

# MartinWatch Nest Data Sheet

Instructions for completion are on the back of this sheet

Date first ASY martin seen at site \_\_\_\_\_

Date first SY male seen at site \_\_\_\_\_

Housing type: Cavity # & Hole type	Male/Female age	Date first egg is laid	Actual hatch date	D A T E S													# Eggs	# Hatched	# Fledged									

Using the codes (below), record exactly what you find in each compartment on every nest check and any action you may take. Using the laminated martin photos, record age of nestlings on first encounter.

Data Sheet TOTALS:

**Housing Type:**  
 WH = wooden house  
 MH = metal house  
 PH = plastic house  
 AG = artificial gourd  
 NG = natural gourd

**Hole Type:**  
 RH = round hole  
 CH = crescent hole  
 EH = excluder hole  
 OH = obround hole

**Age:**  
 A = adult (ASY)  
 S = subadult (SY)

**Species:**  
 PM = Purple Martin  
 HS = House Sparrow  
 ST = European Starling  
 TS = Tree Swallow  
 BB = Bluebird  
 HW = House Wren

**Landlord Action:**  
 NR = nest replaced  
 D = discarded  
 B = banded

**Nest Contents:**  
 X = empty cavity  
 E = # of eggs  
 Y = # of young  
 HD = hatch day  
 1DO = 1 day old  
 DY = # of dead young

**CODES FOR NEST CHECKS**

Customer # \_\_\_\_\_

This data is for the 20\_\_ season

Landlord's name: \_\_\_\_\_

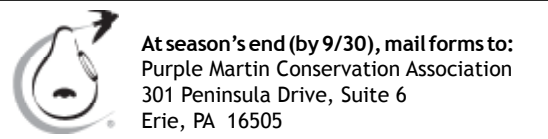
Site location (City/State): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Call 814.833.7656 or email [research@purplemartin.org](mailto:research@purplemartin.org) with any questions.





# The Purple Martin Conservation Association's Project MartinWatch

Help the PMCA conduct groundbreaking research to better understand Purple Martins.

The PMCA needs your help! Since 1995 martin landlords have been participating in a continent-wide citizen science project known as "Project MartinWatch." Participants monitor their nests, record information on this data sheet, and send them to the PMCA by September 30. This allows the PMCA to gain a range-wide understanding of the reproductive success of Purple Martins.

**How to participate:** Conduct a nest check every 5–7 days after nest building begins, recording the contents of each nest cavity and what actions you take. Continue doing nest checks until all young have fledged. Nest checks should be done in the afternoon and as quickly as possible. Contrary to popular belief, nest checks won't cause martins to abandon their nests. In fact, research has shown that landlords who conduct nest checks have more productive colonies.

**Determining parental ages:** Using binoculars or a spotting scope, you can age martins by distinguishing the four breeding plumages.

- Adult males exhibit solid bluish-black plumage.
- Subadult males will have at least one, but may have many, solid bluish-black feathers either on their chin, throat, or belly.
- Adult females have bluish feathers on their head, shoulders and back, chests are a grayish-brown. Their undertail feathers are predominantly brown with white edges.
- Subadult females look similar to adults, but their undertail feathers are almost entirely white with a brown pinstripe down the center. Refer to the PMCA's laminated adult photos\* for images.

**Counting eggs and nestlings:** Purple Martins commonly hide incomplete clutches under a layer of green leaves. Inspect this layer gently to feel for hidden eggs. Once hatched, nestlings huddle together making them difficult to see. You may need to separate them with a finger or blunt probe to get an accurate count. NEVER MOVE EGGS OR YOUNG TO DIFFERENT NESTS! This lowers the success of host nests, shortens parental life, and can spread disease.

**Aging nestlings:** The first time you encounter a hatchling, compare the largest one to the laminated nestling photos\* to determine its age. Record this age in your nest check entry. Use this age to determine the actual hatch date if it is unknown.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

**Completing the data sheet:** Use the codes given to record your data. Each row represents an individual nest cavity.

**Column 1** is used to record the housing type, cavity number, and hole type using the codes given.

**Column 2** is to record the age (if known) of the male and female.

**Column 3** should contain the date the first egg is laid. Since martins lay one egg per day, we can extrapolate a date by subtracting. A nest with two eggs would have had the first egg laid on the previous day. If you are unsure if egg laying has just finished, enter a range spanning from the day after your previous check to the date you determined by subtraction. Typically, incubation lasts 15 days.

**Column 4** is to record the actual hatch date. Determine this either by direct observation of hatching during a nest check or by aging chicks using the PMCA's laminated nestling photos\*.

**Columns 5–19** are used for nest contents. The top row should show the date of the check and the boxes represent the nest contents and actions taken. The final three columns should be used to summarize the nest record, with the total of eggs, hatches, and fledges for the entire sheet shown at the bottom.

**Fledged or failed: It is critical for you to enter a final nest check after all of the nestlings have fledged in order for the PMCA to be able to use your data.** It is unlikely that you observe the moment a nestling leaves the nest, but if a martin lives to the minimum fledging age of 26 days we can assume successful fledging. The final nest check, showing an empty nest after that minimum age, is necessary.

### Housing Type:

WH = wooden house  
MH = metal house  
PH = plastic house  
AG = artificial gourd  
NG = natural gourd

### Age:

A = adult (ASY)  
S = subadult (SY)

### Landlord Action:

NR = nest replaced  
D = discarded  
B = banded

### Species:

PM = Purple Martin  
HS = House Sparrow  
ST = European Starling  
TS = Tree Swallow  
BB = Bluebird  
HW = House Wren

### Nest Contents:

X = empty cavity  
E = # of eggs  
Y = # of young  
HD = hatch day  
1DO = 1 day old  
DY = # of dead young

### Hole Type:

RH = round hole  
CH = crescent hole  
EH = excluder hole  
OH = obround hole

Housing type: Cavity # & Hole type	Male/Female age	Date first egg is laid	Actual hatch date	20 May	25 May	30 May	4 June	9 June	14 June	19 June	24 June	29 June	4 July	9 July	# Eggs	# Hatched	# Fledged
WH-1 RH	A ?	5/23	6/08	PMN	3E	7E	7E	2E 5Y 1DO	7Y	7Y	7Y	6Y 1DY D	6Y	X	7	7	6

\* Buy laminated photos at [shop.purplemartin.org](http://shop.purplemartin.org)