STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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The Council on Environmental Quality Notes Changes in Connecticut's Wildlife Linked to a Warming Climate

HARTFORD –

SONGBIRD POPULATIONS ARE CHANGING IN THE STATE.

The number of birds of species that have a preference for warmer climes is increasing in Connecticut. Historic data indicate that the composition of Connecticut's songbird population is changing. Songbirds that prefer warmer climates are increasing at a faster rate than cold-adapted songbird species. This shift is reflective of the warming of Connecticut's climate.

The Council examined the presence and abundance of a total of eighteen warm-climate adapted and cold-climate adapted songbird species since 1984 to assess the impact that climate change has had on songbird species. For the specific birds assessed, populations have increased. **Warm-climate adapted songbirds have increased more than cold-adapted songbirds**, which had a modest increase since 1984, but a decline in recent years. The impact of climate change on certain species will continue to be tracked annually and will appear in the Council's next Annual Report to the Governor on the State's environment.

FISH POPULATIONS ARE ALSO CHANGING

This change in resident bird species is being mirrored by Long Island Sound's fish species. For a number of years, the Council has tracked species diversity in Long Island Sound using the mean of cold-adapted species and warm-adapted species caught during DEEP's Long Island Sound Trawl Surveys. Since 1984, the **mean number of warm adapted species caught during the spring and fall trawl surveys increased while the average number of cold-adapted species declined**.

In addition to the changes in resident fish species, American lobster, a cold preference species, has seen a very significant decline (almost 90 percent) for the annual mean (spring and fall) trawl surveys.

“The decline in lobster populations in Long Island Sound is believed to be caused, in part, by changes in bottom water temperatures, stated Peter Hearn, Executive Director at the Council. “As the average annual temperature of the air and water increases, warm-adapted species are becoming more common. While species diversity can be good, warm-adapted species, such as certain invasive species, can be detrimental to native species.”

See birds and fish charts in an Environmental Update:
https://www.ct.gov/ceq/cwp/view.asp?a=986&Q=609498

The Council’s 2018 Annual Report, *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*, identifies a number of other environmental trends that are affected by a warming climate. For more information on how a warming climate is affecting our environment go the Council’s Annual Report:
https://www.ct.gov/ceq/cwp/view.asp?a=4992&Q=605326

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About the Council

Established in 1971, the Council on Environmental Quality submits Connecticut’s annual report on the status of the environment to the Governor pursuant to section 22a-12 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Additional responsibilities of the Council include review of construction projects of other state agencies, publication of the twice-monthly Environmental Monitor, and investigation of citizens’ complaints and allegations of violations of environmental laws. The Council is a nine-member board that is independent of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (except for administrative functions). The chairman and four other members are appointed by the Governor, two members by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and two by the Speaker of the House. All serve without compensation.