

Martins spotted early in Alabama

GILBERTOWN — Most bird watchers have a favorite, which for many in Alabama might be a woodpecker, especially the Northern Flicker, the state bird. But another species, the Purple Martin, generates enormous excitement and passion.

A swallow species, purple martins begin returning to North America along the Gulf Coast in January, and reports from Alabama communities are watched by martin enthusiasts nationally in an online data base — at purplemartin.org — maintained by the Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA), a nonprofit conservation organization.

The earliest arriving martin in Alabama this year was reported in Fairhope on January 13 — a very early bird — followed on Jan. 21 by a report from Summerdale. Two reports were made Jan. 22, one each from Theodore and Mobile.

While the coast gets a few “early birds,” most purple martins arrive in Alabama after about Feb. 15 and well into March, according to a PMCA migration map.

Purple martins nest in colonies in gourds hung from large racks and in multi-compartment bird houses placed in open areas in yards statewide. Adult male purple martins are a glossy blue-black in color, which they obtain at two years of age. Females are a bit drab, with a gray breast.

One year old martins — so called “sub adults” — begin arriving 10 to 12 weeks after the older birds in the South. These younger birds are more easily attracted to new housing locations.

The term “scout” is a misnomer, according to the PMCA. These earliest arrivals are simply experienced older martins that have made the journey before and are eager to reclaim their housing.

As a species, purple martins are relatively common throughout Alabama, according to the American Breeding Bird survey.

But long-term trends are a bit worrisome to hobbyists, showing a slight, but continuing, decline in populations throughout the state, with the exception of the far north-west corner.

While generations of Americans have hosted purple martins — the custom adopted from Native Americans who hung out nesting gourds — specific techniques to help a colony to thrive have emerged in the past decade, based on research conducted by the PMCA and by “landlords” in the field.

Among innovations are deeper compartments to better protect nestlings from rain and from predators, and specially-shaped entrance holes designed to admit martins while restricting European starlings, an invasive, non-protected species.

The number one tip from the PMCA for attracting martins: Purple martins are swallows of the open sky and prefer housing with at least several open flyways. Place housing in the most open space available, but where the colony can be enjoyed and monitored.

Much more information about purple martins can be obtained from the Purple Martin Conservation Association — which is focused on aiding martins and “landlords” — including a products catalog and information booklet, with advice on attracting and managing a colony, and data sheets to participate in Project Martin Watch, a national effort in which participants monitor nests and mail information to the PMCA at season's end.

To obtain the booklet, contact the PMCA at 814-833-7656 or online at purplemartin.org.



Five-year old gets five-pointer

COFFEEVILLE — Five-year old John Patrick Larrimore, of Coffeeville, killed this 150-pound, five-point buck while hunting with his dad at “The Camp”. He is a student at Clarke Prep and the son of Chad and Sheramie Larrimore.



Fish already?

That's right, local fisherman Athony Skinner has already braved the cold weather to catch a nice mess of 12 bass last weekend. Skinner, who owns and operates A&D Sporting Goods in Gilbertown with his wife Darla and parents Dale and Linda, will be featured in an upcoming Summer issue of Alabama Outdoor Magazine as an up-and-coming professional fisherman.

Did you Know?

Purple Martins are the largest member of the swallow family and researchers have found that all martins that survive migration and the winter, return to the same location where they spent the spring. Up to 10 percent of the young birds will also return to the place where they were hatched and raised.

LAND SALE WAYNE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Sealed bids will be received by Slater M. Doggett, Donald R. Clark, Jimmy Dale Clark and Wilda B. Clark, “SELLERS”, for the sale of approximately 95 acres of land and timber, until Friday, March 2, 2007, at 11:00 o'clock a.m. at the office of John R. Gunn Attorney at Law, 718 Wayne Street, Post Office Box 1154, Waynesboro, Mississippi 39367 [Telephone 601-735-3440, Fax 601-735-4141]. Bids will be opened immediately thereafter.

The legal description of the property to be sold is as follows:

TRACT NO. 1:

Township 9 North, Range 5 West

Section 18: The SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of section 18, Township 9 North, Range 5 West, Wayne County, Mississippi; less and except that part lying within the Four(4) Lane Right-Of-Way of U.S. Highway 84, containing 29 acres more or less.

Section 19: All that part of the NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 lying and being West of Buckatunna Creek, containing 35 acres, more or less.

OWNER: SLATER M. DOGGETT

TRACT NO. 2

Township 9 North Range 5 West

Section 19: All the parts of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 lying and being West of Buckatunna Creek, containing 31 acres, more or less.

OWNERS: DONALD R. CLARK, JIMMY DALE CLARK AND WILDA B. CLARK

Each bidder should submit a separate bid for each of the two tracts. A combined bid on both Tracts 1 and 2 will not be considered. Bids should be marked “Bid on Tract 1” and/or “Bid on Tract 2”.

The Sellers will reserve all of the oil, gas and other minerals in, on and under said property and no mineral or royalty interest will be conveyed.

Merchantable title to the property described above will be conveyed to the successful bidder(s) by a general warranty deed for each separate tract, subject to the reservation of all mineral rights. Taxes for the year 2007 will be prorated as of the date of closing.

The property will be sold in an “as is” condition. Acreage figures shown above are based on tax assessments and actual acreage is not guaranteed. Any prospective bidder will be responsible for his own due diligence inspection of the property prior to submitting a bid, including any desired timber cruise or survey. Prospective bidders may obtain a written permit to inspect the property at the office of John R. Gunn, Attorney for Sellers, at 718 Wayne Street, Waynesboro, Mississippi, during regular business hours.

The full purchase price will be due at closing. Sellers shall have ten (10) days to consider all bids received. Sellers will notify the successful bidder(s) in writing. Closing will take place within 14 days of such notice being given to the successful bidder(s). Failure of the successful bidder(s) to complete closing within the specified 14 day period may result in the rejection of the bid and termination of the sale at the sole option of the Sellers.

The Sellers reserve the right to reject any or all bids on each tract.

Choctaw bow hunters prepare to ‘Shoot for a Cure’

On March 10th at the Gilbertown Bow Range, the first ever Choctaw County Relay For Life Bow Tournament will take place starting at 10 a.m.

All proceeds from the event will go to benefit the Choctaw County Relay For Life effort.

A \$15 entry fee is required for all entries. Their will be youth, junior and adult divisions and each will receive prizes for first through third place.

Door prizes and lunch also will be

included, as well as a drawing for custom made turkey calls by Bobby Lucas and Richard Downey.

Chances for the custom calls can be purchased at local businesses or from any member of the Wimberly Methodist Protestant Church.

To get to the Gilbertown Bow Range, turn on the Barrytown Road in Gilbertown and follow the signs.

For more information or questions contact Janet Downey at 205-673-2253.

It's your money... why wait?

Get your cash FAST!

If you're tired of waiting to get your tax refund, we can help. We'll prepare your tax return and file it electronically so you get your money fast...sometimes even the same day!

Kathy's Tax Service
38 E. Main Gilbertown, AL
251-843-5153



Want to be an Umpire?

If you are interested in being an umpire for the upcoming girl's softball season, please call Grady Anderson at 205-459-3190 or cell number 205-457-1940.