

BIRD CONSERVATION

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1 JANUARY 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Winter Survey</i>	1
<i>Connecticut River</i>	2
<i>Reconnaissance</i>	3
<i>Membership</i>	4

Board of Trustees

Mary Eliza Kimball,
President

J. Kemler Appell

John J. Carta, Jr.

Gregory M. Castanza

Judith Radasch

June A. Schoppe

Katharine Sheldon

Ronald J. Tillen

Donald E. Williams

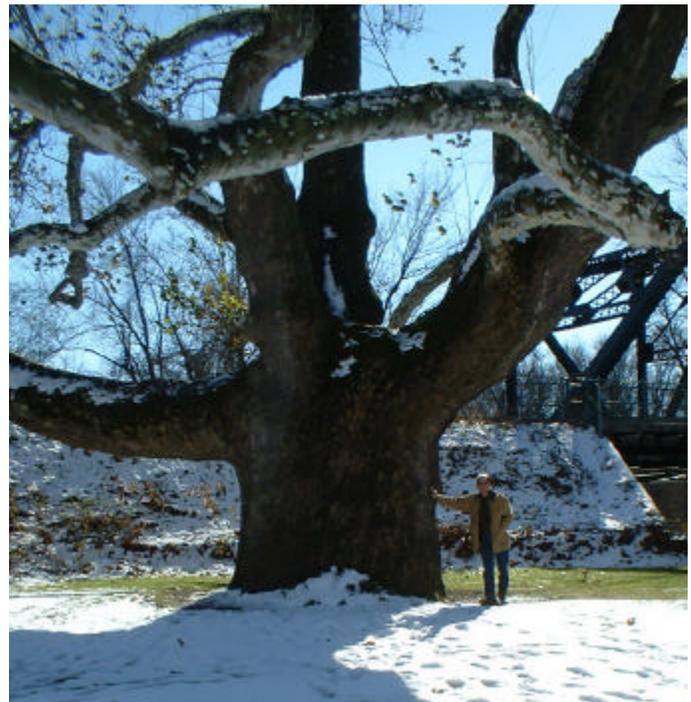
Robert J. Craig, Director

WINTER SURVEY UNDERWAY

“Winter surveys can be daunting,” states Dr. Robert Craig, principal investigator of the Forest Bird Survey of Southern New England. “One day I slid over 100 feet down an icy slope to get from one survey point to the next, hoping all the while that I would not go over a ledge and break every bone in my body. Another day it took me close to an hour to travel the 200 yards up a similarly frozen cliff to get to a survey point.”

Despite its challenges, the Survey is nearing the halfway point in its winter re-survey of Northeast Connecticut. By next winter, all of eastern Connecticut will have been surveyed twice, winter and summer. With repeat data, we will be able to better interpret patterns identified in initial surveys, and we also will be able to document distributional shifts among some of our region’s species.

To date, surveys have demonstrated that certain wintering species, notably the Blue Jay and American Robin, have over-wintered in 2004-2005 in numbers

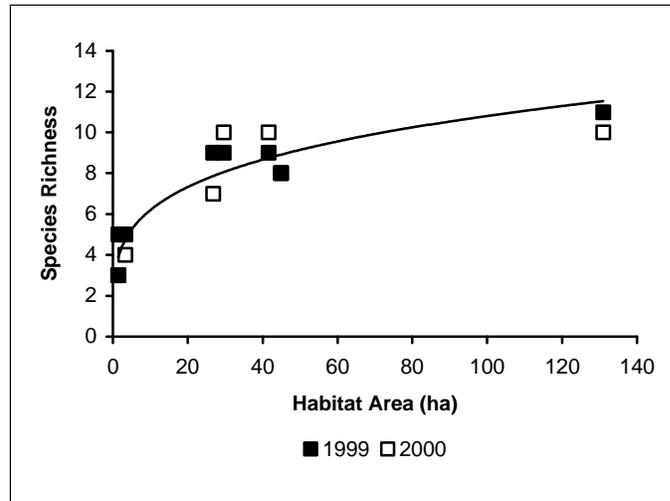


This titanic American Sycamore dwarfs neighboring trees along the Farmington River.

greater than those of 2001-2002. Both these species are well-known for wintering erratically in our region. Another erratically-occurring group, the “winter finches”, have been largely absent through early winter, whereas in each of the past three years they have been present in moderate numbers.

Winter surveys are inherently more variable than those of summer, in part because individuals wander more. However, some patterns noted in previous years, like the low numbers of Tufted Titmice in northern Connecticut forests, appear to be consistent with data from this year.

CONNECTICUT RIVER STUDY UNCOVERS NEW FINDINGS



As marshes of the Connecticut River get larger, more species of birds inhabit them.

“The study has also produced several findings counter to those of current ecological thinking.”

As examination of research data on the birds of Connecticut River marshes draws to a close, new discoveries continue to be made that ultimately will influence the manner in which wetland habitats are managed.

The study has confirmed that larger habitats support more species, a well-known relationship in natural systems (above chart). However, why this relationship develops is often less clear. It requires detailed detective work to uncover the mechanisms at work.

Because our study draws upon data gathered over a 30 year period, we are able to disentangle many of the factors that can lead to an increase in species with area. The histori-

cal perspective of this investigation can, for example, interpret the species-area relationship in light of long term shifts in populations and distributions within the system.

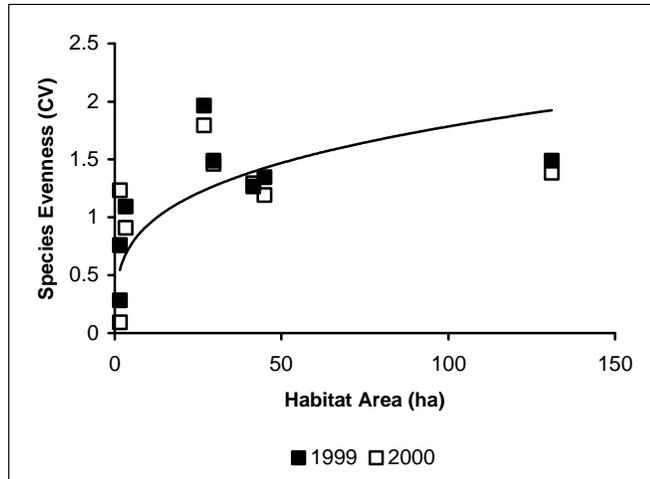
The study also has produced several findings counter to those of current ecological thinking. When one examines how evenly among species individual birds are distributed (for example, if there are five species and 10 total birds in a habitat, there could be two birds of each species or one species with six individuals and the rest with one bird each), theorists predict that greater evenness yields a greater ability of habitats to support species.

In our investigation, in contrast, greater evenness

is associated with fewer species (chart, top of p. 3; larger values are associated with lower evenness). We are able to explain such anomalies through examining patterns of distribution exhibited by individual species.

The last step in this extensive study involves completing our examination of how individual birds are spaced within each of the study sites. Such information will further assist in interpreting the species-area relationship.

Excerpts from our report will appear in the next newsletter.



As habitat area increases, individuals become less evenly distributed among species.

RECONNAISSANCE



Horseneck Beach, Massachusetts

“As habitat area increases, individuals become less evenly distributed among species.”

The Forest Bird Survey of Southern New England is envisioned as a long-term investigation of our region’s bird life. In order for this study to continue effectively into the future, we are continually conducting

reconnaissance work throughout the region. Such investigation identifies suitable locations for study sites.

A notable location visited in recent weeks is the dune

forest community of the south coast of Massachusetts. Such communities as the open Pitch Pine forest depicted above are similar to more extensive such forests on Cape Cod and Long Island.

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 _____



Anthony says, "Don't sleep through our winter membership campaign ..."

www.
birdconservationresearch
.org

MEMBERSHIP

As we now attract about 3,000 visitors annually to our web site, it is not surprising that BCR is receiving an increasing number on-line memberships.

We have recently sent out year-end membership renewals to all of our existing members. Please send in your renewals soon so that you can continue to help with our ongoing efforts.

Membership applications and payment options are available at www.birdconservation-research.org. Credit cards are accepted.