

Umstead Bridge Update— and a Call for Support



Hundreds of Purple Martins die each year from collisions with motor vehicles at Umstead Bridge, Mann's Harbor, North Carolina. View more information at <www.PurpleMartinRoost.com>

John Tautin
Purple Martin Conservation Association
219 Meadville St
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Edinboro PA 16444



Photos by Alisa Esposito

The nesting season is hardly underway, but already people in North Carolina are planning ahead for the Purple Martin roost that forms annually at Umstead Bridge, better known locally as Mann's Harbor Bridge, over the Croatan Sound near Mann's Harbor. In the Fall, 2003 issue of the *Purple Martin Update*, martin activist and PMCA member Alisa Esposito wrote about the roost and the tragic number of martins that die there each year from collisions with motor vehicles. Esposito, the *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*, *Defenders of Wildlife* and others are working locally to convince transportation and municipal authorities of the need to protect martins at Umstead Bridge. Progress is being made, but an effective, permanent solution is not yet in place.

In 2005, the effort to protect martins at Umstead Bridge will expand with a public awareness campaign. Plans call for developing a public viewing area and information station, and for hosting a local martin festival during the height of the roosting season. These welcome developments will take the effort to protect martins to a new level by accentuating the positive aspects of having a martin roost in the community. Developing community awareness and appreciation can be very important to long-term protection of martin roosts.

Writing in the May, 2005 issue of the *Nature Society News*, Carlyle Rogillio describes how people have responded enthusiastically to the martin roost at Lake Ponchartrain, Louisiana.

Locally in North Carolina, people are excited about the possibilities of raising awareness of the Umstead Bridge martin roost, but they will need outside support to be successful. Specifically, they need to raise an estimated \$3,000.00 to cover costs of the public awareness campaign. This is where the PMCA, its members and others outside the local area can help the most.

Helping protect the martins at Umstead Bridge is easy. PMCA has established a dedicated "Umstead Bridge Fund" that members and others can contribute to. Simply make your check out to PMCA, but note on your envelope and check that the contribution is for the "Umstead Bridge Fund" (address shown above). Contributions in any amount will be appreciated. To help your contribution go further, PMCA will match contributions dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$1,500.00, half the estimated amount needed.

We hope that you will join in protecting Purple Martins at Umstead Bridge by financially supporting the public awareness campaign. Thank you for your consideration. 