

# BIRD CONSERVATION

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 4 OCTOBER 2021

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## CONNECTICUT BIRDS SHOW LONG TERM CHANGES



The Baltimore Oriole is an inhabitant of forest openings rather than interior forest.

Our 2020–2021 study of breeding forest birds in northeastern Connecticut repeats our 2001–2004 study of birds in the same area (<http://www.artsandacademic.net/pdf/forest%20birds%20of%20CT%20&%20RI%202.pdf>). The study provides a 20-year

view of changes that have occurred within this forest bird community. It also offers a contrast to our previous smaller scale study of birds within the intensively managed lands of Yale-Myers Forest ([http://www.birdconservationresearch.org/pdf/Yale%](http://www.birdconservationresearch.org/pdf/Yale%20Forest.pdf)

[20Forest.pdf](http://www.birdconservationresearch.org/pdf/Yale%20Forest.pdf)).

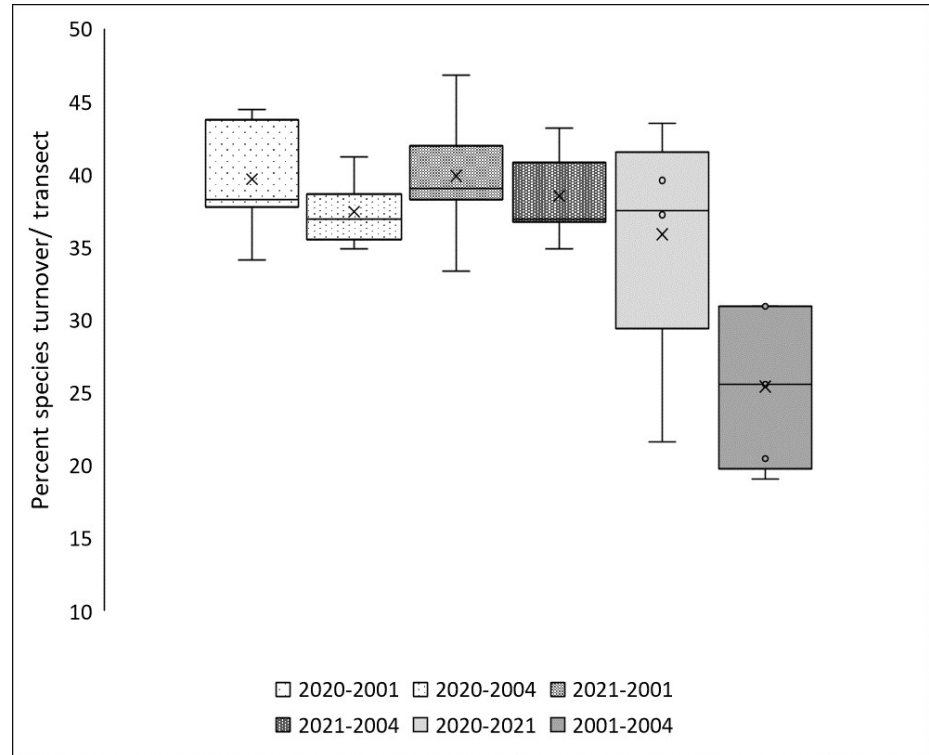
Unlike habitats at Yale-Myers, which have undergone significant change since studies began there in 1985, the forests in the present study have changed little

*(Continued on page 2)*

# CONNECTICUT BIRDS

## -CONTINUED

“...the identity of species present changed dramatically.”



This graph shows that the identity of species has changed considerably over time, with the most consistently large changes occurring among long-term comparisons (e.g., 2001 vs. 2021).

other than that they have continued to mature.

This new study found that the number of species and the density of individuals present changed little over time. However, the identity of the species present changed dramatically. This change, termed turnover, averaged highest in long-term year-year comparisons (see the graph above).

Species like the Pine Warbler, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were infrequent to absent in 2001, although they are

now among the commonest birds in the forest. In contrast, species like the Scarlet Tanager, Black-throated Green Warbler and Wood Thrush have declined substantially.

In comparisons with Yale-Myers Forest, which has substantial expanses of earlier successional habitats, the mature forests of this study had many fewer birds associated with early successional shrublands and young forest. Species like the Least Flycatcher, Magnolia Warbler and Eastern Towhee were far more

common at Yale-Myers. In addition, unlike in this study, populations of birds at Yale-Myers actually increased over time.

Other findings were that species turnover and population expansions and contractions showed some relationships with climate and habitat change, although contrary observations indicated that additional factors influenced community patterns.

## PACIFIC ISLAND STUDY ILLUSTRATES COMMUNITY EFFECTS OF EXTINCTION



The Bridled White-eye is historically known from three Mariana Islands. It has been translocated to a fourth.

Our study of the forest birds in the Mariana Islands of Micronesia, performed in the early 1990s, has undergone a fresh examination using recently developed analytic tools. The study may be viewed at <http://www.birdconservationresearch.org/pdf/forest%20birds%20of%20marianas.pdf> and will appear in the scientific periodical *Pacific Science*.

Studies on the birds of this region are particularly

important, as they are among the most endangered on Earth. The new study demonstrates that populations are generally far greater in native forest compared with alien thickets. In addition, in comparisons of populations on three separate Mariana islands, particularly the uninhabited island of Sarigan was missing many of the species that were prehistorically present. As some of these species survive on other islands, Sarigan is a place where

they can be translocated to safely.

Examination of the prehistoric composition of Mariana Island forest bird communities indicated that they once resembled in their pattern of population densities those of the comparatively pristine Palau Islands. Today, however, they are dominated overwhelmingly by three ecologically versatile species.

**“Studies on the birds of this region are particularly important, as they are among the most endangered on Earth.”**

# FIELD STATION UPDATE

**“In  
September,  
we planted  
replacement  
seedlings and  
also extended  
our original  
plantings to  
30  
individuals.”**



Chestnut seedlings planted in protective sleeves in June are now over a foot tall.

This summer proved to be a challenging one for growing anything, as we in southern New England have endured unprecedented amounts of rainfall. The rains began in earnest shortly after we planted 20 germinating chestnut seeds at the edge of our hayfield. Although most of the seeds began to grow, the consistently waterlogged soil resulted in mortality for a number of the seedlings. Chestnuts are a species of drier soils, so the wet soils

stressed them.

Despite the losses, some plants prospered and are now over a foot tall. In September, we planted replacement seedlings and also extended our original plantings to 30 individuals. As of this writing, all new seedlings are faring well in the somewhat drier conditions of fall.

The next step in getting this fast-growing species to tree size is to protect them from browsing by deer. Toward this end,

we are constructing an electrified enclosure to protect the seedlings over winter. By next spring, we anticipate a rapid increase in seedling size.

# BIRDS OF FIELD BORDERS



The Carolina Wren (above) along with its relative the House Wren are summer inhabitants of the thickets bordering our fields.

“...we hope to continue to attract a greater diversity of species to these habitats.”

Management activities continue on our field borders in order to improve the quality of the thicket habitats. As they improve, we hope to continue to attract a greater diversity of species to them.

A variety of species are already present within them year-round. The breeding community includes among the most quintessential of thicket birds—the mimids: Gray

Catbird, Northern Mockingbird and Brown Thrasher, although our thrashers did not remain throughout the summer this year. Other characteristic and common community members include the Eastern Bluebird, Indigo Bunting, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Song Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow and Northern Cardinal.

At present during fall migration, Yellow-rumped

and Palm Warblers are frequent thicket inhabitants, as are White-throated Sparrows. Less frequent are White-crowned, Fox and even Lincoln's Sparrows. Other fall inhabitants include Carolina Wrens and, on occasion, Winter Wrens.

The Newsletter of  
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# Bird Conservation Research, Inc.

## Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Regular member  
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*Checking out this year's harvest.*

## MEMBERSHIP

It is time to become a member for 2021. Existing members have received renewal forms in the mail. If you have not yet become a member,

you may do so online through GoFundMe ([.https://www.gofundme.com/f/1nqlss](https://www.gofundme.com/f/1nqlss)). Memberships remain one of our principal means of

funding the projects that we conduct, so please consider joining us. Membership applications and contribution options are also available on our web site.