

Michigan Purple Martin Friends

MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER

Greetings, fellow purple martin enthusiasts! This is the first in a series of seasonal, fun, informative newsletters about Michigan purple martins and the Michiganders who care for them. We welcome your feedback as we begin this new project. If there is a topic you would like to see included, or perhaps a question you would like to submit, please send your thoughts to: RRoake@michiganaudubon.org. We hope you enjoy this first issue!

My, what unusual weather we're having!

"Spring" certainly came in like a lion this year, dragging out cold winter conditions well into April. Several brave, ambitious Purple Martins ventured north as early as March 22, causing many landlords to stock up on supplemental foods like mealworms, crickets, and scrambled eggs. Although the impacts aren't yet known, many landlords are reporting fewer birds and delayed arrival dates. The weather is delaying migration for many other songbirds and pushing back egg-laying as well for species like Eastern Bluebirds.

Supplemental feeding provides a critical food source during tough times when winged insects are not active. Weather conditions including temperatures below 50F degrees, sustained winds, or precipitation for multiple days likely means aerial insectivores like Purple Martins may go hungry. At a minimum, this causes energetic stress to birds, but for prolonged periods of starvation, these conditions may lead to nest abandonment or even death. Don't let this happen to your colony! Learn about supplemental feeding techniques now so that you can be ready to help your birds when times are tough.

If you're new to supplemental feeding here are some tips to get started:

- **Introduce your Purple Martins to supplemental feeding before bad weather conditions occur.** Add tray-style feeders to the house pole or to a separate pole nearby to familiarize and "train" the birds when weather conditions aren't dire.
- **Use "wigglers."** Mix in live mealworms with thawed, frozen crickets, dehydrated mealworms, or scrambled eggs - the movement will entice even the most skeptical of birds.
- **Place a few food items on the porch or inside the nest cavity.** Having food delivered to the doorstep is a great way to introduce birds to supplemental feeding. Try this method in conjunction with setting up a new food tray. Especially if food is placed in the cavity, be sure to remove any items before they spoil or attract insects.
- **Try the slingshot method.** Aerial insectivores are used to catching food in mid-air, so why not deliver food this way? It can be challenging, but if the birds take to this method, you can eventually toss handfuls of food items into the air during bad weather.

LANDLORD CHATTER

AN INTERVIEW WITH
TARA ROCK

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“Natusam a tolum quatem quia volumeu eos ipicabo. Eteh soluptatem quam quasi sin.”

- Tara Rock

Upcoming Events

Connie Spotts'
Purple Martin Potluck

Join veteran purple martin landlord Connie Spotts and Jackson Audubon for a summer potluck celebration! This event is hosted at the home of Jackson Audubon Society President Connie Spotts on Crispell Lake at Shady Acres Campground. Come see Connie's thriving purple martin colony along with beautiful pollinator gardens and nest boxes for many other birds.

The address is:
2023 Crispell Rd.w
Clark Lake, MI 49234

Call Connie for questions or directions at
517-230-2707.

The fun begins at 11:00 a.m.!