

**Breeding Bird Survey  
Bath Nature Preserve and Field Station  
2000**

John Shaffer and Ed Pierce, as volunteers, agreed to study the grassland birds of the Bath Nature Preserve and Field Station (BNPFS) for The University of Akron. This study was broadened to include all of the breeding birds of this area.

The survey results are based on 7 daytime trips walked through the area in June and July 2000: 6/3, 6/15, 6/17, 6/24, 7/1, 7/18, 7/25. Each trip began between 7:00 and 7:25 AM except 7/25 which began at 6:10 AM. Each trip averaged three hours in duration. Both Shaffer and Pierce were present the entire time each trip. Results of two night trips, 6/12 and 7/5, are included. Each night trip began at 8:30 PM and averaged three hours in duration. Shaffer and Pierce surveyed on 7/5 and Pierce and Jim Reyda on 6/12.

The route walked is marked on the attached map. Basically it began near the entrance gate and followed the western edge of the grassland/tree line south around the eastern edge of Bath Pond, across the grasslands to the Emergent Wetland/Woodland, to the eastern boundary of the area and then north along North Fork to Ira Road, returning through the grasslands to the entrance gate area. The only exception was 6/15 when the entire time was spent in the grassland areas.

The system of codes based upon observable breeding behaviors used by fieldworkers in recording data for The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas (1982-1987) was used to record breeding data at BNPFS. (See attached list of codes.)

404 acres of habitat were surveyed. At least 50% was grassland, approximately 25% mature woodland and 25% wetland, pond and stream.

To us, as birders, the unique habitat feature was the large grassland areas. This habitat type is declining rapidly in the northeastern United States and disappearing with it are the bird species it supports. Here we found at least 23 pairs of nesting bobolinks, five pair of nesting savannah sparrows and one singing Henslow's sparrow. Probably, this is the largest, most productive grassland nesting area in Summit County and deserves complete protection. From a nesting birds perspective, most modern grasslands suffer from breeding season mowing. John Shaffer early recommended that the BNPFS area not be mowed until early August if at all. Unfortunately, we didn't know of the upper grassland areas east of the main grasslands and separated from the main grasslands by a stand of mature woodlands. Thus, they were mowed during the week after we discovered there a singing Henslow's sparrow 6/24. It was not found again. We now recommend that any grassland area not be mowed before September and then only every three years.

Other birds of note found during the survey were a male prothonotary warbler at Bath Pond, singing in the same general area from 6/3 to 6/24. The bird was not found after that date, leaving

us in doubt as to any breeding. Breeding of this species in Summit County is rare as it is in many counties in Ohio. The birds suitable breeding habitat, the shrubby swamp habitat found at Bath Pond, is also unique as relatively few remain in Ohio. This “emergent wetland” was also found in the southeastern corner of the property where up to 16 green herons were found feeding. Green heron is thought to be declining in numbers but an uncommon to fairly common summer resident.

In total, 75 species were found during this summer survey. 21 species were confirmed as breeding, four as probable breeders, four as possible breeders, and 24 as presumed breeders. A total of 53 species of birds believed to be using BNPFs for breeding.

Presumed breeding is a code not used in the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas work but rather invented by us for a common species found by the Atlas to be breeding in Summit County and present at BNPFs in good numbers but for which we didn’t see the significant coded behavior. It allows us not to have to “reinvent the wheel” for some common species.

We found BNPFs a wonderful slice of little found habitat and well worthy of all preservation efforts. We hope to continue further seasonal surveys.

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<b>Species</b>	<b>Breeding Status OBBS#</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Great Blue Heron	No evidence of breeding	1-6 birds seen at Bath Pond feeding on 6 trips.
Green Heron	Possible (10)	2-5 birds seen at Bath Pond or Emergent Wetlands on 7 trips increasing to 10 adults and 1 young 7/25 and 16 adults at Emergent Wetlands 8/12.
Turkey Vulture	No evidence of breeding	1-2 birds overhead on 4 trips: 6 roosting in Bath Pond trees 5/22.
Canada Goose	No evidence	Although up to 75 birds roosted at large man-made pond on adjacent property to east, only 13 max seen on 3 trips; 7 young were present 6/3 but capable of flight.
Wood Duck	Confirmed (34): 1f with 8 downy young on Bath Pond 6/17	Up to 12 birds on 6 trips.
Mallard	No evidence	1-3 birds seen on 4 trips.
Cooper's Hawk	No evidence	2 birds overhead 6/15.
Red-tailed Hawk	No evidence	1 bird overhead on 2 trips.
American Kestrel	Probable (21)	Up to 2 birds on 5 trips; roosting in dead solitary trees around residences.
Virginia Rail	Possible (10)	One bird singing at Farm Pond 6/15 and again at Bath Pond 6/24.
American Woodcock	No evidence	One bird flushed, Bath Pond 6/17.
Rock Dove	No evidence	2 overhead 7/25.
Mourning Dove	Confirmed (38): 1 bird on nest 7/1	2-7 birds on 8 trips.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Confirmed (36): 1 bird carrying food 6/15	1-2 birds on 3 trips; not seen after 6/17.
Black-billed cuckoo	Possible (10)	2 birds singing 6/3.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Breeding Status OBBS#</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Eastern Screech Owl	Probable (21): 5 birds singing same night 6/12 in same woods in short distance (family group?)	Heard on road through woods from new parking lot to farm on western boundry.
Barred Owl	Possible (10)	1 bird responded to tape by flying in and calling at Emergent Woods 7/5.
Chimney Swift	No evidence	1-4 birds on 7 trips.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Confirmed (38): 1f on nest 6/3.	Only sighting.
Belted Kingfisher	No evidence	1-2 birds on five trips.
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Confirmed (36): 1 bird carrying food 6/3	1-5 birds on 6 trips.
Downy Woodpecker	Confirmed (36): 1 bird feeding another 6/7	1-5 birds on 6 trips.
Northern Flicker	Presumed (confirmed breeder in Summit Co. OBBS)	2-4 birds on 6 trips.
Hairy Woodpecker	No evidence	1 bird 6/3
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Confirmed (38): 1 bird on nest 6/3	1-2 birds on 4 trips
Eastern Phoebe	Presumed	Single bird seen on 3 trips up to 7/18 when 5 seen and 7/25:9.
Great Crested Flycatcher	Presumed	1-3 birds on 4 trips; 2 birds singing 7/1.
Eastern Kingbird	Confirmed (38): 1 adult with nest and 3 eggs 7/1	2-5 birds on 6 trips
Yellow-throated Vireo	No evidence	1 bird singing, Emergent Woods 6/3
Blue-headed Vireo	No evidence	1 bird singing, Emergent Woods 6/3
Warbling Vireo	No evidence	1 bird singing 6/3 and 6/17

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Red-eyed Vireo	No evidence	1 bird 6/3
Blue Jay	Confirmed (36): 1 adult feeding young 7/1	3-6 birds on 7 trips
American Crow	Presumed	1-9 birds on 7 trips
Tree Swallow	Confirmed but with caution (34): 2 adults feeding 7 young sitting on electric wires on entrance road near Bath Pond 7/1	2 birds on 3 trips; on 4 <sup>th</sup> trip, 7/1, 20 birds.
Barn Swallow	Probable (22)	1-10 birds on 8 trips
Black-capped Chickadee	Presumed	1-14 birds on 7 trips
Tufted Titmouse	Confirmed (34): 1 bird carrying food 6/17	3-12 birds on 5 trips
White-breasted Nuthatch	Presumed	3-11 birds on 5 trips
Carolina Wren	Presumed	1-2 birds singing on 3 trips
House Wren	Presumed	1-3 birds singing on 6 trips
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	No evidence	1 bird 6/3
Eastern Bluebird	Confirmed (34): 1 bird with fledged young 6/17 and 7/1	1-5 birds on 5 trips; generally found near residences
Wood Thrush	Confirmed (38): 1 bird on nest 6/24	1-4 birds singing on 6 trips
American Robin	Presumed	2-22 birds on 7 trips
Gray Catbird	Confirmed (36): 1 bird carrying food 7/18	3-11 birds on 6 trips.
Brown Thrasher	Presumed	1-2 birds on 5 trips.

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European Starling	Presumed	2-100 birds on 6 trips.
Cedar Waxwing	Presumed	1-20 birds on 4 trips
Blue-winged Warbler	No evidence	1m 6/24
Yellow Warbler	No evidence	1-2 birds on 3 trips; not detected after 6/24
Yellow-rumped Warbler	No evidence	1m 6/3 Bath Pond
Prothonotary Warbler	Probable (22)	1m bird singing on each of 3 trips; Bath Pond
Common Yellowthroat	Presumed	1-4 birds on 7 trips
Hooded Warbler	Presumed	1 singing bird on each of 4 trips
Scarlet Tanager	Presumed	1-5 birds on 4 trips
Eastern Towhee	Presumed	1-2 birds on 4 trips
Chipping Sparrow	Confirmed (34): 1 young bird seen 7/18	1-11 birds on 7 trips
Field Sparrow	Presumed	1-2 birds on 3 trips
Savannah Sparrow	Confirmed (34): 4 adults with 2 young 7/1	4-10 birds on 5 trips
Henslow's Sparrow	No evidence	1 bird singing 6/24
Song Sparrow	Confirmed (36): 1 adult feeding young 7/1	3-11 birds on 7 trips
Swamp Sparrow	Presumed	2 singing birds 7/18
Northern Cardinal	Confirmed (36): 1 bird carrying food 6/3	2-8 birds on 7 trips
Rose-breasted Grosbk	Presumed	1-6 birds on 4 trips
Indigo Bunting	No evidence	1-2 birds on 2 trips

<b>Species</b>	<b>Breeding Status OBBS#</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bobolink	Confirmed (36): birds carrying food 6/3, 6/15, 7/1	Seen on all 8 trips; 21 pair 6/3, 23 pair 6/15, 24 young birds 7/1; last seen 7/18 when 30+ birds in fall plumage roosting in shrub/tree row bordering grass fields
Red-winged Blackbird	Confirmed (36): 2f carrying food 7/18	2-17 birds seen on 8 trips; 7 pair 6/3, 4 pair 6/15
Eastern Meadowlark	Presumed	2-6 birds on 6 trips
Common Grackle	Presumed	4-23 birds on 6 trips
Brown-headed Cowbird	Presumed	1-4 birds on 5 trips; 2 young 7/1
Baltimore Oriole	Confirmed (34): 1 near-flightless young 6/17	2-5 birds on 3 trips
House Finch	No evidence	3 birds 6/15
American Goldfinch	Presumed	1-12 birds on 6 trips
House Sparrow	Presumed	1-3 birds on 2 trips

