

Purple Martin News Update

Winter/Spring 2012

From the **Western Purple Martin Foundation**, Nanaimo, BC Website: www.saveourmartins.org
(working in association with Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society (GBEARS),
Nanaimo, BC Website: www.georgiabasin.ca)

Highest number of Purple Martins recorded in 2011

The BC Purple Martin population increased significantly in 2011 to **735 pairs, the highest number recorded in the 26-year history of the recovery program!** This is slightly lower than the 800 pairs expected after last year's good production when over 2,200 nestlings were raised successfully. A review of the band reading data showed an on-going decline in the number of older birds from the 2003-2005 growth phase which may account for the slightly lower number of pairs than expected.

Another cold and wet spring slowed the return and nesting of all age groups of Purple Martins by 2-3 weeks in 2011. Where early nesting did occur, nestling losses were high and some adult losses also occurred as was seen at the Fanny Bay, Hornby Island and Comox area colonies. The summer continued to be cool but the later nesting martins managed to find a sufficient supply of flying insects for food and were able to build up their fat reserves in preparation for egg laying. The number of eggs/pair was not as high as last year but they still managed to produce **another high record of young - ~2,200 nestlings were successfully raised!** This should result in another increase in population numbers for next year. Perhaps we'll exceed our short term goal of 800 pairs by 2012.



Adult feeding dragonfly to nestling

With the help of our summer students and many volunteers in Victoria, Campbell River, Powell River, Sechelt and the Lower Mainland, we were able to band over 1800 nestlings.

Upcoming Events for 2012



Saturday, May 5 8:30 am – 1 pm

Morrell Sanctuary Plant Sale

Visit GBEARS' tables and buy some BC native plants and new perennials for your garden & patio pots.

Saturday & Sunday, May 26-27 10 am – 4 pm

Ladysmith Maritime Festival

Visit our Purple Martin display & Kid's Crafts Corner down on the dock.

Sunday, July 29 1 pm – 4 pm

8th Annual Purple Martin Open House

Displays, refreshments and nestling banding at 3 & 4 pm at the Ladysmith Maritime Society Marina (Follow the yellow signs) Wear something purple!

Successful return of geolocators for migration study



Ali Loewen (left), Amy Hsueh & Bruce Cousens putting a geolocator on an adult Purple Martin

This year marks the third year of a BC Purple Martin migration study and the most successful to date.

Three of the ten birds fitted with geolocators in 2010 returned in 2011. The first 2 were spotted at Ladysmith Maritime Society Community Marina and were successfully retrieved. The third geolocator was also successfully retrieved from a Purple Martin nesting at the Buckley Bay colony.

A fourth geolocator was spotted at the Deep Bay colony and was a surprising find. This bird had its geolocator put on in 2009 and had been seen in 2010 but had eluded capture. This year, however, the bird cooperated and was successfully relieved of its geolocator before being set free unharmed. The older versions of geolocators had a larger battery pack and this one remained operational and recorded information for both its 2009 and 2010 migration routes!

Data analysed from several of the geolocators show that these Purple Martins followed a similar route to and from Brazil as the first one retrieved. They flew through the western states, spent some time at a fall roost in the SW States, then flew through Central America and spent the winter in SE Brazil, returning by the reverse route in the spring of 2011. This migration from BC to SE Brazil and return was ~22,000 km long!

The information gathered from the other geolocators is currently being processed and will add greatly to our knowledge of Purple Martin spring and fall migration routes.

With financial support from the Canadian Wildlife Federation, geolocators were put on 20 more adult martins at Ladysmith Maritime Society Community Marina this past summer.

We are now waiting patiently for the Purple Martins to return this coming summer to see how many more geolocators can be successfully retrieved.

For more information about this study, please go to the migration study page on the Foundation website at www.saveourmartins.org/recoveryprogram.html.



Amy Hsueh releasing a geolocator bird

7th Annual Purple Martin Open House



Bruce Cousens giving a banding demonstration

On July 24th, 2011 over 100 people gathered at the Ladysmith Maritime Society Community marina for the 7th annual Purple Martin Open House. Visitors from all over Vancouver Island, the BC Mainland and eastern Canada came to learn about Purple Martins, the largest swallow in N. America. People watched banding demonstrations, enjoyed delicious blueberry milkshakes and learned what they could do to help this Species at Risk in BC.

We would like to thank everyone who made this event a success including members of the Dover Bay Eco Club who helped all day setting up and

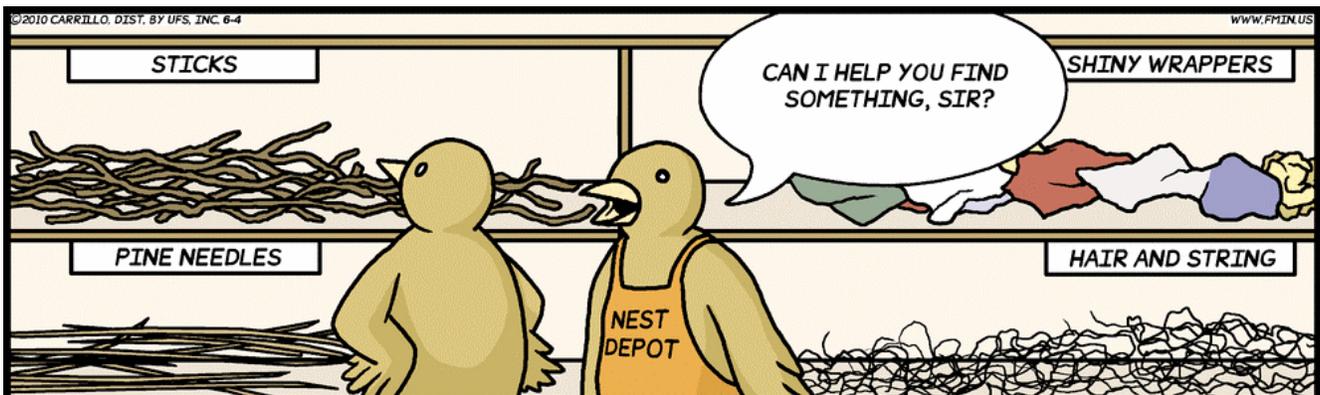
taking down the displays, directing visitors, documenting the event, and serving refreshments; the Ladysmith Maritime Society members for their on-going support of the BC Purple Martin Recovery Program; and, all those who came out and supported the Western Purple Martin Foundation and Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society. We look forward to seeing you at our 8th Annual Open House!

Shop online through  and support Purple Martins

Did you know that you can now support the BC PURPLE MARTIN RECOVERY PROGRAM by shopping online through shopandshare.ca? Choose the **Western Purple Martin Foundation** as the charity you wish to support and go shopping!

'ShopandShare.ca' has partnered with over 120 big-name stores, such as amazon.ca, Boston Pizza, Canadian Tire, Chapters Indigo, Dell, Expedia.ca, Home Depot, Sears, ToysRus, & The Body Shop. The prices are the same, the quality is the same, everything is the same – except 'ShopandShare.ca' will donate a portion of their proceeds from every purchase you make all year long.

This is a chance for you and your family and friends to make a difference. Every purchase generates automatic donations and every little bit helps! There are NO fees & NO pressure to sign up for anything. **Simply go to shopandshare.ca today to start shopping and show your support!**





You make it possible!

As charitable societies, the Western Purple Martin Foundation and Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society (GBEARS) depend on many companies, organizations and individuals to continue the BC Purple Martin Stewardship and Recovery Program. Each year funding for our Purple Martin programs comes from a variety of sources including grants, donations and in kind contributions. We are honoured to have your support. Thank you to all of you for your generous contributions.

Vancouver Island University instructor, Greg Klimes, and some of his Resource Management Officer Technology students again helped clean & repair boxes in the fall of 2011.

Banding nestlings at Powell River (Photo by Andrew Bryant)

The following list includes grants and donations towards the BC Purple Martin Recovery Program in 2011. Our sincere apologies if there are any errors or omissions (please let us know).

PROTECTORS (\$1,000 – \$4,999)

Canadian Wildlife Federation
Coast Community Credit Union
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund
Human Resources & Skills Development Canada
Public Conservation Assistance Fund
Helen Ross
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
TimberWest

PARTNERS (\$500 - \$999)

Burke Mountain Naturalists Society
Kathleen Harder
Ladysmith Maritime Society
Joan Scruton
Pender Islands Conservancy Association
Vancouver Island University

STEWARDS (\$100 – \$499)

Ken Balmer
Steve Baillie
Doug Bell
Carol Davies
Dover Bay Eco Club
Peter Karsten

Barbara & David Low
Dr. Charles Low
In Memory of Joan & Clyde McLeod
Mid Island Co-op
Betty Pearson
Keith & Sylvia Pincott
Kerstin & Rolf Serenius
Ed & Thelma Silkens
Silver Pine Studio
John & Heather Sinclair
Bob & Margaret Vergette
Victoria Voros
Brenda & Vern Yoshida

FRIENDS (Up to \$99)

Backyard Wildbird and Nature Store
Karen Barry
A. V. & M. Butler
Eric Demers
Ryan & Ann Geboers
Harriet Ruedgeberg
Kiyoshi Takahashi
Walter Voros
J. Whittome

A special **Thank You** to all our volunteers for their time and efforts at colony sites and for making nest boxes and supplying equipment such as spotting scopes, tools, ladders and boats when needed.