

Report for Akaogi Farm
2009 Northeast SARE Farmer Grant
Wetland Wildlife Section

by Alma Beals

My report covers 9 visits from May 12, 2009, to August 24, 2009, for 16 1/2 hours.

I made observations in two areas: one by the three rice paddies and the other area included grasslands, shrubs, orchard, and trees.

Birds seen at the rice paddies include: great blue heron, Canada geese (flew overhead), solitary sandpiper, American robin, house sparrow, tree swallow, brown thrasher, gray catbird, killdeer, sharp-shinned hawk, barn swallow, ruby-throated hummingbird, American goldfinch, northern cardinal, American crow, pileated woodpecker, house finch, bluejay, and yellow warbler.

Twice a great blue heron stood outside the pond, and one time he picked up and swallowed two voles. While I realize that herons eat small mammals, they are more apt to eat insects, frogs, fish and other aquatic life.

I observed a pair of killdeer on the small stones outside a rice paddy. They were agitated and did the "broken wing" display. There was a scrape nest there.

Jan Lambert observed a pair of American woodcocks, which appeared to be nesting. They are very secretive birds. The area was a brushy, wet thicket; so the habitat was correct for nesting.

Both Linda Akaogi and I heard a black-billed cuckoo - the first that I have heard in many years.

I was especially interested in the bobolinks in the adjoining meadows. They were singing in both meadows on May 12. After that, one meadow was then mowed and the other one was not. They nested in the unmowed meadow. When I visited on June 6 they were agitated when I came too close. so I assumed that several nests were there. Bobolinks are getting scarce as many fields are being cut at the same time the bobolinks are ready to nest.

1. Birds that I observed that live here year round (permanent residents) are: American goldfinch (flock of 10), American robin (4), black-capped chickadee (6), white-breasted nuthatch (1), house sparrow (8), northern cardinal (2), American crows (8), downy woodpecker (1), pileated woodpecker (1), mourning dove (4), European starling (15), house finch (6), Canada goose (5), and bluejay (3).

2. Individual birds that I saw or heard singing that migrated here from southern US or South America

A. Ones that could nest here, but I did not actually see nesting.

Blue-gray gnatcatcher
Black-throated blue warbler
Black-throated green warbler
Yellow-rumped warbler
Black and white warbler
American redstart
House wren
Savannah sparrow
Barn swallow (8)
Chestnut-sided warbler
Scarlet tanager
Warbling vireo (5)
Ruby-throated hummingbird
Black-billed cuckoo
Indigo bunting
Common grackle (3)
Red-eyed vireo (3)
Brown-headed cowbird
Eastern bluebird
Least flycatcher
Eastern wood pewee
Eastern kingbird

B. Birds that I observed with nesting activity

American goldfinch (10)
American robin (4)
Gray catbird
Bobolink (8)
Red-winged blackbird (6)
Yellow warbler
Northern cardinal
American crow
Killdeer
American woodcock
Common yellowthroat
Cedar waxwing
Eastern phoebe
Brown thrasher
Eastern kingbird

Chipping sparrow
Mourning doves
House sparrow (8)
Tree swallows (8)
Rose-breasted grosbeaks
Black-capped chickadee

3. Birds that I observed flying over were: Canada geese (6 on 3 different days), Broad-winged hawk (1), American kestrels (2), and a sharp-shinned hawk (1 chasing a catbird). A solitary sandpiper was seen once, and a great blue heron was seen twice.