

CUYAHOGA VALLEY TOWPATH TRAIL CENSUS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2022
(CVTTC)

HISTORY & FACTS of the AUGUST CENSUS

AUGUST		13-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS						
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
60 / 612	52 / 697	55 / 1,445	60 / 1,736	62 / 1,109	63 / 946	64 / 796	66 / 574	68 / 662
2019	2020	2021	2022					
65 / 584	56 / 507	60 / 577	58 / 546					

Most Species seen in August : 68 on 08/03/2018.

Most Individual Birds seen in August : 1,736 on 08/03/2013.

Fewest Species seen in August : 52 on 08/06/2011.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in August : 507 on 08/07/2020.

Species Average in August : 60.7 Species.

Total Individuals Average in August : 830.0 Total Birds.

Lowest Temperature on August Census : 52-degrees F on 08/09/2014.

Highest Temperature on August Census : 92-degrees F on 08/06/2011 & 08/05/2016.

Longest Time Afield on August Census : 10 Hours on 08/02/2019 & 08/08-09/21.*

Shortest Time Afield on August Census : 5 Hours & 30 Minutes on 08/06/2011.

* = August 2021 Census was done over two days due to inclement weather prohibiting completion of Census Route in one day.

LAST AUGUST'S FIELD REPORT

08/08/21 & 08/09/21	TOTAL SPECIES:	60	TOTAL BIRDS:	577
START / END TIME:	(08/08) 6:00am - 2:30pm; (08/09) 4:45pm - 6:15pm			
TIME AFIELD:	10:00	FT. MI.:	13.63	
TEMP.:	(08/08) 64F ~ 82F ~ 73F ~ 75F; (08/09) 90F ~ 86F			
ROUTE:	(08/08) Red Lock Trailhead south to Botzum Trailhead; (08/09) Botzum Trailhead south to Merriman Valley.			
	OBSERVERS:	John Henry and Douglas W. Vogus		
CONDITIONS:	(08/08) Foggy at start, warming and turning mostly sunny; turning overcast with rumbles of thunder at 12:05pm and light sprinkles; we took refuge under a willow tree at the Ira Beaver Marsh hoping this would blow over - as there was no mention of any rain in the forecast. This eventually turned into a severe downpour with lightning forcing us to leave our now worthless shelter, as there was no mention of this in the forecast! With no umbrellas or rain gear - as there was no mention of a possible monsoon in the forecast!! - we made our way to the vault toilets at Ira Trailhead, which had an overhead awning, and rode out the remainder of the storm with four bicyclists and two motorcyclists, who all agreed - there was no mention of this in the forecast!!! Rain subsided at 1:35pm, and wet and bedraggled, we made our way south to the Botzum Trailhead to call it a day and finish the last leg of the census the following day. (08/09) Hot, humid, and breezy with light sprinkles just as we ended.			
TRAIL CONDITIONS:	(08/08) Good, then turning soaked and puddled; (08/09) Good.			
RIVER CONDITIONS:	(08/08) Low and mostly clear, turning swift and turbid after the downpour. (08/09) Slightly muddy.			

THREE YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

On August 02, 2019 we set a census high for Ohio's largest member of the swallow family, the Purple Martin. A difficult species to get in the Cuyahoga Valley outside of late summer migration, we tallied 29 birds, a mix of both adults and immatures, perched on the bare snags at the Ira Beaver Marsh.

AUGUST 2022's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*)

DESCRIPTION:

Male not purple, but uniformly blue-black throughout; appears black at a distance; tail moderately forked; female and immature, gray to white below, with upperparts mixed blue and gray.

LENGTH:

7 & 1/4" to 8 & 1/2"

WING:

15 & 1/2" - 16 & 3/4"

WEIGHT:

44.9 to 45.3 grams
(about 1 & 3/4 oz.)

VOICE:

CALL: Most frequently gives a "chur" call in many situations. When alarmed or excited, gives a "zwrack" or "zweet" call. **SONG:** Usually a series of chortles, liquid gurgles, and clicking, and slightly harsher croaking phrases.

HABITS:

Most of insect food is caught in the air; some while walking on the ground: largely ants, wasps, beetles, grasshoppers, stink bugs, treehoppers, dragonflies (a favorite), some caterpillars, moths, butterflies, horseflies, robber flies, spiders, etc. In drinking and bathing in flight, martins skim surface of ponds and rivers with bill, dipping hind part of body, usually in early morning and late afternoon. Fond of eggshells scattered on ground for them.

HABITAT:

Apparently never lived in great forests of early America, likes open grassy river valleys, shores of lakes, meadows about ponds and coastal marshes. Also in glades of pine forests and cut-over woods in Florida, in parts of Arizona depends on saguaro forests for nest holes. Its absence, like that of Cliff Swallow, from apparently suitable environment over its wide range still puzzles ornithologists.

NESTING:

NEST: In colonies; both sexes carry grasses, leaves, twigs, shreds of bark, feathers, mud, into martin house compartments. **EGGS:** March to July, 3 to 8 eggs, usually 4 to 5, white. **INCUBATION:** By female, 15 to 16 days (male guards nest during her absences); young fly at 26 to 31 days after hatching. One brood per year.

RANGE:

Nests west of Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada from southwest British Columbia south to Baja California, Sonora, and Arizona; east of the Rocky Mountains from northeast British Columbia, central Alberta, east through northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, southern Ontario, to central Nova Scotia, south to the Gulf Coast and southern Florida. Winters in South American lowlands east of the Andes south to northern Argentina and southern Brazil.

STATUS:

Fairly common but a local and declining summer resident. Causes of long-term declines unknown. Competes for nest cavities with the introduced European Starling and House Sparrow. In the West, logging has reduced availability of natural nest cavities. Increased availability of human-provided nest sites has had a positive effect on populations. Sharp declines in southern California.

Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the Purple Martin in Northeast Ohio.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
		ooooorrrr	rrruuuuuu	CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC
Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC	Cuuuuurr	rrr	*	

- CCCCCCC** = Common to Abundant. Frequently encountered in this region during this time of year.
- UUUUUUUU** = Uncommon. Occurs regularly during this time of year but not frequently detected.
- RRRRRRRRRR** = Rare. These birds can occur more or less annually but are easily missed in their scant presence in the region.
- OOOOOOOO** = Occasional. Limited history in this region and are not to be expected.
- ******* = Accidental. Few records in the past 60 years. Not expected in this region during this time of year.
- !!!!!!!!!!!!** = Fluctuating Abundance. May occur some years yet absent other years. Irruptive or overwintering birds.

History of the Purple Martin on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 ~ present.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.								
FEB.								
MAR.								
APR.								
MAY								
JUN.								
JUL.								
AUG.				1	2		2	
SEP.						3	1	
OCT.								
NOV.								
DEC.								

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
JAN.					
FEB.					
MAR.					
APR.		1			
MAY					
JUN.					
JUL.					
AUG.	5	29*	7	3	3
SEP.					
OCT.					
NOV.					
DEC.					

DID YOU KNOW?:

The swallow family is a very homogeneous family of birds, all with very similar body structures, and generally unlike any other passerines? Swallows have long pointed wings with 10 primaries (the tenth greatly reduced); small compressed bills with a wide gape, sometimes with rictal bristles; short legs; and square to deeply forked tails. Feathers of the lores are directed forward, which shades the eyes, a useful adaptation for aerial insectivores. The structure of the syrinx (vocal apparatus) is well differentiated from other passerine families, though for the most part, swallows are unremarkable singers.

- *** = HIGHEST COUNT TOTAL ON CENSUS.
- BOLD #** = HIGHEST COUNT FOR THAT YEAR.

DID YOU KNOW?: The genus name of the Purple Martin, *Progne* (PROG-nee), is Latin, from the Greek *Prokne*, daughter of Pandion and fabled to have been changed into a swallow? The species name, *subis* (SUE-biss), is Latin, name applied by Pliny, Roman naturalist, to a bird that breaks eagles' eggs.

DID YOU KNOW?: Thankfully, Purple Martins have adapted to "martin houses" supplied by humans. But where did they nest originally? Much like Tree Swallows, they would nest in old woodpecker holes or natural cavities in trees, or somewhat like the Northern Rough-winged Swallow, would nest among loose rocks on cliffs. And, much like the Barn Swallow or the Cliff Swallow, would use mud in their nests, basically to keep the eggs from rolling out. They were originally enticed by North American indigenous tribes to nest in gourds or calabashes they put up for them. To see these aerial insectivores in action, the following two pages are from the Portage Lakes Purple Martin Association, founded in 2000 by Larry Hunter. Locally, it has been an amazing success story, and one you can see right here in Summit County.



Although usually seen from afar and looking mostly dark, the male Purple Martin is splendid when close at hand.

(photo by: Reanna Thomas)

THE AMAZING PURPLE MARTIN



Purple Martins truly are amazing and a very accurate barometer of the environment. By keeping insect populations in check, they dramatically reduce the need for damaging insecticides and poisons that can pollute the air and water.

Purple Martins are the largest member of the swallow family. Martins are about 7-inches long with a wingspan of 16" - making them one of the most acrobatic birds in flight.



Purple Martins are dependent on humans, especially in the cold weather when they return in the Spring. Volunteers flip scrambled eggs into the air to feed the birds and are treated to a spectacular acrobatic display found nowhere else in nature.

An estimated 95% of Martins east of the Rocky Mountains nest in man-made housing. A pair lays two to seven eggs, typically in May and early June. The chicks hatch in about 15 days and fledge approximately 30 days later.



In August, the migration ritual begins when thousands and thousands of birds roost in reed beds at Nimisila Reservoir. Starting in September, they migrate over 6,000 miles to South America - Flying as far as 300 miles per day.

COME AND JOIN US!



Get Involved * Get Inspired

Become a Portage Lakes Purple Martins member today. Learn more about the incredible Purple Martin and how they benefit your community and the great State of Ohio.

For more information on membership, Buckeye MartinFest, Twilight Boat Rides, to subscribe to our newsletter, or just to find out what the fun is all about, go to:

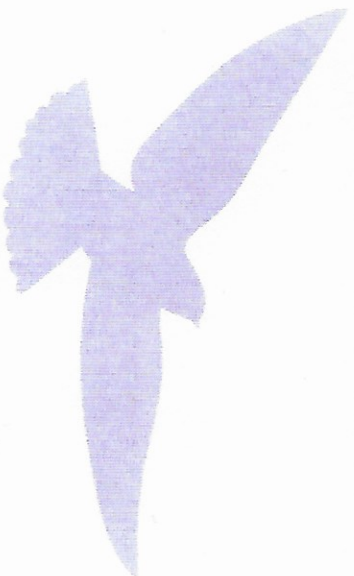
PortageLakesPurpleMartins.com

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ENDORSED BY: Akron Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau, Greater Akron Audubon Society, Ohio Division of Natural Resources, Portage Lakes Advisory Council, Portage Lakes Kiwanis, Purple Martin Conservation Association, Summit Metro Parks, Wild Ohio



**THE PORTAGE LAKES
PROUD TO BE THE PURPLE
MARTIN CAPITAL OF OHIO**



WE BUILD MEMORIES

Portage Lakes Purple Martin Association

Founded 2000

PortageLakesPurpleMartins.com

THE PORTAGE LAKES PURPLE MARTIN CAPITAL OF OHIO



The Portage Lakes area in Northeastern Ohio is comprised of parts of Akron, New Franklin, Green and Coventry Township. Located about six miles south of downtown Akron, the area has over 2,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs with more than 40 miles of shoreline.

The Portage Lakes are anchored by 411 acres of Portage Lakes State Park. The Park is home to numerous species of birds, waterfowl and wildlife of every description.

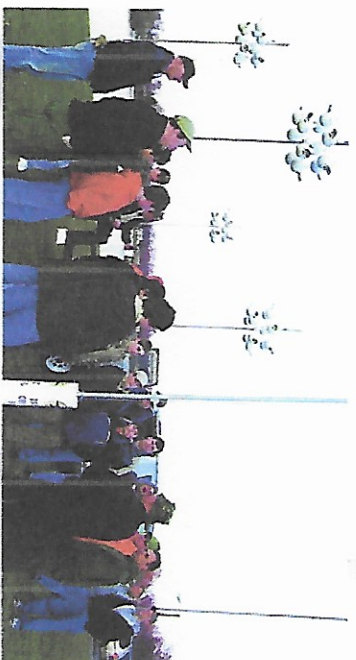


The PLPMA was founded in 2000. Since then, the Purple Martin population has grown from one documented pair that fledged five chicks - to over 650 nesting pairs and a total population of well over 3,000 birds that consume 100 pounds of flying insects each day.

On December 19, 2014, Governor John R. Kasich signed House Bill #404 making the Portage Lakes area the official Purple Martin Capital of Ohio. The bill was sponsored by State Representatives Anthony DeVitis and Marilyn Slaby.

The Purple Martin is just one more unique feature that makes the Portage Lakes a fantastic place to visit...and one of the best kept secrets in Ohio for bird watchers!

THE PORTAGE LAKES PURPLE MARTIN ASSOCIATION



OUR MISSION: To propagate Purple Martins and to educate the public on the benefits of the birds. Everything we do is to this end.

Founded in 2000, PLPMA is dedicated to helping the Purple Martin feed, breed, and prosper in their natural habitat.

The PLPMA provides and oversees 660 gourd on 50 permanent poles at 30 different sites around the Portage Lakes. PLPMA members and volunteers feed the birds in inclement weather, help to band the birds when appropriate, keep track of eggs, chicks and fledglings in regular nest checks and conducts seminars and events throughout the year to educate the public and raise funds



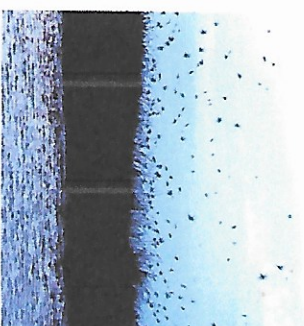
Buckeye MartinFest in June is a chance for birders to interact with Purple Martins at a very personal level.

WE BUILD MEMORIES



Bird banding and health checks are an important part of Buckeye MartinFest

Each night in August, the PLPMA runs boat trips on beautiful Nimisila Reservoir in the Portage Lakes where people can experience - from just a few feet away - the amazing spectacle of more than 30,000 Martins swirling together as they prepare for migration.



What people say about this experience:

"...a masterpiece of nature." ~ Steve, Bath OH

"...incredible. What a rush!" ~ Mike, Brownsville, MD

"...so beautiful. So magical. So musical. It takes your breath away." ~ Sue, Hocking Hills, OH

"...what a thrill! The kids and I were just blown away" ~ Jennifer, Columbus, OH

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AUGUST'S DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW?: *Terance James Bond is rightly regarded as one of the foremost bird illustrators in Britain? The range and ability of this artist and his meticulous attention to the most delicate of details have been known to bird-lovers for many years.*

DID YOU KNOW?: *Terance James Bond was born at Bures St. Mary, Suffolk in September 1946. Terance was educated at Bures Primary School and Stoke-by-Nayland Secondary School, after which he took various positions, including in a drawing office in Ipswich. A self-taught artist, but early on he had an interest in wildlife, which developed into an ability to paint from nature. His first solo show was at the Haste Gallery, Great Colman Street, in Ipswich in 1971, when his twenty-five pictures were all sold, and he was included in their 40th. anniversary exhibition in 1998, also exhibiting widely. In 1981 he was invited to submit work for an exhibition staged by the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) in London. The showcase led to his paintings being used on fine art business calendars, a relationship with Bemrose of Derby, lasting almost 30 years. His work has also been featured on bone-china plates produced by Wedgewood and is sold widely in Britain, Europe, and America.*

(from: suffolkartists.co.uk)

DID YOU KNOW?: *As we dive yet again into the artist's mind, the following is the text from Bond's painting of the Barn Swallows that follow. The book is from my personal collection, given to me from my late father in Christmas of 1993.*

"The Swallows, Swifts and Martins are some of the most welcome summer visitors to the British Isles. They arrive from Africa at varying intervals during the spring from as early as mid-March to take up residence at nesting locations from the previous year. The most familiar of these is the House Martin, a bird that is closely bound up with modern man and his buildings. They will form large, noisy colonies under the eaves of houses."

"When I was a young man Swallows nested regularly in the open-fronted buildings around the stack-yard of my parents' farm. For this reason the swallow was always the best-loved member of the family. As if to reinforce this affinity with farm buildings and similar structures the species is known as the Barn Swallow in the United States of America."

"In the painting shown here I have deliberately placed the birds against a fairly light and plain background of an old white-painted timbered building, a device which has helped accentuate the delicate and streamlined tail feathers of the adult bird. There is no obvious difference between the plumage of the male and female Swallow. The simplest way, however, to tell the male from the female is the length of the tail streamers; the male has the longest, the female the next longest and birds born during the year the shortest."

"Old material, wood or stone, is always interesting to paint particularly if some decay or weathering has taken place, for besides adding a tactile element in the form of the holes and cracks and their accompanying shadows, it also adds a sense of time to a particular scene."



Terance James Bond's painting of a Swallow (Barn Swallow) family, a common occurrence in late summer in Ohio.

(painting by: Terance James Bond)

LITERATURE CITED

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*** Rosche, Larry O.	2004 "Birds of the Cleveland Region" <i>The Cleveland Museum of Natural History</i>
*** Terres, John K.	1956 "The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds" <i>Alfred A. Knopf</i>
*** Vogus, Douglas W.	2010-present "The Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census" (<i>CVTTC ~ Personal Records, Personal Experiences, and Mindless Ramblings</i>)