

Johnson Cedar County Breeding Bird Newsletter

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Breeding season is almost over for most species, however there are two birds whose season is just getting started. American Goldfinch, although present all summer, is just beginning its breeding activities, so now is the time to confirm this bird. Pine Siskin is another late season breeder and although normally only a winter visitor, they could nest here.

I feel good about progress in our two counties this year. Every block in Johnson County has been worked on and five of the nine blocks in Cedar County have been started. There seems to be interesting areas in most of the blocks. For instance, I was surprised to find that the northeasternmost block in Johnson County was mostly pasture or fallow fields. This makes for some great habitat for field birds of which several have been found. Also in eastern Cedar County, many of the blocks are primarily agricultural, but there are small woodlands and pastures. One of these blocks had only one woodland, but it turned out to be a Cedar County Conservation area and a very pleasant spot. I hope that most of you are finding nice birding spots in your blocks too. It does us all good to get away from our traditional birding haunts.

The weather certainly has not co-operated this year. Hot and humid is not my idea of fun birding. However, despite this, we have turned up some good birds this year. A Willow Flycatcher was a good find, so good in fact that a birder from Kansas City came up to see it. There have been Sedge Wrens in at least two of the blocks. Orchard Orioles seem to be somewhat common as are Warbling Vireos. There has been a noticeable lack this year of Yellow-breasted Chats and Bell's Vireos. Although not abundant birds, I'm surprised we haven't found any.

I would appreciate it if everyone would turn their atlas block cards in to me by the end of September. I will look them over to get a better idea of our progress and then return them. I am doing a habitat analysis on our blocks and I will add that information to the cards when I return them. Several of you have asked about numbers for each species. Lets try to use the following codes:

| | | |
|---|----------|------|
| A | abundant | 50+ |
| C | common | 6-49 |

For anything below common just put numbers of birds seen. Remember we're trying to keep track of Eastern vs Western Meadowlarks so put numbers for those two species. The next newsletter will probably not come out till after I've looked at our cards and hopefully will have compiled our observations. Have a good rest of the breeding season.