



PURPLE MARTINS

At Home With Humans



Adult Male

Subadult Male

IDENTIFICATION

Adult males are overall iridescent dark purple. Females are grey-brown with small patches of iridescent dark purple on the head or back. Juveniles take 2 years to reach their adult plumage making it difficult to distinguish them from females; they have short, stubby tails and pale yellow at the base of the bill.



Adult Male

Purple Martin
Progne subis

8" tall
30" wingspan

PLEASE HELP US!

In Michigan, Purple Martin populations have been in steep decline for decades. In our state, these birds nest exclusively in man-made housing, which is in short supply. If you have open habitat, especially near water, consider adding a Purple Martin house to your yard.

Purple Martins are social birds with a close relationship to people. In the eastern United States, Purple Martins are entirely dependent on humans to provide houses and gourd for nesting habitat. Purple Martins can be seen swooping to catch insects in open areas across Michigan in the spring and summer before migrating to Brazil to spend the winter. Purple Martins are very social and use a variety of whistles, chirps, clicks and chatter to communicate.



Adult Female

OPEN HABITAT

These aerial acrobats need open habitat with ample room to swoop and catch flying insects. Purple Martin houses can be placed near water or in an open area, but it must be near a human house and away from nearby large trees.



FEEDING

Purple Martins are agile insect hunters and eat large amounts of flying winged insects. Dragonflies and damselflies are some of their favorites.



NESTING BEHAVIOR

Purple Martins build flat nests with straw, twigs, dried pine needles, or even mud. Just before the female lays her eggs, the pair adds a layer of fresh grass leaves. Purple Martins typically lay between 4 and 6 pure white eggs.



Adult Male



MIGRATION

Purple Martins are migratory birds and travel up to 10,000 miles each year, flying between North and South America!



Be a good Purple Martin landlord by keeping watch on the house, cleaning it regularly, and preventing invasive bird species like House Sparrows and European Starlings from taking over these special houses, leaving the native Purple Martins with nowhere to go.

www.pulsedesign.com 801-786-7610 30-Minute/1-Hour

Purple Martins

Camrose has undertaken a long-term, integrated Purple Martin conservation project. Purple Martins depend entirely on human made housing for nesting. There are 21 City owned Purple Martin houses and each of them have caretakers (landlords) from the community. You will see these birds swooping to catch insects in open areas and near water bodies. They arrive in Canada during the spring to nest and care for their young in the summer before they migrate to Brazil for the winter.

Caring for Purple Martins

Each Purple Martin landlord has an important job of maintaining the houses. Weekly nest checks are important for eliminating unwanted birds and nests. These houses are opened during the spring and closed at the end of summer.

Feeding

Purple Martins are primarily aerial insect hunters that eat large amounts of flying winged insects.

Identification

Adult males are overall iridescent. The Females are gray brown with small patches of dark purple on back and head. The juveniles take 2 years to reach their adult plumage which can make it difficult to distinguish from the females.

CWSS Efforts

The Camrose Wildlife Stewardship Society has selected Purple Martins as its flagship species. Part of the conservation efforts is to conduct annual surveys to estimate the Purple Martin population in the City. The CWSS also provides landlords and the general public education, new research and knowledge about the Purple Martins at the annual Purple Martin Festival, which is held in Camrose.

Nesting Behavior

Purple Martins build flat nests using twigs and straw with a layer of leaves on the top. The eggs are white in colour and females typically lay between 4 and 6 eggs.