Woodlands and Woodland Birds in Illinois

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“Disturbance Birds”

Species that have an important association with habitats that are created or maintained by some agent of disturbance
For this Study:

Savannas and Woodland: 20 to 80% canopy closure, not shrub or grassland habitat, usually dominated by oaks. Nearly all the sites visited were in the higher end of this range.
Historical Range of Oak Savannas/Woodlands
What bird species are associated with these habitats?

For oak savannas and woodlands, most species are also found elsewhere (e.g., forest, grassland, edges)
The Red-headed Woodpecker is an exception
Great Crested Flycatcher
Northern Bobwhite
How are these species doing in Illinois?

For this, much of what is learned is from the Breeding Bird Survey
Population Trends in North American Birds
Breeding Bird Survey: 1966-2006

Habitat Groups

- Grassland
- Shrub-Scrub
- Savanna
- Forest
- Generalist

Percentage Changes:
- Signif. Decrease
- Decrease
- Signif. Increase
- Increase
Red-headed Woodpecker
Region 22 (most of central and northern Illinois)
For the Bird Conservation Area that Includes Much of Illinois: Oak Savanna and Woodland Birds

**Concern:**
- Red-headed Woodpeckers
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Eastern Kingbird

**No Problem**
- American Robin
- Eastern Bluebird
How does restoration change constituent animal populations and communities?

Sampled in series of restored savannas paired with undisturbed, closed-canopy forests.
Effects of Disturbance on Overall Community Structure
Illinois Oak Savanna and Forests

- Red-headed Woodpeckers
- Indigo buntings
- Baltimore Orioles
- Ovenbirds
- Scarlet Tanagers
- Red-eyed Vireos
Bird communities associated with savannas and open woodlands are identifiable and reasonably distinct from forest (or other) bird communities.

The suite of species associated with these habitats are of serious conservation concern and have legitimate ecological identity.