

Birds of Evergreen Farm

The year 1998 was an eventful one. Wild Turkeys spent time in late winter scratching up acorns (one of their favorite foods) from the red oaks you see scattered about the property. In July, Bill saw them roosting near some blueberries and an old apple orchard. A “dusting” pit near a large red oak in the Scotch Pine/Concolor Fir plantation was used frequently. The turkeys use fine soil particles to knock off the parasites on their feathers and skin.

Ruffed Grouse were heard drumming and seen in various locations. Drumming is done by the male in spring to attract a mate. He sits upon a log and periodically beats his wings, starting slowly and increasing the tempo. This year, a male liked to drum on a still living but horizontal tree just to the left of the road directly behind the house. What a show! If successful, the female will hatch 10-12 chicks in early summer.

Red-tailed hawks, other species of hawks and various owls are also seen or heard throughout the year.

We were especially gratified to have several bluebird families use our boxes this year. We estimate 20 new young were fledged. You might see or hear one of them while searching for your Christmas tree as we once saw one on the first of January.

Other birds in good supply were: tree swallows chipping sparrows, purple finches, goldfinches, flickers, towhees and cardinals, along with red-eyed vireos and phoebes, nuthatches, chickadees and tufted titmice.

Cedar waxwings pass through, and once nested in a Christmas tree late in the summer. They wait until berries are ripe to raise their young, so they will have a good food supply. Goldfinches seem fond of maturing birch catkins and the seed of the coreopsis flowers growing by the nursery and in the perennial garden. Phoebes like to nest under the overhang of the warming shed.

Happy Holidays!

Bill and Julie