



# Wisconsin Purple Martin Association

To restore and preserve the Purple  
Martin Population Throughout  
Wisconsin



The **Purple Martin** (*Progne subis*) is the largest North American swallow. These aerial acrobats have speed and agility in flight, and when approaching their housing, will dive from the sky at great speeds with their wings tucked.

### **Description and taxonomy**

Purple Martins are a kind of swallow, of the genus *Progne*. Like other members of this genus, they are larger than most of the other swallows. The average length from bill to tail is 20 cm (7.9 in). Adults have a slightly forked tail. Adult males are entirely black with glossy steel blue sheen, the only swallow in North America with such coloration. Adult females are dark on top with some steel blue sheen, and lighter underparts. Subadult females look similar to adult females minus the steel blue sheen and browner on the back. Subadult males look very much like females, but solid black feathers emerge on their chest in a blotchy, random pattern as they molt to their adult plumage.



**After Second Year Male (ASY)**



**After Second Year Female (ASY)**



**Second Year Male (SY)**



**Second Year Female (SY)**

# Question:

## What do Purple Martins sound like?

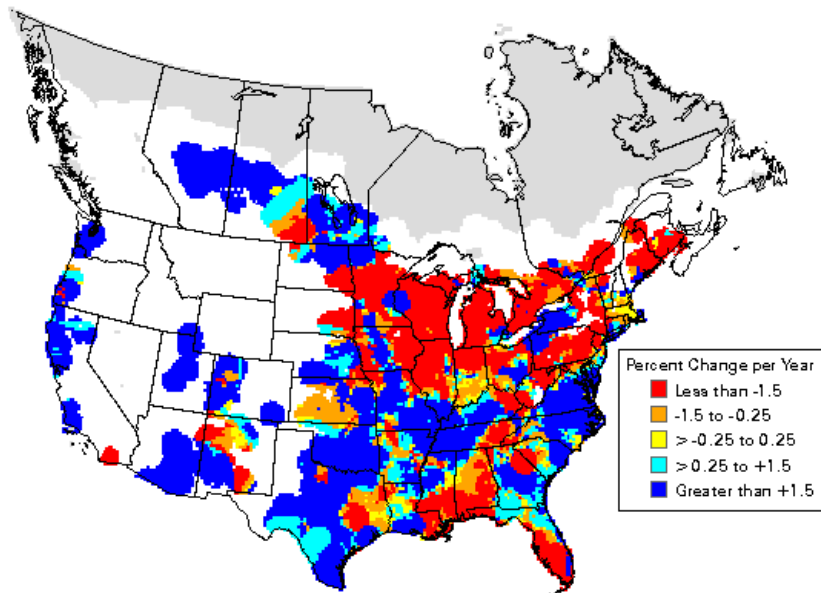
Purple Martins are fairly noisy, chirping and making sounds that have been described as chortles, rattles, and croaks. The various calls are said to be "throaty and rich" and can be rendered as tchew-wew, pew pew, choo, cher, zweet and zwrack. The males have a gurgling and guttural courtship song, a dawn song, and even a subsong used at the end of the breeding season.

[Vocalizations](#)

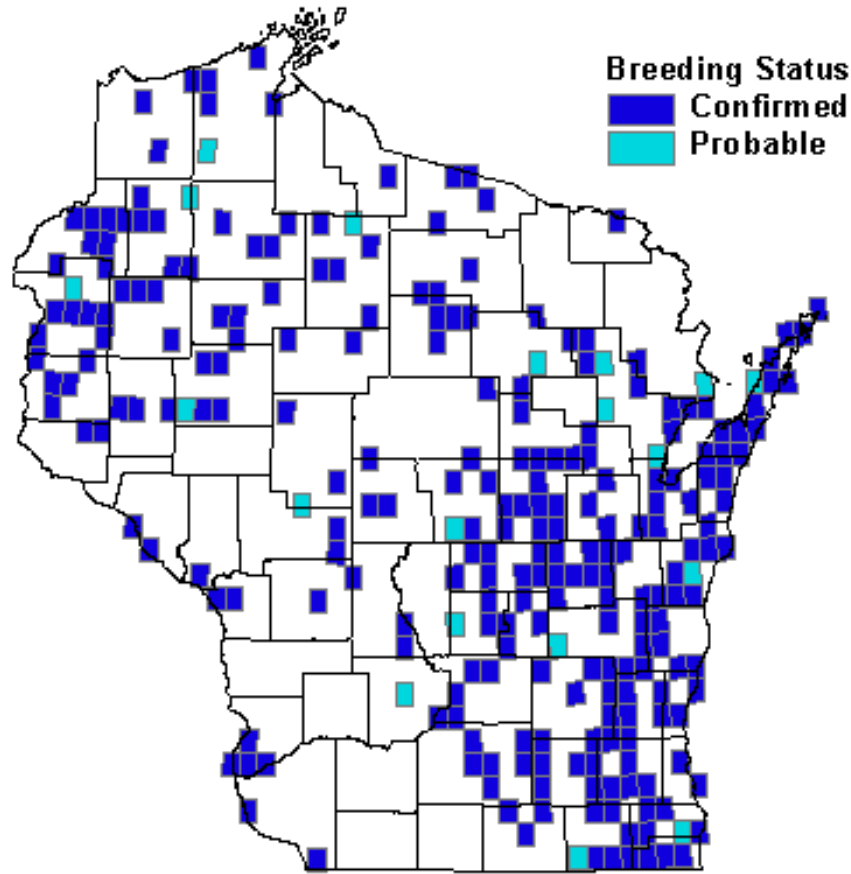
|-----1966-2012 trends--| |-----2002-2012-----|

**N Trend ( 95% CI ) Trend ( 95% CI ) RA**

wisconsin 79 -6.45 ( -7.55, -5.30) -5.97 (-10.04, -1.36) 3.0



# Wisconsin Population Density



# Question:

## What is our season for Purple Martins?

Scouts arrive  
in Wisconsin in  
Late March,  
early April

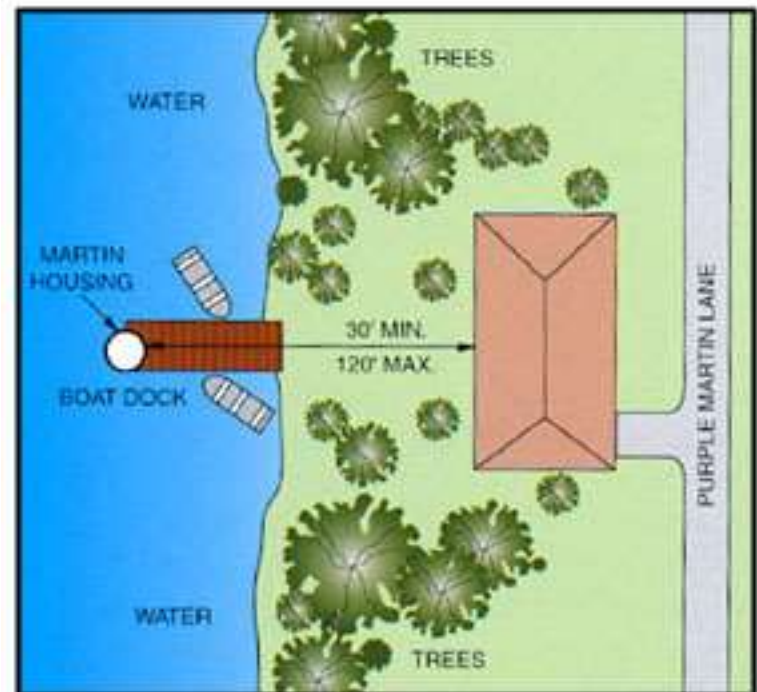
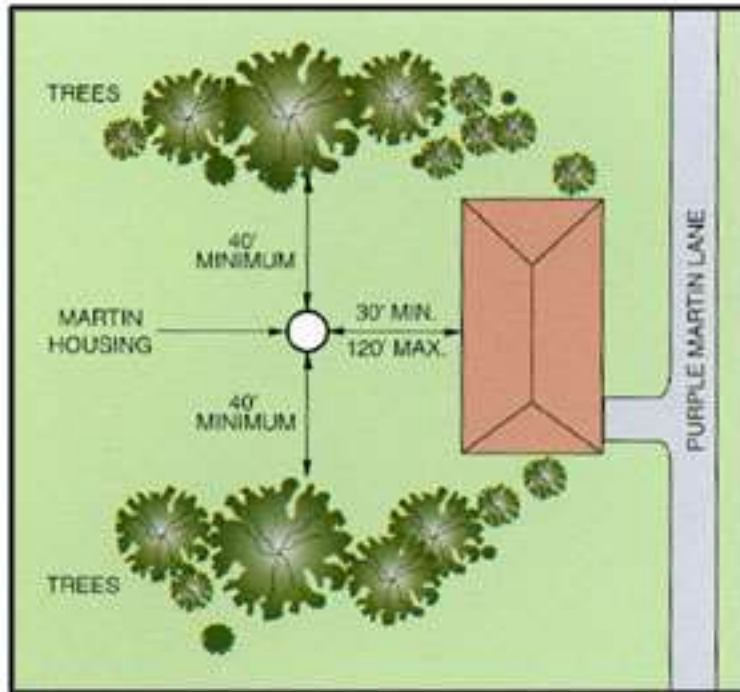
[Go to PMCA  
and watch  
migration](#)



Martins leave to  
begin migration in  
late July to mid  
August

# How do I become a PM Landlord?

As they say in real estate; Location, Location, Location!



Martins require a flyway from at least three directions.



# How do I become a PM Landlord?

Provide manageable Housing



Manageable means, that the house has deep compartments with pull out nest trays, and that the house can be safely raised and lowered on the pole with a boat winch without disturbing the Martins.

# How do I become a PM Landlord?

Northstar House, designed by Bob Buskus



# How do I become a PM Landlord?

T 14 House, designed by Andy Troyer



## Bungalows and Northstar



# How do I become a PM Landlord?

You must control ground and aerial predators



Predators are: Squirrels, Snakes, Raccoons, Cats, Hawks, Owls

# Ground Predators



# Prevent Aerial Predators, if necessary



Barred Owl



Kestrel



Coopers Hawk



Great Horned Owl



Sharp Shin hawk

# How do I become a PM Landlord?

You must control Nest site competitors



English House Sparrows and European Starlings compete with martins for nest boxes

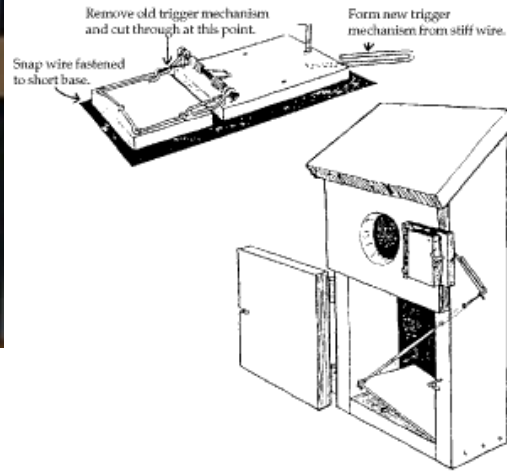


# How do I control nest box competition?

You must trap, shoot, and use Starling Resistant Entrances (SREH) (No round holes allowed)



Crescent Entrance



Connally II Entrance



English House Sparrows and European Starlings are non-native species and are not under federal control.

# How do I become a PM Landlord?

You must use attraction techniques (Advertise)



Song bird Magnet



Play Dawnsong mornings starting at 4:30 to 7:30

Attach at least two decoys to your housing, move them around often

Fill the nest trays with pine straw (dry pine needles, no green)

# How do I become a PM Landlord?

Pay attention to your colony; be on the watch for:

Green leaves, bugs, predators, nest site competition, babies



# How do I maintain a colony?

Keep houses in good repair

Keep records

Supplemental feed early returning martins and in cold rainy weather



[Supplemental Feeding](#)

# Additional Resources



## [Wisconsin Purple Martin Association](#)

- Public Meetings
- Free Site Evaluations
- MartinFest
- Managed Public Colonies
- Statewide mentor Program
- Newsletters



## [Purple Martin Conservation Association](#)

- Educational Material
- Forum
- Purple Martin Update (member)
- Purple Martin Marketplace (houses/poles)

# Purple Martin housing is available

- PMCA
  - House's, Poles etc.
- Troyer's Birds Paradise (800-872-0103)
  - House's, poles, plans
- Northern Sky's (Bob Buskas)
  - House's, plans
- Must have Martins (Les Rhines)(920-889-0060)
  - House's, poles, etc.

Thank You any questions?

