gilles, along with the other martin housing that is erected there and becoming a vibrant colony.



We're on the web!

John Balga has lent his creativity and technical know-how to building our very own website. Please check it out. It is extremely well done; please give him some feedback. He also is appreciative of any suggestions to make it as useful and informative as possible for people wishing to learn about martins locally and get help locally as well.

Please notice that both our **CLUB CALENDAR** and our **NEWSLETTERS** are on this website, as well as some great photos of various club activities click on the NEWS tab.

www.essexpurplemartins.ca

Another website John has constructed is the [Ontario Purple Martin Group Website](http://www.ontariopurplemartins.ca/ontario). With a broader range, this site is to facilitate the connecting of purple martin landlords throughout Ontario with the aim of safeguarding the purple martin which is now officially declared "in decline" in Ontario.

www.ontariopurplemartins.ca/ontario

A website that John has been active in, on our behalf, for several years is the Purple Martin Society NA. This website allows us to participate, in our own page, with in a discussion forum that is shared with a much broader audience. <http://www.purplemartins.com/RTC/forumdisplay.php?f=14> – goes directly to our page <http://www.purplemartins.com> - goes to main website of above (**Purple martin Society NA**) which has the ECPMA link.

John is a great advocate for our club in the various forums in which he participates, sharing news, posting meeting dates, etc. Let's try to support him in this during 2011. In particular with the 3rd site listed (forum), we as a specific group can share our news, questions, and so forth within this free and well-managed larger American based forum.

See next page for our 2011 events calendar.

Meeting Notifications:

We will continue our practice of making reminder phone calls for each meeting, and sending reminder emails out to those with email, but you may want to clip out this schedule, or transfer the dates to your calendar. We always enjoy seeing everyone come out. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated to everyone.

We encourage members to volunteer to “**host**” one of the several meetings designated as “**Member Host**”. The club reimburses expenses to the host member for coffee / donuts / refreshments. It is always interesting to see other members’ sites, and share the love of martins, and the joys and heartbreaks of being a martin landlord with them.

In case of bad weather, individuals should contact the “host” (number will be provided) to confirm if the meeting will be held as scheduled. It will not be the responsibility of the “host” to contact everyone. If volunteers do not come forward for these “host” meetings, the club will attempt to schedule at some other venue, but these meetings provide a wonderful opportunity for members’ colonies to be seen, and for the sharing of ideas and innovations, and so we encourage your participation.

2011 MEETINGS and EVENTS of the Essex County Purple Martin Association

9:00 am Jan 15, 2010.. MEETING – Colasanti’s Tropical Gardens, Ruthven (The Willow Room)

6–9 pm Mar 4 Home & Garden Show
10-5 pm..... Mar 5 Leamington Kinsmen Recreation Complex
12-5 pm..... Mar 6 249 Sherk Street, Leamington

9:00 am Apr 16. Gilles & Judy Breton’s house

9:00 am Apr 30. **BLUEBIRD TOUR** – Hosted by Don Bissonnette (Note: May 7 is rain date)

9:00 am May 14 **Member “Host Meeting”** _____ ??????

9:00 am Jun 4 Orchard View Golf Course

9:00 am Jun 25 **Member “Host Meeting”** - John & Barbara Balga’s – meeting & lunch
519-776-5777

Jun 28 - *Approximate Time Window for banding*

Jul 9. Bird Banding Contact John Balga to participate. 519-776-5777

9:00 am Sep 17 FINAL 2011 MEETING - Orchard View Golf Course