

# Artificial Nest Box Install & Monitoring

## THE PROBLEM

A number of birds have been directly impacted by people thru the loss of suitable nest sites. Those species vary widely but include such species as bluebird, chimney swift, prothonotary warbler, purple martin, barn owl, swallows and osprey. In general, these species either evolved closely with humans and became highly dependent on human structures, like the martin, swift and barn owl, or have seen their traditional nest sites disappear due to land management practices that typically remove standing dead trees, like the bluebird and prothonotary. The good news is that all of these birds have responded quite well in utilizing artificial nest structures.

## DETAILS

**Purple Martins:** This species has benefited greatly by the management efforts, including large numbers of nest box installations, of the Purple Martin Conservation Association. PMCA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) through scientific research, state of the art management techniques, and public education, with the end goal of increasing martin populations throughout North America. Visit their website <http://www.purplemartin.org/>.

**Bluebird:** Development and intensive management of “bluebird trails” have made a huge impact on bluebird populations continent-wide. In Missouri, that work has been largely coordinated by the Missouri Bluebird Society, whose major goal is to encourage the development, maintenance, and monitoring of bluebird trails in the state of Missouri and to encourage citizens of Missouri to have safe bluebird boxes in their yards. They can be reached at [http://www.missouribluebird.org/Missouri\\_Bluebird\\_Society.html](http://www.missouribluebird.org/Missouri_Bluebird_Society.html).

## What SLAS is Doing

With organizations dedicated to bluebird and purple martin conservation, the Chapter has directed its efforts at the other perhaps less visible, but just as important, species. Most recently, those efforts have included the installation of two chimney swift towers and a barn owl box. The towers were installed at Emmenegger Park near I-270 and I-44 in Kirkwood and at Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area in north St. Louis County. The barn owl box was installed at Marais Temps Clair Conservation Area in St. Charles County. Also, a number of years ago, a project was started with the Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge in Brussels, Illinois that involved the installation of a dozen nest boxes for prothonotary warblers. The boxes were mounted along a 3-mile levee road in the Gilbert Lake Unit just outside of Grafton. The boxes are still in place, but the project was not maintained as a result of insufficient volunteer support.

## What YOU Can Do

- Contact us if you would like to get involved in any of our existing projects, help restart an old one or have thoughts on swallows or ospreys! Drop and e-mail to our VP Conservation at [conservation@stlouisaudubon.org](mailto:conservation@stlouisaudubon.org).
- Consider being a steward for bluebirds or purple martins and visit the sites above.
- Build your own house for native wildlife and visit MDC's woodworking for wildlife site <http://mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/MDCLibrary2.aspx?NodeID=201>
- Thanks for supporting the avian equivalent of “Habitat for Humanity!”