

BIRD CONSERVATION

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2 APRIL 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Artists for conservation</i>	1
<i>Connecticut River</i>	2
<i>Birds below zero</i>	3
<i>BCR assists</i>	3
<i>Membership</i>	4

Board of Trustees

June A. Schoppe,
President

John J. Carta, Jr.

Gregory M. Castanza

Marvin Haltzer

Mary Eliza Kimball

Judith Radasch

Katharine Sheldon

Ronald J. Tillen

Donald E. Williams

Robert J. Craig, Director

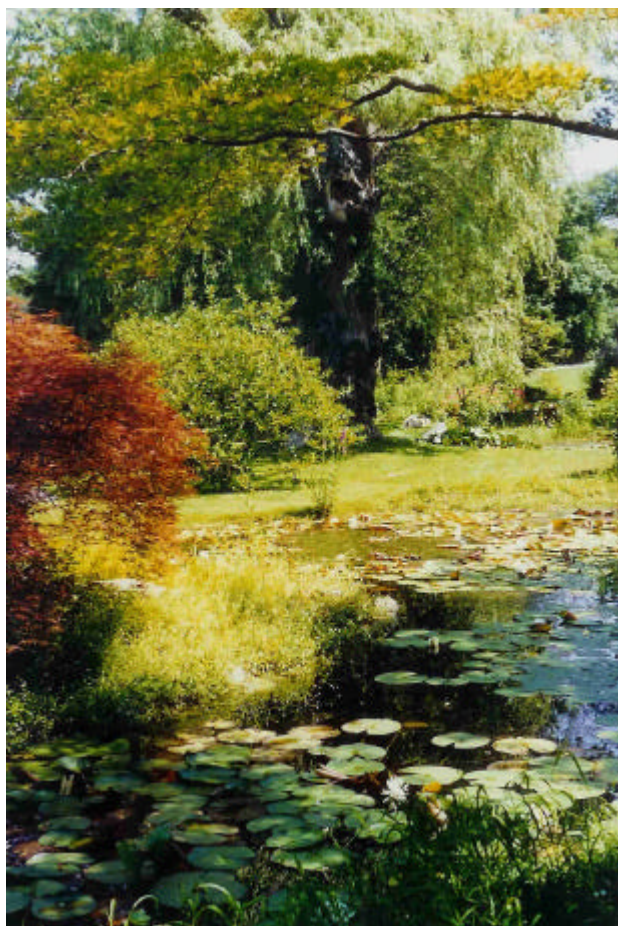
ARTISTS FOR CONSERVATION

Art and nature are a natural pair, so it is not surprising that the 25 artists from *New England Plein-Air Painters* would wish to converge on the Blithewold estate in Bristol, RI to hold a "paint-out."

The outdoor painting group, consisting of among the most talented and well-known New England artists, will be capturing the stunning landscapes and gardens of Blithewold. They will be offering these works for sale, and will be donating a portion of their proceeds to Bird Conservation Research.

The Blithewold estate sits on the shores of Narragansett Bay. Its centerpiece is a magnificent mansion of the same vintage as the famed Newport "cottages." The home is surrounded by extensive gardens, ponds, sweeping lawns, and an arboretum sporting century old specimen trees such as Giant Sequoia. All these will be the subjects of the plein air painters.

A similar arts event last year at the Danielson estate in Putnam, CT was a huge success, attracting



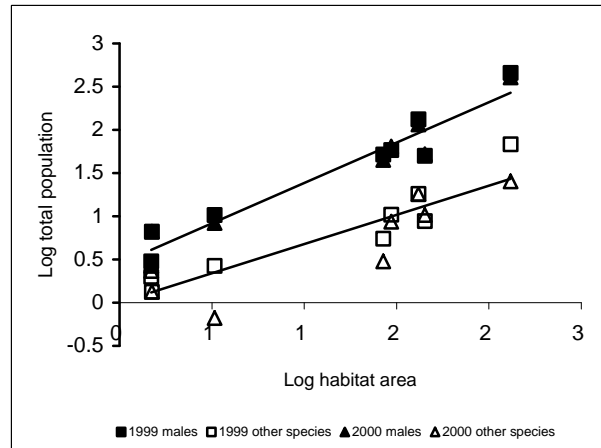
The glorious grounds of the Blithewold estate.

over 700 visitors. Numerous art sales helped fund BCR's ongoing research efforts.

The paint-out and sale will be on the weekend of 9-10 July, and will run from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM.

All are invited. Details are at www.NewEnglandPleinAirPainters.com. **We also need volunteers to help with running the event. Please call if you would like to help! Volunteer Coordinator: Kay Sheldon, 401 521-6186.**

CONNECTICUT RIVER STUDY COMPLETE



As marshes of the Connecticut River get larger, bird populations in them also grow.

“Long-term regional population phenomena clearly influenced the occurrence of some species.”

Following are excerpts from our recently completed study of how the area of tidal wetlands affects their bird communities. This work was supported in part by your membership dues:

We studied from 1974-2000 the marsh bird communities of the Connecticut River in order to understand the relationship in it between species richness and habitat area. The relationship uncovered proved to be a complex one that was the consequence of such components as area itself, habitat, populations, and historical factors. Any one variable examined could be related to only a portion of observed patterns even in this simple system, although area alone clearly was a major contributing variable.

Observations illustrated that two broad types of habitat affiliation existed among species, and these affinities may have affected some population densities within sites, but they alone had little effect on controlling the presence of species...An association of richness specifically with area was indicated by accumulation of rarer species, species that appeared to have a minimum threshold area for occurrence, and species with larger home ranges at larger sites.

Long-term regional population phenomena clearly influenced the occurrence of some species. Two species exhibited population growth during the 26 year span of this study which involved expansion into new sites on a geographic rather than area basis.

Still others appeared to owe their present rarity or absence to regional phenomena rather than to local conditions. However, regardless of their reason for local rarity, in all instances rarer species occurred only at larger sites. Long-term data further illustrated that certain species generally common in this system were historically and consistently infrequent even at some larger sites with, based on habitat occupancy at other locations, apparently ample amounts of suitable habitat. Other more common species had distributions in any particular year controlled in part by density-independent factors like extent and duration of spring flooding, rather than by vegetation and area.

BIRDS BELOW ZERO



Performing bird surveys in Union, CT at -8 degrees.

As the temperature dips below zero, problems associated with surveying birds multiply. This cold winter a number of mornings reached that level, and the ongoing Forest Bird Survey of Southern New England faced its consequences.

Surprisingly, bird activity does not diminish on very cold days. Flocks of the

usual chickadees and nuthatches are as active as ever.

What does change is the difficulty in surveying them. Batteries in global positioning devices stop working, digital watches go blank, and taking notes while wearing mittens becomes an ordeal.

More difficult still is traveling through snowy landscapes. Snow becomes powdery and slippery at low temperatures, making the ascent of even a small hill treacherous. During a bitter morning in Union, CT this past winter, the normal one hour return trip across the 2.5 mile survey route took instead four hours.

“Surprisingly, bird activity does not diminish on very cold days.”

BCR ASSISTS CONSERVATIONISTS

Bcr offers assistance to communities and conservation groups for dealing with conservation issues. This winter, for example, we teamed with *Connecticut Fund for the Environment* to oppose development of a 1000 acre tract of coastal forest in Old Saybrook, CT. Because of our ongoing research pro-

grams, we were able to demonstrate overwhelmingly that such coastal forest are a principal reservoir for wintering forest bird populations in southern New England.

We have similarly worked with *Connecticut DEP*, *Connecticut Audubon Society*, and the *Thames River Basin Partnership* to present a

workshop on using data from our forest bird surveys to develop regional plans for open space conservation.

Funding from the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, along with BCR membership dues, has made such programming possible.

The Newsletter of
Bird Conservation Research, Inc.

90 Liberty Highway
Putnam, CT 06260

Phone: 860 928-2178
E-mail: mail@
birdconservationresearch.org

Bird Conservation Research, Inc.

Membership

- ___ \$10 Electronic member
(e-mail only) \$10
- ___ \$25 Regular member
(receive mailings also)
- ___ \$35 Family membership
- ___ \$50 Sustaining member
- ___ \$100 Contributor
- ___ \$ 250 Patron
- ___ \$ 500 Benefactor
- ___ \$ 1000 Grand
benefactor

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

City _____

State, zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____



Be wise: become a member of BCR and support conservation in southern New England.

MEMBERSHIP

Last year we attracted 4,965 visitors to our web site. These visitors downloaded our publications 2,993 times, or at a rate 30% more than last year.

Such increasing interest in our web site clearly demonstrates that BCR's mission is valued highly by the conservation community.

Please help BCR by becoming

a member. Membership applications and payment options are available at www.birdconservationresearch.org.