

ABSTRACTS FOR ISSUE 103(1) FEBRUARY 2001

FEATURE ARTICLES

SEASONAL FLUCTUATIONS OF BIRDS, FRUITS, AND FLOWERS IN A SUBTROPICAL FOREST OF ARGENTINA¹

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Abstract. I quantified monthly variation in species composition and captures of birds in a premontane forest of northwestern Argentina. Seasonal patterns of frugivore-insectivores and nectarivores were compared with fruit and flower abundances, respectively. The composition of the entire bird community fluctuated seasonally; frugivore-insectivores showed a peak in captures during the wet season, insectivores peaked at the end of the dry season, and nectarivores peaked during the dry season. At a local scale (~ 50 ha), captures of frugivore-insectivores were not correlated with number of plant species with ripe fruits for any vegetation stratum considered, but were correlated with a fruit phenology index that considers crop size. At a plot scale (~ 7.5 ha), only understory flower abundance and captures of nectarivores were correlated, but only in the plot where both were more abundant. At a net-site scale (50 m²), captures of the Rufous-bellied Thrush (*Turdus rufiventris*) were correlated with understory fruit abundance, but only in the plot where fruits were more abundant. These results suggest that seasonal fluctuations in birds may be driven to some extent by their food resources. Premontane forest provides habitat for many migrants and also presumably acts as a source of birds that emigrate to disturbed areas. Although premontane forests should be a conservation priority for the region, they are poorly protected and suffering high deforestation.

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