

# BIRD CONSERVATION

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## RHODE ISLAND SURVEY COMPLETE



**Here at the southern end of its range, the Canada Warbler is a widespread but uncommon inhabitant of swamps and laurel thickets.**

The first ever comprehensive, broad scale population survey of forest birds in Rhode Island is now history. Despite the unrelenting spring deluge, 26 sites and 390 survey points were sampled. Although computerization and analyses will take some time, preliminary estimates are that we tallied roughly 90

species and 4,500 individuals.

In many regards, Rhode Island surveys verified patterns already detected in eastern Connecticut. However, the unique conditions present in Rhode Island (greater preponderance of coastal plain conditions, drier upland soils, pine

barrens-like conditions, and extensive swamps) also yielded patterns peculiar to the region.

Some of the most exciting bird discoveries of the summer include several breeding Goshawks and Cooper's Hawks, Northern Parulas and, incidentally to surveys, Sora and Common Moorhen.

## PFIZER FUNDS COMPUTER SYSTEM

Through the generosity of the Pfizer Foundation, BCR is upgrading its computer systems. Because of

our sophisticated analytical needs, such an upgrade comes as a welcome addition to our capabilities.

We are gathering enormous volumes of data in the Forest Bird Survey, conducting complex

## PFIZER GRANT (CONTINUED)

mathematical analyses, and generating large numbers of maps to be used in Geographic Information Systems. To function effectively, we have required much greater speed and computing capacity. If we

are to maximize the utility of our data, our computing abilities must keep pace with our requirements.

In addition to computing capacity, we are also adding to our scanning, print-

ing and electronic communication abilities.

*“The sites provide an ominous look into the future of forest birds in the urbanizing landscape of southern New England.”*

## THE SILENT SPRING OF LINCOLN WOODS



**The Scarlet Oak-Huckleberry forests of Lincoln Woods are lacking forest floor birds.**

The mature and extensive forests of Lincoln Woods State Park in Lincoln, Rhode Island possess exceptional examples of Scarlet Oak-Huckleberry forest. A number of the trees in the park have diameters to 20 inches and grow to 70 feet tall. It is a system beginning to exhibit some of the condi-

tions of old growth forest.

Although an outstanding example, the forest type itself is not unusual. The forests are typical of drier, gravelly soils such as are found on the coastal plain and in areas of glacial-derived soils.

The bird communities of

these forests are characteristically diverse and include such common tree-top residents as Eastern Wood Pewee, Red-eyed Vireo and Scarlet Tanager. On the forest floor, the Ovenbird is generally the most abundant species. The Hermit Thrush and Rufous-sided Towhee also occur there, although they

are replaced by the Veery and Wood Thrush at moister sites.

All these forest inhabitants are widespread and common in most of our region's forests. Indeed, the treetop species are also frequent at Lincoln Woods, but the forest floor residents are conspicuously absent.

So what is different about Lincoln Woods compared with so many similar woodlands around the region?

A clue lies at Diamond Hill State Park in Cumberland. Forest floor inhabitants are also uncommon there, although not as completely absent as at Lincoln Woods.

Lincoln Woods sits on the border of Providence, and is nearly surrounded by extensive suburban development. Similarly, Diamond Hill is near Woonsocket, and although not quite as engulfed in suburbs, it is also in a much more urban area than other sites we

surveyed.

The difference between these sites and others studied indeed appears to be their proximity to urban centers. Such centers bring cats, dogs, intensive use by people, and isolation from surrounding forest habitats. Effects like these likely explain the absence of forest floor residents. The sites provide an ominous look into the future of forest birds in the urbanizing landscape of southern New England.

## SPECIES SPONSORS



**Tom Harvey would love to see the species account for Black-capped Chickadee have a sponsor.**

The *Forest Birds of the Last Green Valley*, the atlas of breeding and wintering forest birds of eastern Connecticut, is in its final proof-reading, and will be avail-

able for publication this year. The book contains a detailed analysis of forest bird communities, and also contains individual accounts for every species occurring in our region.

The goal of BCR is to make this document available to all towns and regional planners at a nominal cost so that they may use it in regional open space planning.

In order for this goal to be met, we need assistance. You can help by sponsoring a species account. A number of species already have sponsors, but many more need them. Use the enclosed envelope (with the printed version of the newsletter) and adjacent form to choose a species. You may view the species list at [www.birdconservationresearch.org](http://www.birdconservationresearch.org). Your name will be listed at the end of your species account.

### Species Sponsorship

**For Birds of the Last Green Valley**  
*(sponsorships are \$125; please select a first, second and third choice)*

**Species Choice:**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
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# Bird

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\_\_\_ \$25 Regular member  
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\_\_\_ \$35 Family membership  
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\_\_\_ \$100 Contributor  
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funded completely by memberships, gifts and research grants. Please help bird conservation by

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