

MONDAY POSTER SESSION

WILDLIFE POPULATION ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Breeding bird survey and detection probability analysis of birds at Murphy Lake State Game Area in Michigan

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Little is known about breeding bird diversity of Murphy Lake State Game Area (MLSGA), in Tuscola County, Michigan. A breeding bird survey has never been conducted at MLSGA. Situated between 2 large bodies of water, Lake Huron and Lake Erie, MLSGA is a forested habitat island in a sea of agriculture that may be important for breeding birds. The goal of this project was to perform a thorough breeding bird survey of MLSGA. Experienced birders surveyed the area using the unlimited-radius point count method. Ten minute time intervals were used for the detection of breeding birds. Sixteen points were systematically chosen throughout the game area, which consists mostly of beech-maple forest, emergent marsh, and coniferous forest. Results from the survey suggest that at least 102 species use the game area as breeding habitat. Three species observed are on the Michigan State Threatened Species list: Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*), and Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*). In addition to conducting a breeding bird survey, two points were systematically chosen for a detection probability study. These data provide information required to monitor breeding bird distributions, habitat associations, and population trends of birds and may potentially influence resource management of Murphy Lake State Game Area.

KEYWORDS: diversity, point, count

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Variations in the annual distribution of birds across the grassland habitat of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Kansas

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Birds are an important component of ecosystems, as their high body temperature, rapid metabolism, and high ecological position in most food webs make them good indicators of the effects of local and regional changes in an ecosystem. Using Hot Spot Analysis, as implemented in ArcGIS 9.3 (ESRI), we analyzed trends in the species richness of bird as long-term indicators of the integrity of the grassland habitat of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Kansas between 2001 and 2008. Annual hot spot analysis identified areas in the grassland with both total bird species richness, and the richness of grassland obligate species, higher and lower in magnitude than expected by random chance. However, these areas of high and low species richness were not consistent across years, suggesting that sporadic annual variations in habitats across the preserve are readily identified by birds. It also suggests, that as a whole, the preserve is providing for the habitat needs of most grassland obligate species across years, as demonstrated by their relatively stable species richness.

KEYWORDS: birds, habitat, grassland

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: American Woodcock Singing-ground Surveys in the western Great Lakes region: assessment of trends in counts and habitat

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: The American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) Singing-ground Survey (SGS) is the primary tool used to assess population trend. The SGS was standardized in 1968, and has since been conducted with little modification. Survey routes were initially located randomly on secondary roads distributed across the primary breeding range of woodcock from the western Great Lakes region to New England and adjacent southern Canada. However, survey routes are restricted to roads and have largely remained the same for more than 40 years, potentially confounding interpretation of counts. Forest succession, development, and other factors that influence woodcock habitat quality or abundance along routes may not reflect habitat change at a broader, landscape scale, and as habitat along routes changes, woodcock counts also likely change. To assess these issues in the western Great Lakes region, we used a sample of SGS routes in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin and determined how land cover changed along SGS routes over a 15- to 17-year period (early 1990s to mid-2000s), and related changes in land cover to changes in counts of woodcock. We also compared the current land cover surveyed by the SGS in Minnesota and Wisconsin to the broader landscape that routes were intended to represent. Our results suggest that habitat abundance along routes is generally reflective of habitat abundance at a broad spatial scale. However, at finer scales some habitats are more or less abundant along roads. We also provide information about what changes in habitat are related to changes in woodcock counts. Our results provide a context for understanding trends in counts of American woodcock resulting from the SGS in the western Great Lakes region.

KEYWORDS: woodcock, habitat,

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Preliminary assessment of avian richness and relative abundance at green wing environmental laboratory in Amboy, Illinois

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: A preliminary assessment of avian richness and relative abundance was conducted at Green Wing Environmental Laboratory in northcentral Illinois, throughout all seasons, from the early fall of 2001 through the breeding season of 2002. This site consists of 170 hectares of various edge-dominated habitats. We conducted a total of six unlimited-radius point count survey routes (two fall migration, one winter, two spring migration, and one summer breeding season). Additionally, three random area search waterfowl surveys, and two random area search nocturnal bird surveys were conducted. We also recorded all birds observed between points (i.e. interpoint data). A cumulative total of 140 species were identified. Of these, 62 species were North American Migrants (NAM), 59 were Neotropical Migrants (NTM), and 19 species were Permanent Residents (RES). A total of 4,440 birds were recorded during the entire project. Fall migration yielded 88 species (36 NAM, 37 NTM, 15 RES) and 1,954 individuals. During the winter season, 27 species were identified (13 NAM and 14 RES), including 332 individual birds. We observed 115 species during spring migration (52 NAM, 48 NTM, 15 RES), which included 1,572 individuals. During the breeding season, we encountered 55 species (20 NAM, 23 NTM, 12 RES) and tallied 582 individual birds. Although our sampling effort during this project was very limited, a large diversity of avian species was nevertheless recorded. This tends to suggest that the Green Wing Environmental Laboratory may be functioning as a habitat island within a Midwestern landscape matrix dominated by agricultural row crops.

KEYWORDS: avian, point, count

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: The Birds of Green Wing Environmental Laboratory in Northcentral Illinois

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Green Wing Environmental Laboratory (GWEL), a biological field station located in the Prairie Peninsula Physiographic Area of northcentral Illinois, contains 170 hectares of edge-dominated forest fragments, scrub-shrub, wetland, and grassland habitats. Our objective was to assemble a cumulative list and summarize baseline ecological information for the avifauna utilizing GWEL, based on field studies from 2001-2007. During this study period, we observed 188 species within 17 orders and 47 families. Abundant summer breeders included Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), and Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*). During fall and spring migration, Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) were abundant. In winter, abundant species included the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), and Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). We observed many species of conservation concern, such as Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*), Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), and Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*). Edge-nesting species, such as the Red-winged Blackbird and Gray Catbird, experienced relatively high reproductive success. However, limited observations of species breeding in interior-edge habitats suggest that these birds, for example Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) and Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), may suffer from higher rates of nest depredation as well as brood parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). This is viewed as preliminary data regarding avian use of GWEL.

KEYWORDS: avian, abundance, productivity

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Novel microsatellite markers for use in determining genetic population structure of eastern box turtles at multiple spatial scales

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Eastern box turtles *Terrapene carolina carolina* are experiencing population declines throughout much of their range, likely due to a combination of anthropogenic pressures. Habitat fragmentation and road mortality can combine to reduce genetic variation within populations and decrease the ability to adapt to changing environments. *Terrapene c. carolina* is a long-lived species and changes in genetic parameters within local populations could go unobserved for long periods of time. To address the cryptic impacts of anthropogenic pressures on genetic diversity within Eastern box turtle populations, we have constructed a suite of hypervariable microsatellite markers. We discuss the use of these markers to assess population structure at three levels of geographic resolution: within Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests in Indiana (fine scale), across Indiana (state-wide), and across much of the Eastern United States (range-wide). By gaining an understanding of current levels of genetic structure, we can then make specific management recommendations with the aim of sustaining eastern box turtle genetic resources within Indiana and across their range.

KEYWORDS: *Terrapene carolina*, population decline, genetic diversity

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Relative abundance and species richness of terrestrial salamanders in response to timber harvests

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Woodland salamanders are an ideal group of species to monitor forest ecosystem integrity across the eastern United States. They play a significant role in nutrient recycling, are sensitive to environmental stresses, and they are often the most abundant vertebrates in deciduous forests. However, our current knowledge of the effects of timber harvesting on salamander populations is incomplete. We compared the species richness and abundance of woodland salamanders pre- and post-harvest among replicated study areas consisting of even-aged management, uneven-aged management, and uncut control areas. Two years prior to harvesting, 66 coverboard grids were placed throughout the study areas and checked bi-weekly from September through November 2007, and from March to May 2008. Pre-harvest sampling yielded 7753 salamander captures (representing six salamander species). Experimental harvests occurred between July 2008 and February 2009. Post-harvest sampling was initiated immediately during the fall of 2008 and the spring of 2009. Sampling will continue through 2011 to evaluate the immediate response of plethodontid salamander populations in regenerating forests < 5 years old.

KEYWORDS: salamander, timber harvest, coverboard

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Rangelwide analysis of Eastern massasauga rattlesnake survivorship

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: The Eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) is an endangered species afforded protection in every state/province in its range, which extends from Iowa to New York and from Ontario to Missouri. Populations of massasauga are fragmented with only a few areas containing multiple, sizable populations. Research on the massasauga usually focuses on single populations or local metapopulations but suggest that demographic parameters may vary geographically. In this study, we use radiotelemetry datasets provided by massasauga researchers throughout its range to characterize geographic patterns of massasauga survival. Radiotelemetry datasets were analyzed using the known-fate model in Program MARK to determine annual survivorship. Annual adult survival estimates averaged 0.56 (range: 0.35-0.80). To discover possible geographic patterns in massasauga survival rates, geographic contours will be generated through spatial principal components analysis and ArcMap. We also propose to combine the survival rates with climate data to forecast future demographic change due to changing climate with the program Maxent, which utilizes the maximum entropy approach for species habitat modeling. These analyses will provide a better understanding of the relationship between survivorship and geographic location for the Eastern massasauga rattlesnake as well as predict possible changes in massasauga survivorship and range due to climate change.

KEYWORDS: massasauga, survivorship, radiotelemetry

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Treefrog population dynamics in western Kentucky

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: The drastic decline in global amphibian populations has revealed our general lack of understanding of amphibian behavior and environmental requirements. Population dynamics of treefrogs, in particular, is currently being explored. Due to their biphasic lifestyle, treefrogs are influenced by both aquatic and terrestrial habitat disturbance. Many studies have been performed on the use of terrestrial habitats by treefrogs for hibernation and breeding purposes, but little is known about the seasonal movements of these animals among habitats. Of the treefrogs found in North America, three species are native to western Kentucky: the Bird-voiced (*Hyla avivoca*), Green (*Hyla cinerea*) and the Copes grey (*Hyla chrysoscelis*). In this study, we monitored population movements of all three species of treefrogs through a deciduous forest surrounding a cypress swamp in western Kentucky. Using artificial refugia (PVC tubes), 158 treefrogs were trapped and marked around the swamp. Frog captures peaked in April and September as they migrated from surrounding woods toward the swamp for breeding in the spring and subsequently back to wintering sites in the fall. Movement among tubes was limited during the four months encompassing breeding season (May-August). However, Bird-voiced treefrogs were caught more frequently during the summer months, especially August. Treefrogs spent over 50 percent of their time foraging in woods around the breeding pond. The protection of forest buffer zones surrounding treefrog breeding areas may be just as vital to their health and survival as protection of the breeding ponds themselves and should be considered in management of these species.

KEYWORDS: treefrog, amphibian, movement

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Human-related threats to urban raptors

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Annual bird mortality in the United States from anthropogenic sources is estimated at one billion. Urban raptors are affected by many of these factors. However, little is known about the relative frequency and magnitude of sources within and among species. I reviewed 86 published sources on mortality and urban use for the raptors of the United States and Canada. Within the Falconiformes (28 urban species), vehicle collisions and electrocutions were reported for most species (73% and 48%, respectively), and vehicular and window strikes were the leading sources of mortality for 39% and 12% of species, respectively. For the Strigiformes (14 urban species), vehicular (63%) and window (47%) collisions affected most species, and the primary sources of mortality were from vehicles (32%) and electrocution (5%). Window-strike mortality was reported for 45% of urban raptors and represented the leading source of mortality for Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*), Coopers Hawks (*A. cooperii*), Merlins (*Falco columbarius*), and Peregrine Falcons (*F. peregrinus*). Mortality by electrocutions was also observed for 45% of the species. Collisions with vehicles affected a large proportion of urban and non-urban raptors, both for species that use roadways for various activities (e.g., foraging) and for those that do not use roadways. Overall, the literature suggested that collisions and electrocutions are important sources of mortality for most raptors. Future work should directly assess the consequences of these sources on life history and demography of raptor populations.

KEYWORDS: raptors, urban, threats

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Risk of leptospirosis in wildlife: a measure of ecosystem health

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Leptospirosis is a waterborne bacterial disease for which wildlife and domestic animals can serve as reservoirs for multiple pathogenic serovars (i.e. *Leptospira interrogans* autumnalis, bratislava, canicola, ichterohemorrhagiae, pomona, *L. kirschneri* serovar gryppotyphosa, and *L. borgpeterseni* serovar hardjo). Urban sprawl has increased interspecies interactions i.e., wildlife with humans and their domestic animals. Therefore, human, wildlife, and domestic animal health risk is based on the assessment of the prevalence and incidence of leptospirosis in wildlife and the watersheds that are now shared. Samples from raccoons, opossum, and feral cats from a local natural area were trapped, bled, and their serum was analyzed for 7 pathogenic serovars of *Leptospira* using a Microscopic Agglutination Test (MAT). Titers 1:25 or greater were considered suggestive of past exposure and titers > 1:800 of active infection or recent infection. Water samples were collected from areas in close proximity trapping sites. Water samples were analyzed for *Leptospira* by a real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (q-PCR). The results indicate that cats are not susceptible to infection (Prevalence = 0%, n = 9 feral cats) Opossums prevalence = 59.2%, n=76 (3 of those with an active or recent infection), Raccoon prevalence = 46.2%, n=130 (13 of those with an active or recent infection). The qPCR indicated that 7 water samples were positive (Cycle Threshold < 38) for *Leptospira* and 2 samples were suspect (n=15). The combined data of infected waters, active or recent infections, and sites with greater sero-conversion rates will provide evidence of areas of high risk for infection.

KEYWORDS: leptospirosis, ecosystem, disease

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Spatial variation of host selection in *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Recent field studies are measuring feeding patterns of mosquitoes using advances in molecular blood meal identification and quantify avian and mammalian host selection based on measures of availability. These studies incriminate mosquito vectors responsible for arbovirus transmission and implicate bird and mammal species responsible for amplification. However, most of these studies aggregate data across samples collected from different geographic areas due to limited sample sizes. We performed a mosquito blood meal analysis integrating host-feeding patterns of *Culex pipiens* with measures of host availability from 10 different sites in a West Nile virus-endemic area of suburban Chicago, Illinois, during 2005 to 2008. We will present both the spatial variation in host selection and the amplification fraction of the avian community at each site. Results demonstrate the importance of considering spatial variation when measuring feeding patterns and host selection, especially when genetic substructuring in the *Cx. pipiens* complex is known to influence host preference.

KEYWORDS: arbovirus, mosquito,

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Mitochondrial DNA sequencing of white-tailed deer within chronic wasting disease management zone in south central Wisconsin

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a transmissible spongiform encephelopathy (TSE), which has had considerable economic and ecological impact, in both Wisconsin and Illinois. We can better understand the patterns of this disease by analyzing animal movement and dispersal behavior. This project focused on the collection of data detailing the spread or movement of the white-tailed deer populations within the CWD outbreak regions. The sampling area for this is the CWD management zone (CWD-MZ) in south central Wisconsin. Deer tissue samples from these populations were analyzed for mitochondrial DNA sequences to determine the diversity and distribution of existing haplotypes. The total sequences were mapped in Arc GIS to display the geographic distribution of the haplotypes across the CWD-MZ. We found 18 haplotypes in the deer populations. The distribution of haplotypes differed between the eastern and western CWD outbreaks. This sequence data gives a more clear picture of the population structure than previous microsatellite-based studies. This data will also be relevant to general ecological inference projects regarding female dispersal patterns or the population structure of white-tailed deer. This information contributes greatly to plans regarding CWD management in the future.

KEYWORDS: CWD, deer, genetics

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: DNA markers identify management units of white-tailed deer in Ohio

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Genetic methods can provide novel information to guide the management of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in Ohio. Specifically, data from genetic markers can identify genetically-distinct management units, assess the level of connectivity between these units, and estimate genetic variation and levels of inbreeding within management units. To address these goals for the Ohio deer herd, we sampled a total of 622 white-tailed deer from 24 counties in Ohio harvested during November thru December 2007 and November 2008 thru January 2009. Tissue samples were obtained during the week-long gun season and during select controlled hunts and culling programs across the state. We extracted DNA and genotyped samples at 11 nuclear microsatellite loci and sequenced a section of the mtDNA control region. We found that deer from Williams County in NW Ohio and Brown county in SW Ohio were genetically differentiated from deer throughout the rest of the state based on pairwise F_{ST} using multilocus genotypes ($P < 0.007$). We detected more fine scale population structure using mtDNA sequence data. The pattern of recent migration was asymmetrical with 19% and 54% of deer assigned as immigrants in Williams and Brown counties, respectively. However, the proportion of emigrants from these two counties was estimated at close to zero. Levels of within-population genetic variation ranged from moderate (HE equal 0.76) to high (HE equal to 0.80). These results indicate low levels of inbreeding and that deer are moving between management units in Ohio.

KEYWORDS: genetics, management, deer

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: The effects of block predator management on nesting success of ringed-necked pheasants in northeastern South Dakota

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: South Dakota has the largest population of ring-necked pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) in the country. However, loss of native prairies as well as CRP lands is reducing available nesting habitat. During the nesting season, mammalian predation can negatively affect hen and nest success. Township size block predator management has been effective at increasing duck nest success in North Dakota, but no research has been conducted regarding pheasant nest success. The objective of this part of the study was to determine if block predator management would increase nest success of pheasants. The Delta Waterfowl Association hired trappers to remove mammalian predators from March 15 to July 15 in northeast South Dakota on two 36-square mile blocks in 2007 and three blocks in 2008 and 2009. Trapped blocks along with similar control blocks were searched for nests from early May to early July using chain dragging methods, walking with hockey sticks, or the use of dogs. Nests were monitored weekly to determine their fate. We found 717 pheasant nests during the study and overall nest success rates were low. Increases in nest success were year and site specific. For example, in 2008 the Mayfield nest success in Beadle County was 39.0% (95% CI, 23.5-64.3) for the trapped site and 5.2% (95% CI, 1.5-17.4) for the control site. However, pooled Mayfield nest success was 18.2% (95% CI, 13.4-24.6) for the trapped sites and 14.5% (95% CI, 10.8-19.3) for control sites.

KEYWORDS: pheasant, nesting, predator

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Comparison of waterfowl nesting in natural and artificial habitat

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: Nearly two decades ago, prairie potholes were constructed in the Munuscong Bay region in effort to increase waterfowl nesting. Munuscong potholes and bay region were sampled to evaluate the waterfowl nesting and compare the newly constructed potholes to the naturally occurring bay habitat. Results showed equal usage between locations, similar species, and a positive relationship between size of waterfowl and size of potholes used for nest sites. The results suggest the addition of potholes is positive for waterfowl production. Further studies should focus on comparison or recruitment rates within each habitat.

KEYWORDS: waterfowl, habitat

ROOM:

TIME: Monday

TITLE: Living with wildlife in Illinois: a website to address human-wildlife conflicts

AUTHOR(S):

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ABSTRACT: The Living with Wildlife in Illinois website, was developed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and University of Illinois Extension. The website (<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/wildlife/>) was launched in July 2008 to provide residents of Illinois with information on how to coexist with wildlife. Besides offering life history information on many of Illinois most common species, the website guides homeowners on ways to prevent and solve basic wildlife-related problems. Preventing problems with wildlife is much simpler and less aggravating than dealing with problems after they occur. Fortunately, taking a few simple steps can help prevent many of the most common wildlife-related problems around the home. A number of proven methods can be used to remedy situations when problems cannot be prevented. If wildlife pose a threat to public health or safety, removal may be necessary. By Illinois law, a nuisance animal removal permit must be requested from the IDNR before a resident may remove most species of wildlife from private property. Another option is to hire a licensed nuisance wildlife control operator to remove the animal. The Living with Wildlife in Illinois website helps users identify species and determine whether or not they need to request a nuisance animal removal permit, provides contact information for IDNR district and regional wildlife biologists and conservation police offices, nuisance wildlife control operators and wildlife rehabilitators, and offers information about public health and safety issues as well as Illinois conservation laws. The public can submit reports of unusual wildlife sightings and post questions to IDNR wildlife biologists.

KEYWORDS: wildlife, website, Illinois