

Purple Martin / *Progne subis*

Habitat

LAKES & PONDS

Purple Martins forage in towns, cities, parks, open fields, streams, wet meadows, beaver ponds, and other open areas.

Food

INSECTS

A year-round insectivore, the Purple Martin eats flying insects such as beetles, dragonflies, crickets, butterflies, and wasps at altitudes often exceeding 150 feet (sometimes 500+ feet!)

Nesting

CAVITY

Males & females visit several cavities before selecting a nest site; usually a birdhouse, gourd, dead tree, or building. East of the Rocky Mountains, they only nest in manmade birdhouses.

Behavior

AERIAL FORAGER

Purple Martins fly with quick flaps and glides, outlining big circles in the sky as they hunt insects, rarely landing on the ground. Adults form flocks as soon as nestlings fledge, and congregate in large roosts throughout the winter.

Conservation

LOW CONCERN



The estimated global breeding population of Purple Martins is 9.3 million. Logging practices that remove dead trees reduce nesting habitat for martins, but humans have helped counteract declines by putting up nest boxes. Introduced species often take over martin houses and injure or kill eggs and nestlings. Like other species, Purple Martins are also sensitive to cold weather snaps as well as the use of pesticides.

INFORMATION FROM ALLABOUTBIRDS.ORG