

Last week's blog was about the Purple Martin fascination shared by my office manager Melissa Williams and our insured's Tim & Angie Russell, well this week I am going to touch on some of the more interesting facts about the birds that leads to the fascination.

1. They prefer the gourds to regular birdhouses due to the privacy and Angie says it is because they swing. However in some areas they prefer the octagon or rectangular shaped condos, as well as the woodpecker holes found in trees.
2. They like to colonize.
3. The older birds will return to the same yards year after year, however the younger ones will leave and look for their own "colony"
4. They eat only insects and will gather where there is plowing or mowing going on so that they can gather all the insects that are disturbed by these actions.
5. There is a bridge here in North Carolina that houses about 100,000 every summer. It is the William B Umstead Bridge in Mann's Harbor. When they leave the bridge for their morning food forage it can actually be seen on Doppler radar.
6. They will travel 2000+ miles to South America for the winter.
7. They rely on humans for their nesting and while raising their young. Angie tells me that "they really aren't timid around people and are undisturbed by our outdoor activities".
8. Their natural enemies are the wild sparrow and the starling. These birds will try to enter their homes and feed on their eggs.
9. They like to have the posts holding the gourds put in the same place each season.
10. All 3 of my sources agree that they worry about "their birds" in inclement weather due to a lack of food source. Melissa says that in a pinch they will eat egg shells.
11. They usually only roost in open areas with minimal amount of trees.

If you need or want more information, visit the purple martin society website <http://www.purplemartins.com/about-purple-martins.htm>.

Well I hope you have enjoyed discovering the hobby of our office manager Melissa and our clients Tim and Angie. I am sure that all 3 of our fans are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the first scouts of the season

Happy Bird Watching.

Gina