

# PURPLE MARTINS

## Legend & History

Purple Martins are native songbirds of the swallow family.

Throughout history, many cultures have cherished the swallow. Among Romans, the bird was linked with Aphrodite, the beautiful goddess of love. The ancient Greeks held a festival to honor the swallows arrival in the springtime. Sailors saw them as good luck. Native Americans hollowed out and hung gourds to attract Purple Martin colonies.



**The scientific name for the Purple Martin is *Progne Subis*.**

It is said that *Progne* is taken from the Greek name Prokne, daughter of an Athens king. Legend states that Prokne was transformed into a swallow, the very family that the Purple Martin belongs to.

The species name, *Subis* was given to the bird by Roman naturalist Pliny. It is Latin for "*Bird That Breaks Eagle's Eggs*". Since martins have a liking for eggshells, this may be where the bird got its name.

甘燕

In the Chinese culture the swallow is a messenger of spring and happiness. It is seen as a symbol of good fortune. The Chinese symbol for swallow features the image of a bird with an open mouth, outspread wings and forked tail.



The Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of Purple Martins through scientific research and public education.

With a team of people that includes biologists, educators, public members and bird enthusiasts the PMCA works to carry on the thousand year old traditional of caring for Purple Martins and enjoying the birds' presence in their lives.

You too can become involved with the conservation of Purple Martins in a variety of ways:

- Learn to identify the Purple Martin
- Visit a colony in your neighborhood
- Join the PMCA
- Become a Purple Martin landlord
- Participate in research projects
- Volunteer with the PMCA
- Attend events and workshops

Contact us today and together we will make a difference!

Purple Martin Conservation Association

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