

# BIRD CONSERVATION

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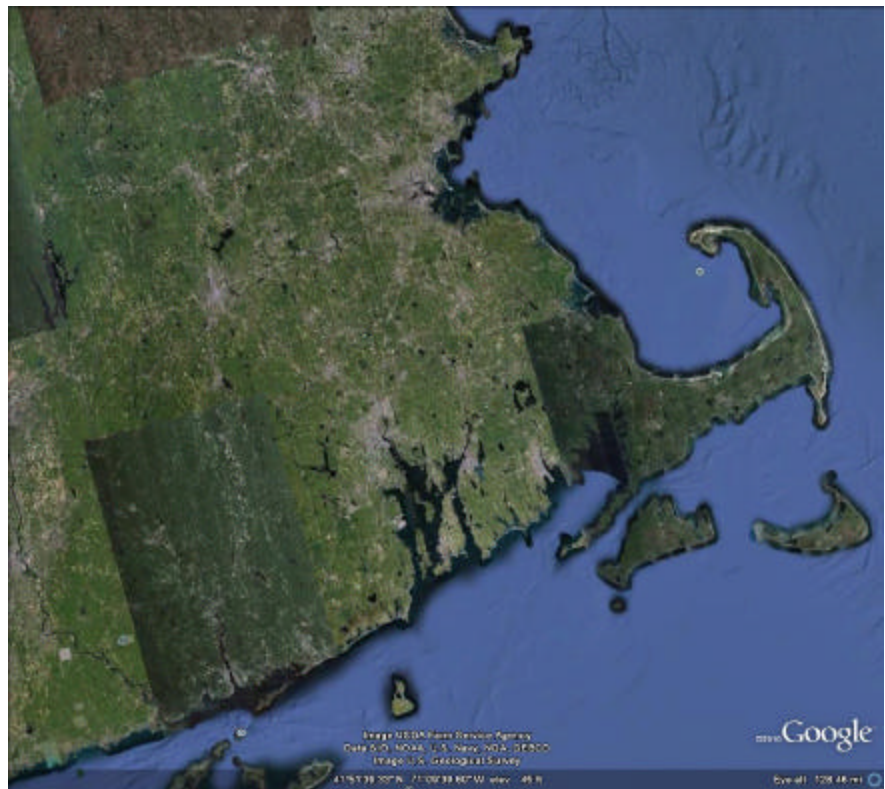
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## INSIDE THE FOREST BIRD SURVEY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND



**The Forest Bird Survey of Southern New England covered much of the area in this satellite image.**

**W**hen *The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Connecticut* was published in 1994, the notion of conducting a fully quantitative survey of Connecticut's birds was dis-

missed as a practical impossibility. Indeed, conducting sophisticated scientific research is difficult even in the laboratory. When field work is involved, it can become truly daunting.

Despite the inherent difficulties, *The Forest Bird Survey of Southern New England* carried out a quantitative survey of both Connecticut and Rhode

*(Continued on page 2)*

# FOREST BIRDS— CONTINUED

**“... the notion of conducting a fully quantitative survey of Connecticut’s birds was dismissed as a practical impossibility.”**



**The bleak landscapes of winter proved to be the most challenging for carrying on forest bird surveys.**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Island. In addition to the drudgery of compiling and proofreading titanic stacks of data, there were new branches of mathematics to learn and new statistical techniques to master.

Gathering field data was the most difficult task, however. It was quite something other than simply taking a walk in the woods. It instead involved walking a thousand miles and repeating the same sampling protocol 8880 times over eight years, winter and

summer.

Winter proved to be the most challenging season for collecting data. Conditions could become dangerous, such as when temperatures dropped well below zero, when icy rivers needed to be forded, and when walking across thin ice on beaver ponds ended in breakthroughs.

Situations such as these led to hypothermia and frostbite. There were as well times when sampling schedules precluded taking time off to heal from injuries or to

recuperate from illnesses.

When analyses are complete, the survey will provide the first ever systematic, fully quantitative and statistically defensible view of the distribution, populations and habitat use of the forest birds in Connecticut and Rhode Island. However, the scale of the investigation is so massive that even after two full years of data analysis, most data are yet to be examined thoroughly.

# FIELD TRIPS



**Early morning frost across the Thompson Lake meadows met participants in the November BCR field trip.**

The sparsely attended late fall field trip to Thompson Lake was sparse in terms of bird sightings as well. It was an atypically cold morning during an otherwise mild autumn. A Board of Trustees trip to the same place on the previous weekend was similarly quiet, although not nearly as cold.

Highlights of the two trips were several species that have become regulars in the Thompson area— Common Raven and Pileated Woodpecker. Ducks were in short supply at a time

when they are often plentiful. We did manage to find a few Common Mergansers and Mallards, but our best find was a Surf Scoter. This bird was at nearby Killingly Reservoir, however.

Other notable observations were plentiful Eastern Bluebirds and American Robins. Tree Sparrows had also just arrived, along with fair numbers of the more widespread Swamp and Song Sparrows.

Birds of prey included Red-tailed and Red-

shouldered Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk. The Bald Eagles that have taken up residence in the Thompson-Killingly area were not in evidence on either trip, however.

Plans are now in the works for a mid-winter trip to some suitably exotic coastal location, so stay tuned...

***“Actually gathering field data was the most difficult task. It was quite something other than simply taking a walk in the woods.”***



# BCR EXPANDS ITS WEB PRESENCE

**“... the site enhances access to our web products, including scientific papers, books, videos, PowerPoint presentations and lab activities.**

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In order to better accommodate our rapidly expanding population of internet resource users (17% more users in 2011 than in 2010), BCR will shortly unveil its new web site. In addition to taking advantage of state-of-the-art graphics and design, the site enhances access to our web products, including scientific papers, books, videos, PowerPoint presentations and lab activities.

The new web look will also enhance the visibility of our open access scientific journal, *Bird Conservation Research Contributions*. Instructions to contributors are to be posted, and as each new paper is accepted for publication, it will become available for download.

We have also expanded our web presence to Facebook, where we post the latest news about our accomplishments. Friends are notified of new posts and all posts are made immediately available to the general public.

We have additionally established several blogs (see an example on the next page),



**This photo of a Tufted Titmouse has been adopted as our signature image.**

where we initiate discussions about topics in bird conservation and environmental education. We have focused particularly on publicizing the availability of our educational materials for advanced placement (AP) environmental sci-

ence. We have been working toward developing a complete AP course that follows national curriculum standards.

## bird conservation research

Recent news from Bird Conservation Research, Inc. about its work on the conservation of New England's birds and on the promotion of environmental education.



## ARE PERMANENT RESIDENT BIRDS REALLY SO PERMANENT IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND?



*The Mourning Dove is a frequent year-round resident of Connecticut.*

A variety of bird species are thought of as being permanent residents in southern New England. However, although the species may be present year-round, the individuals present are not necessarily the same. In fact, populations of resident species often change considerably between seasons. Short distance migrations may occur among some individuals. In eastern Connecticut, ongoing research conducted by Bird Conservation Research, Inc. has demonstrated that species like the Tufted Titmouse, Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal show population declines from summer to winter as birds appear to leave the region. In contrast, the Black-capped Chickadee shows population increases that appear to be driven by movement of chickadees into the region from further north. A number of wintering species also tend to congregate toward the coast, where winter temperatures average milder than in northern areas. These findings are detailed in **Seasonal Shifts in Population Distributions and Habitat Use by Permanent Resident Forest Birds in Eastern Connecticut.**

***“A number of wintering species also tend to congregate toward the coast, where winter temperatures average milder than in northern areas.”***

The Newsletter of  
Bird Conservation Research, Inc.

90 Liberty Highway  
Putnam, CT 06260

Web: [www.birdconservationresearch.org](http://www.birdconservationresearch.org)

E-mail: [mail@birdconservationresearch.org](mailto:mail@birdconservationresearch.org)

# Bird Conservation Research, Inc.

## Membership

- \$25 Regular member
- \$35 Family membership
- \$50 Sustaining member
- \$100 Contributor
- \$250 Patron
- \$500 Benefactor
- \$1,000 Grand benefactor

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*Become a member and have something to crow about...*

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

**P**lease consider becoming a member of BCR or renew your membership if you have not yet done so. You may support us by returning the member

form on the left of this page.

Memberships provide a significant part of the funds necessary to conduct our research and

public education activities. Membership applications and payment options are also available at [www.birdconservationresearch.org](http://www.birdconservationresearch.org).