

What happens
when we
feed birds?



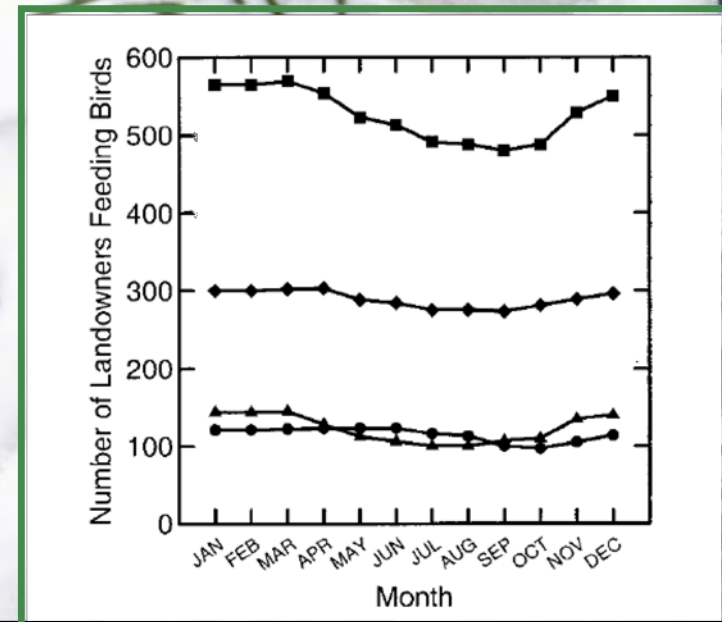
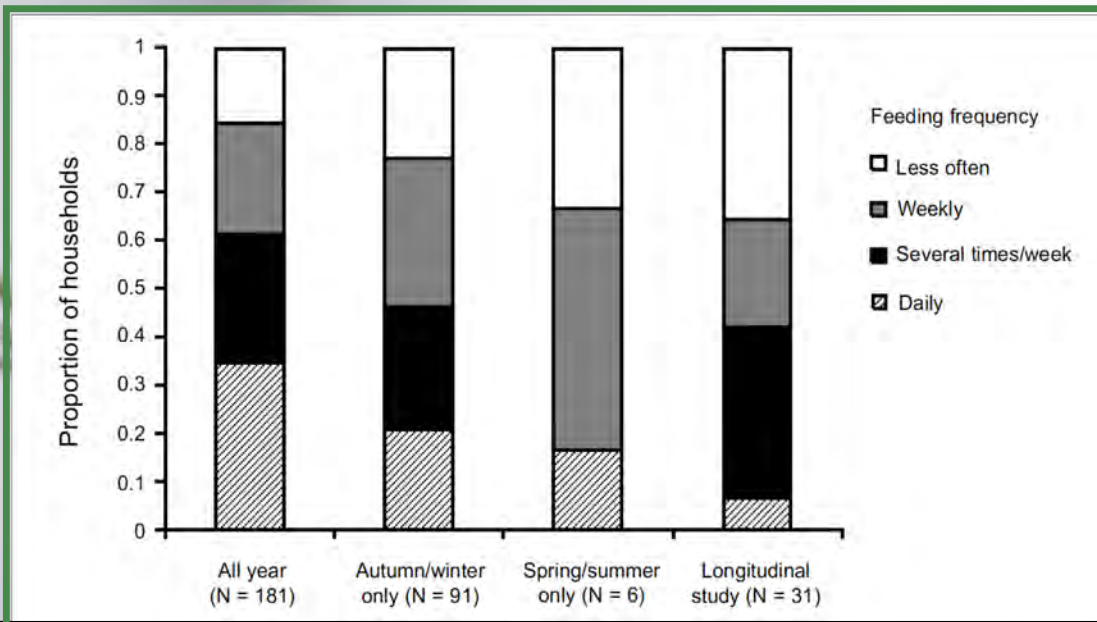
Darryl Jones

Bird feeding has
traditionally been
winter only



Now, often year round

Less strict in warmer places



An aerial photograph of a BNSF freight train. The train consists of two orange and black BNSF locomotives at the front, followed by a long, continuous line of tan-colored hopper cars. The train is curving through a dry, hilly landscape with sparse vegetation and a dirt road. The BNSF logo is visible on the side of the locomotives.

United States

22,000 carriages of seed annually

What happens when we feed
birds?

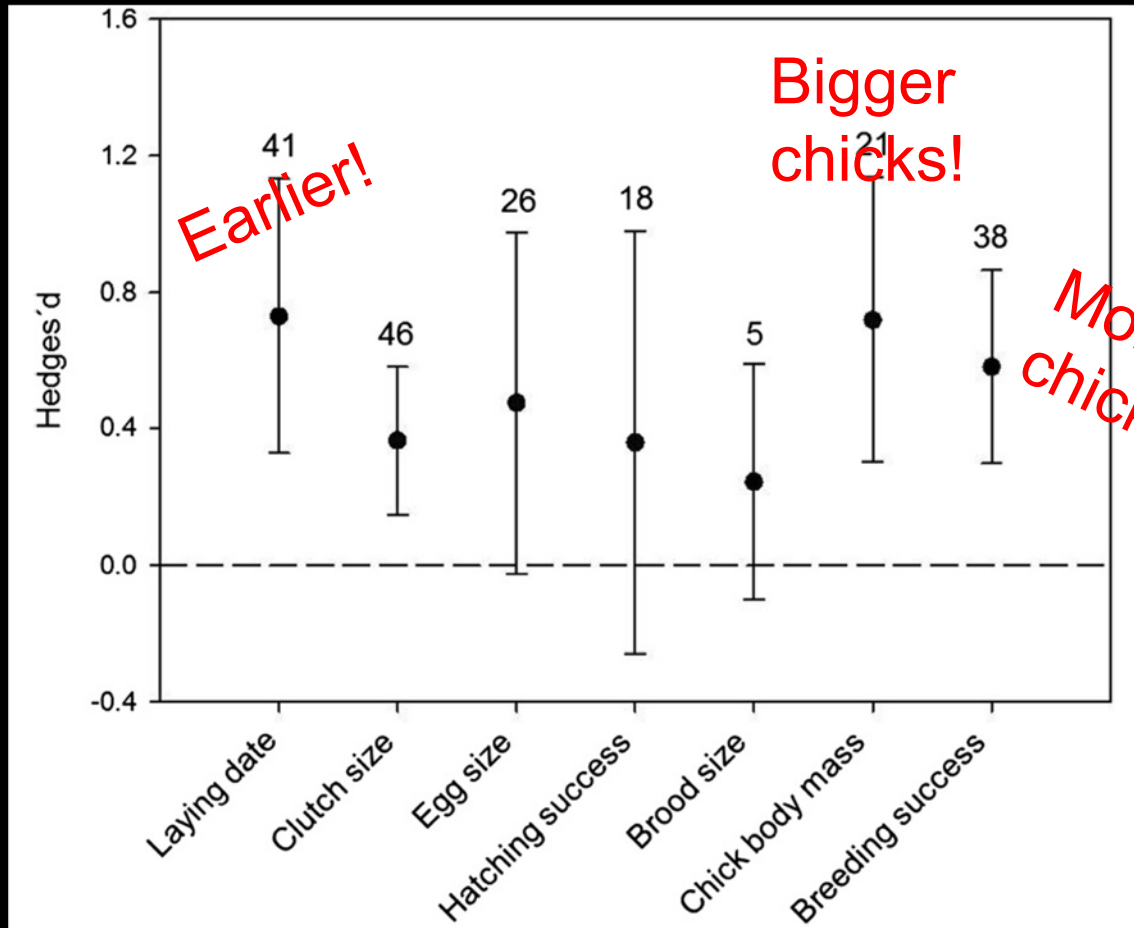


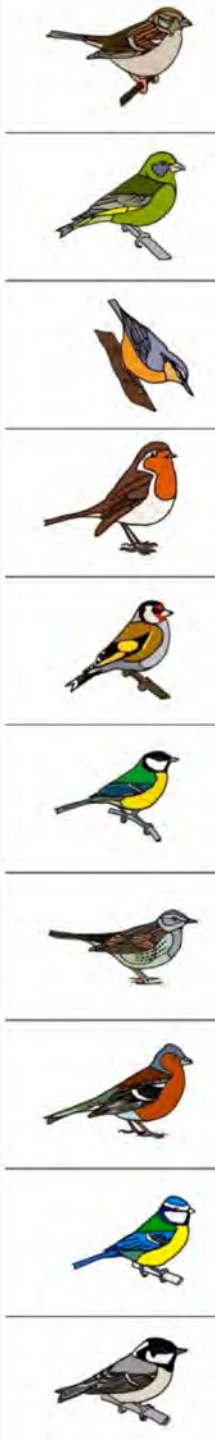


Supplementary feeding experiments

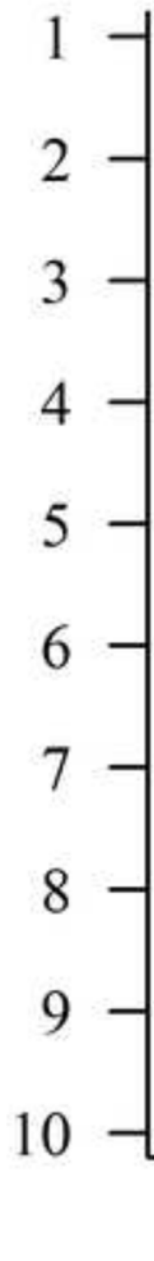
*Survive winter better, start breeding earlier ,
have more attempts, produce more offspring*

Additional food always changes something!





Dominance rank



Feeding creates concentrations and competition



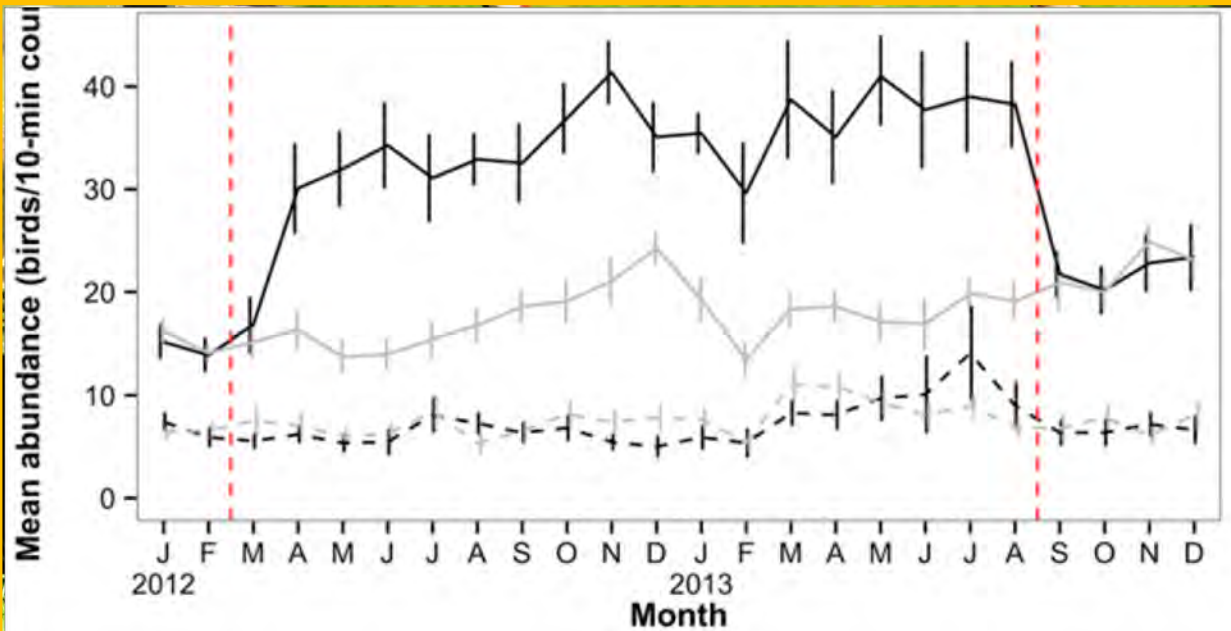
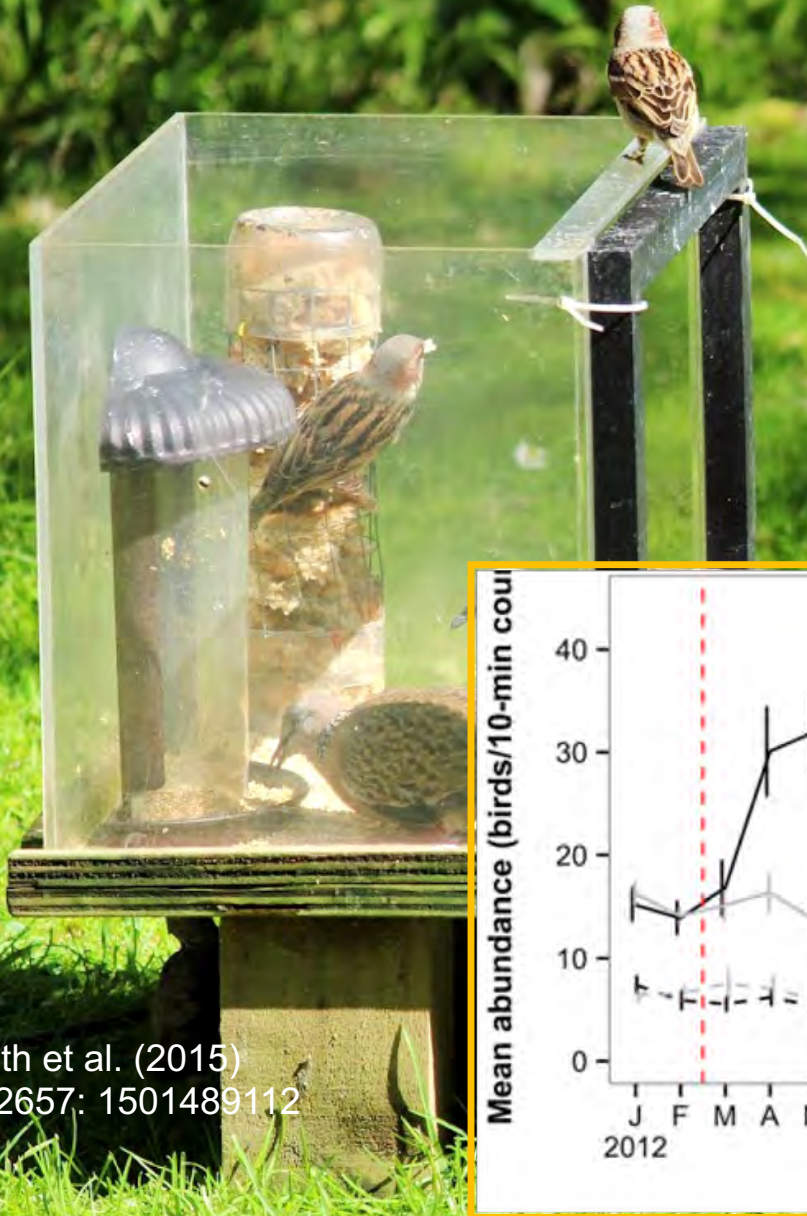
Miller et al. (2017)
Beh Ecol 28: 1454



Feeders attract feeder birds

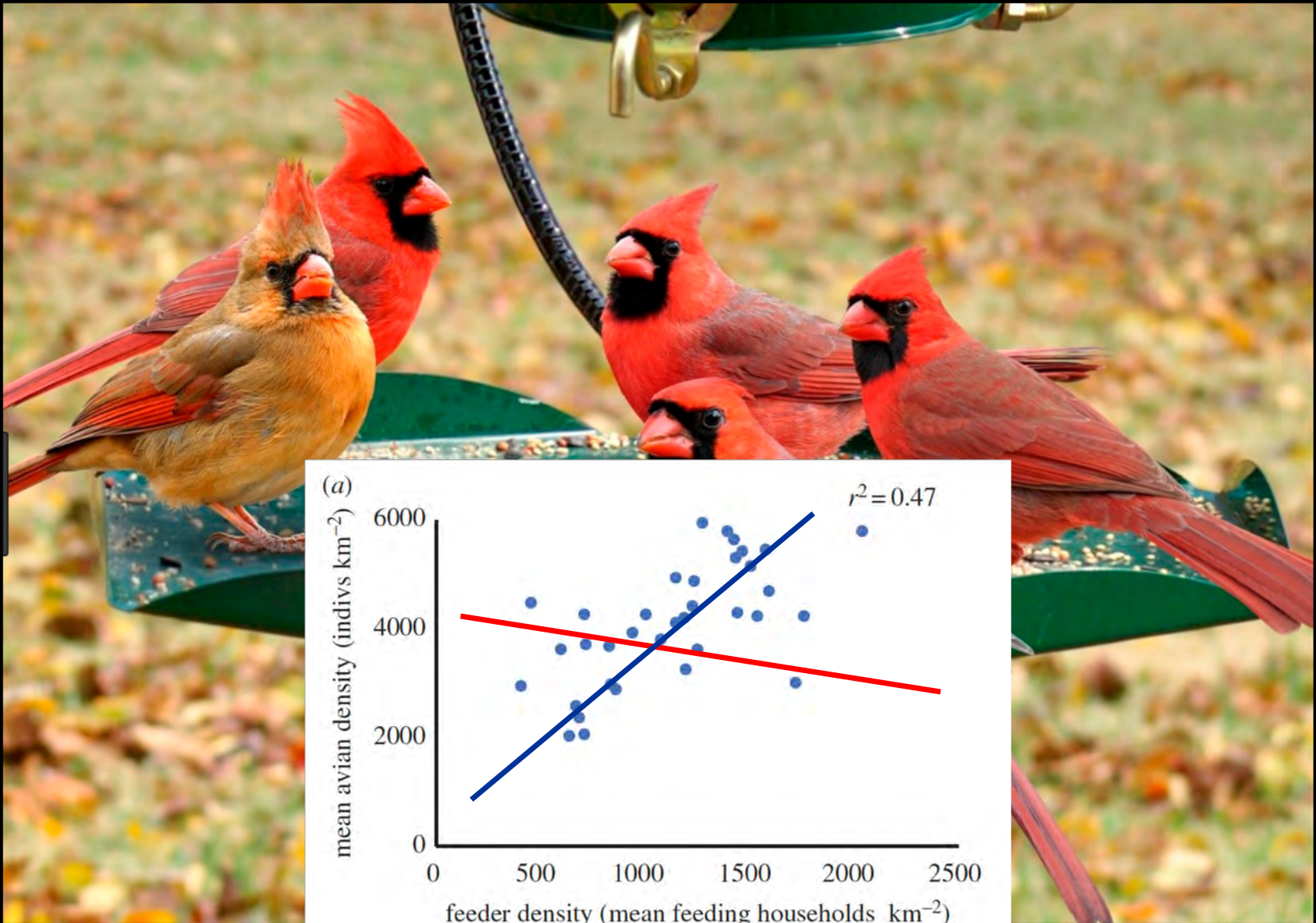
Greater diversity of species requires
a diversity of foods

Feeding changes bird communities



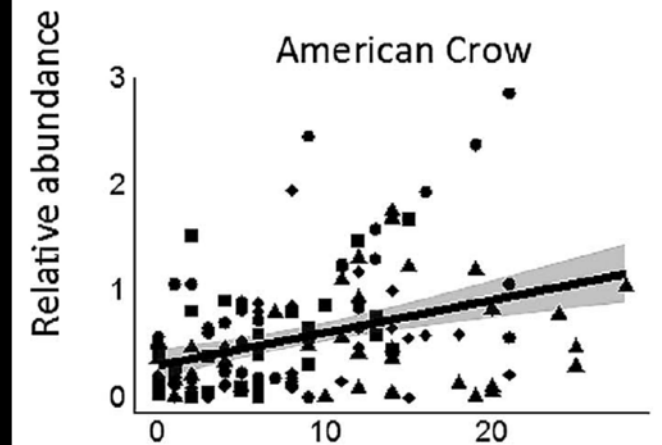
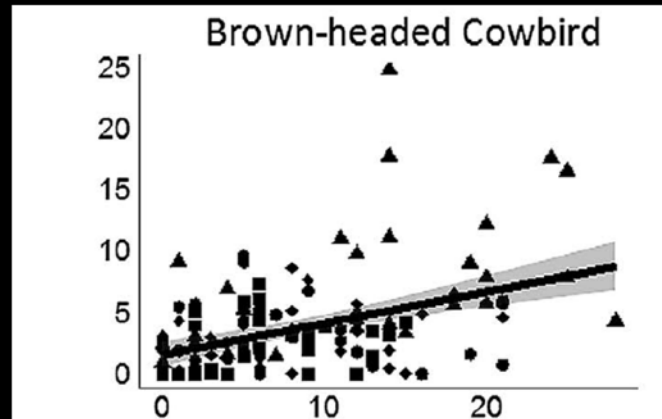
Galbraith et al. (2015)
PNAS 2657: 1501489112

More feeders, more birds (but not more species)



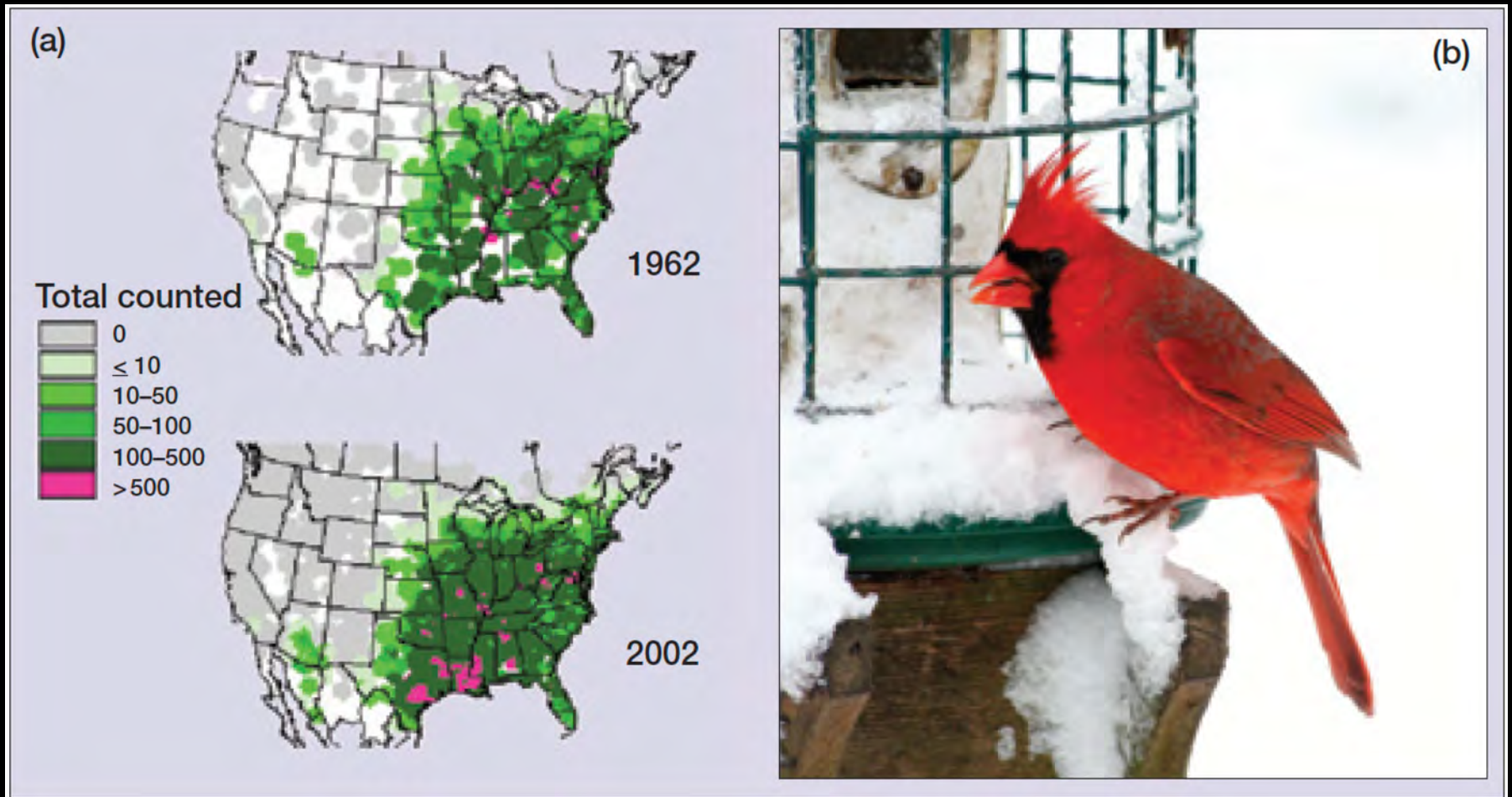
More feeders, more nasties

No effect

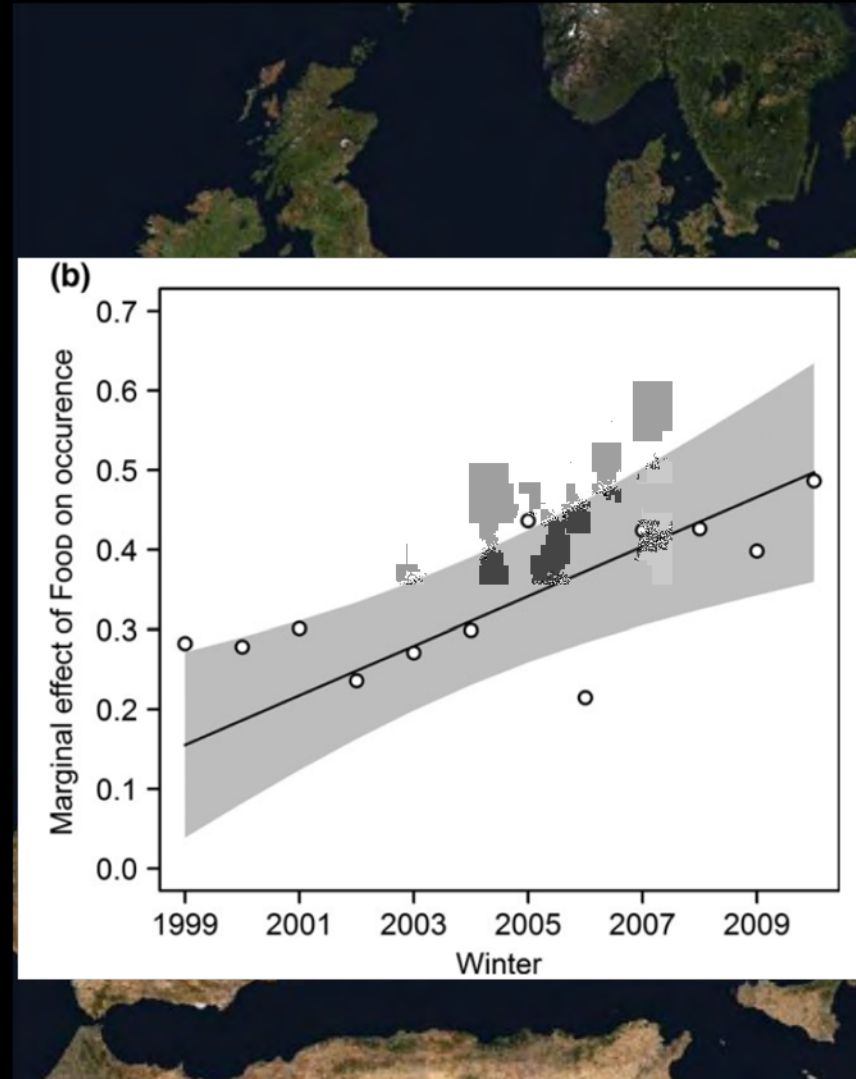


Low nest success
with most feeders and
crow

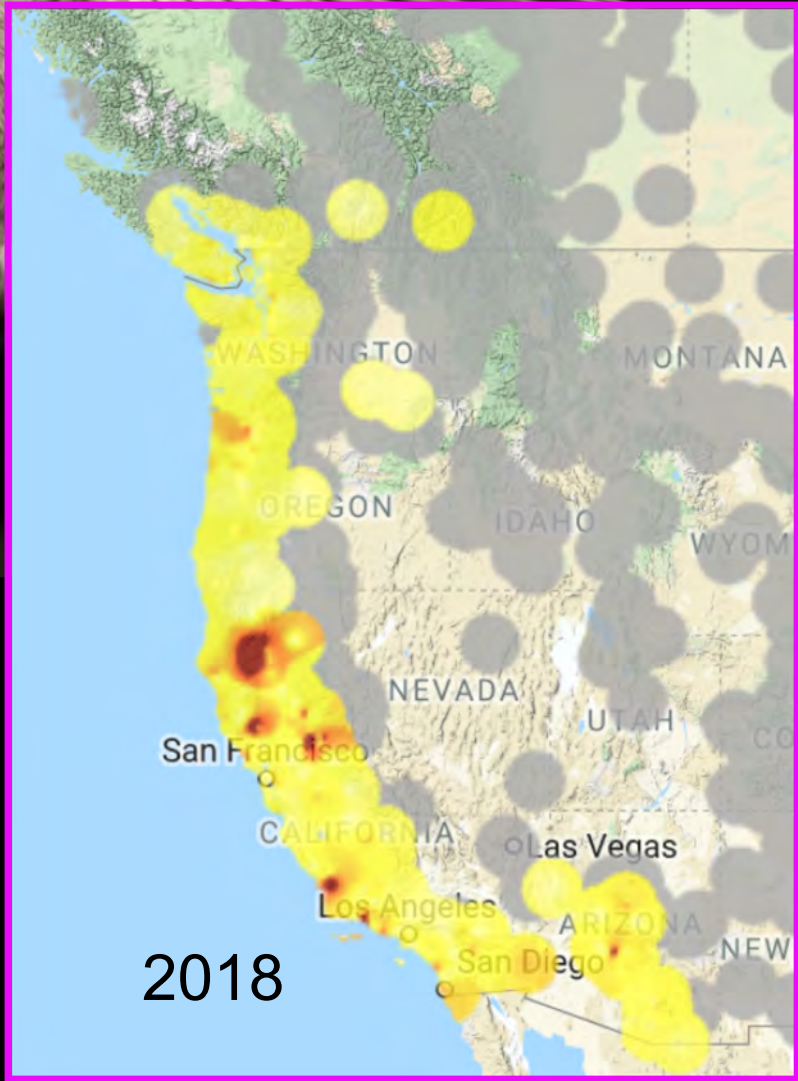
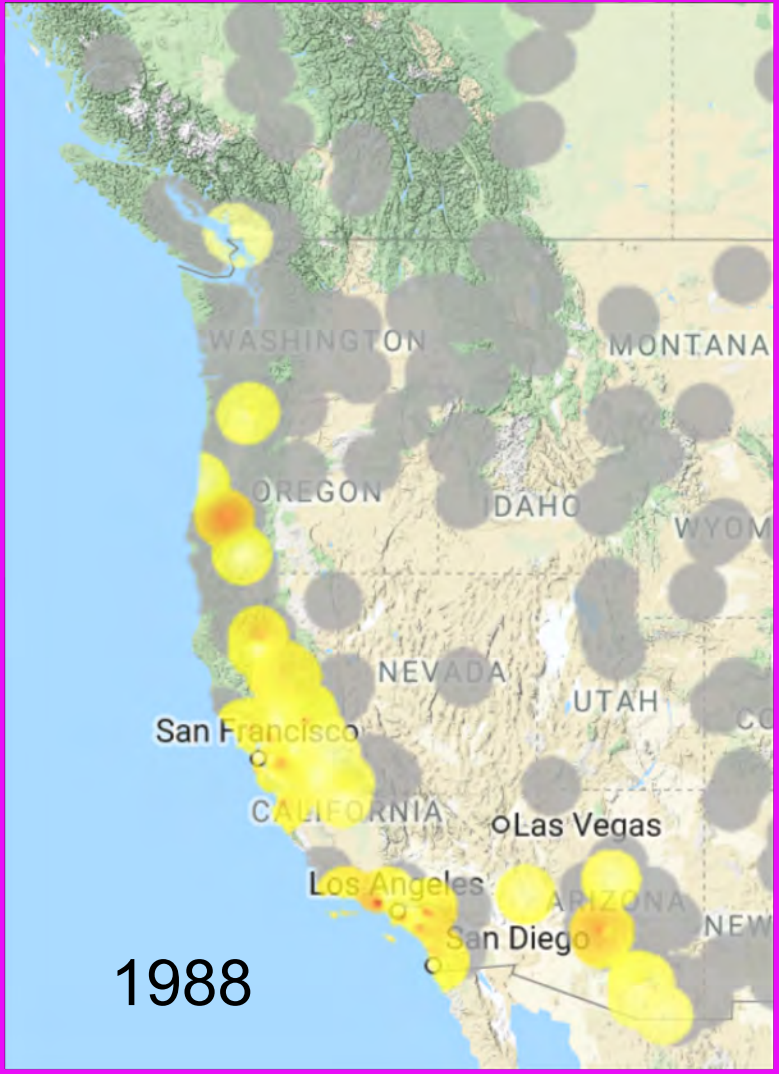
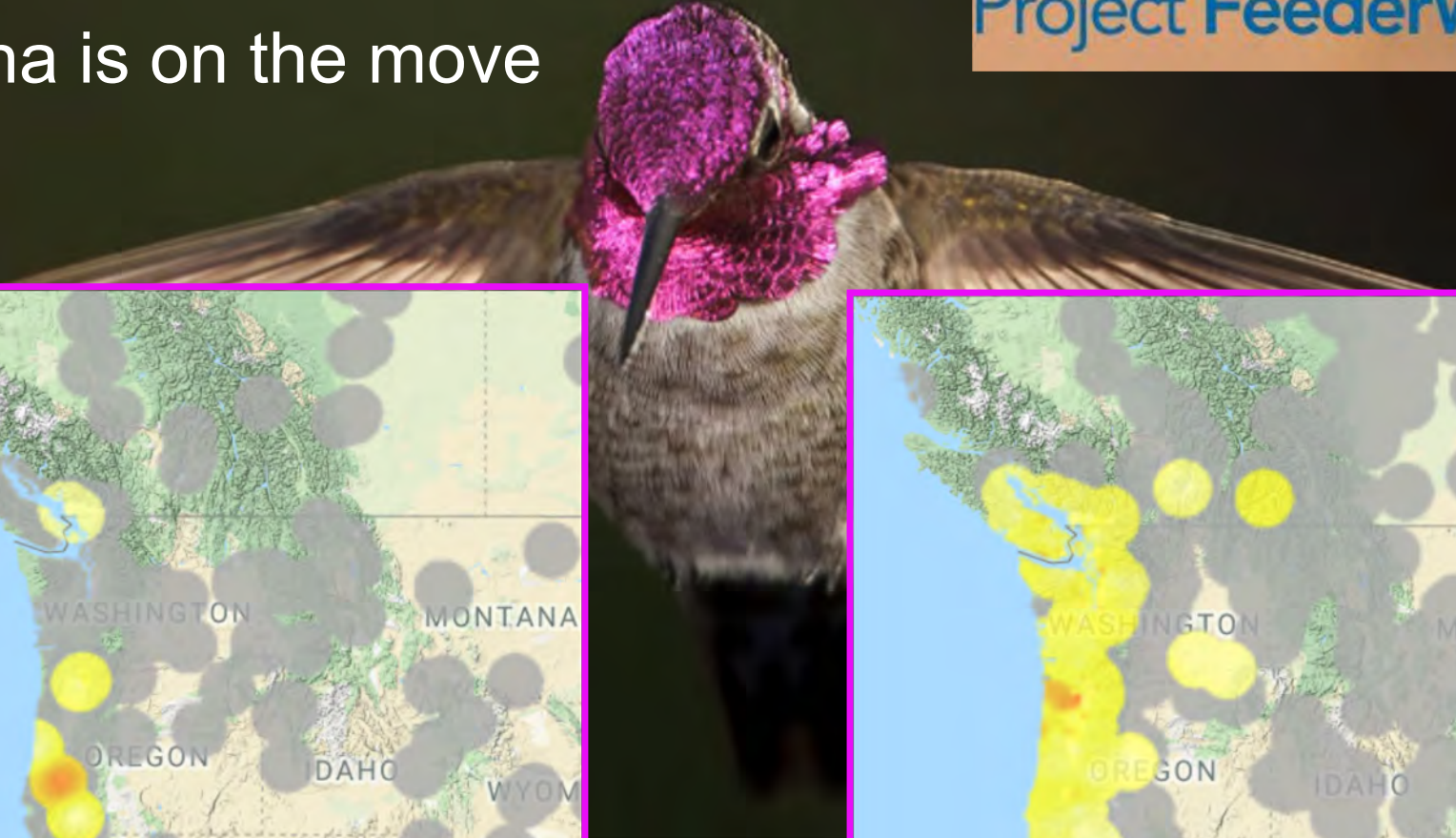
Is feeding moving birds around?



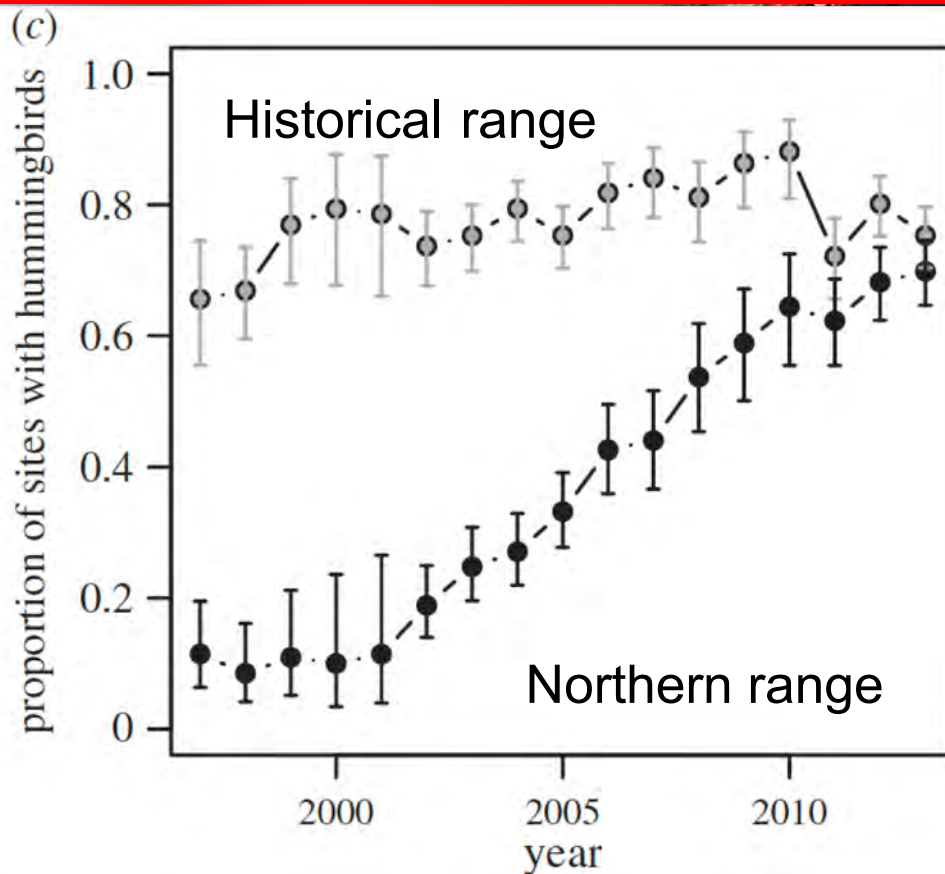
Blackcaps: a fortuitous mistake?



Anna is on the move



Anna's Hummingbird In Vancouver



Grieg et al. (2017)
ProcRoySocB 284: 20170256



Do birds rely on our food?

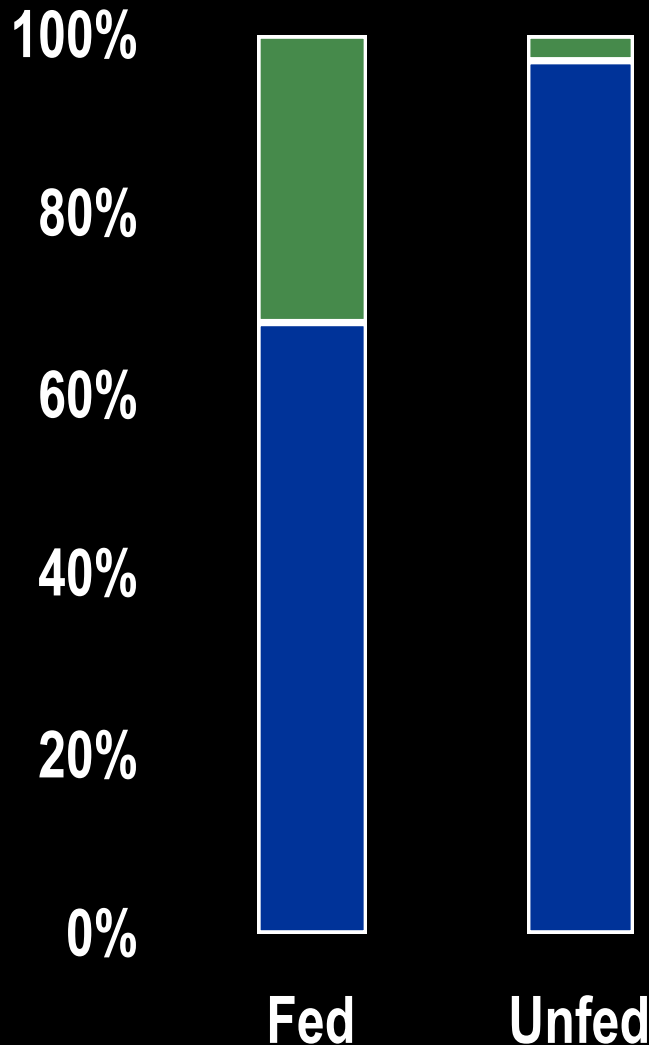
Margaret Brittingham
Winter in Wisconsin
25 years of feeding

No difference in survival!

No evidence of dependency

Brittingham & Temple (1992) *J Field Ornith* 63: 190-194

What about chicks?

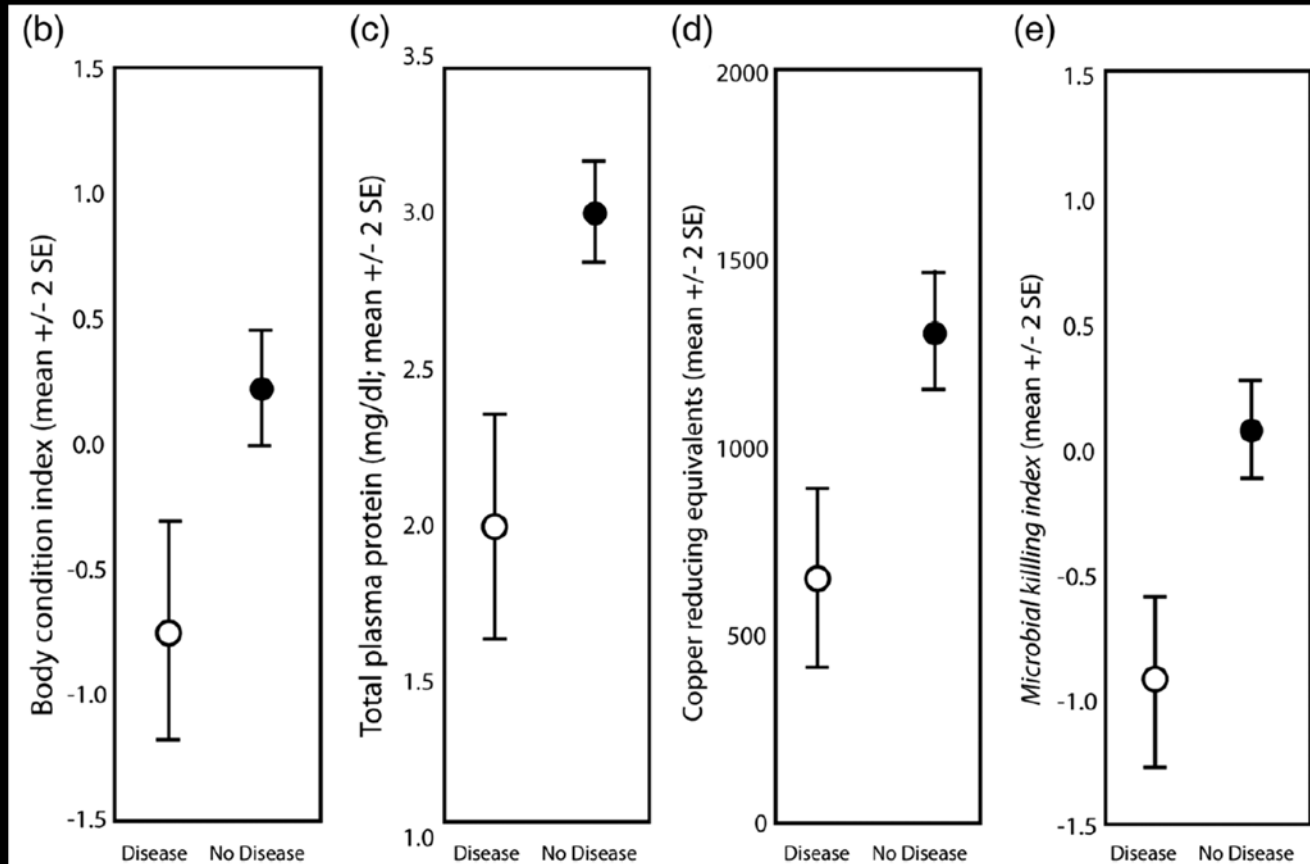


Natural foods preferred

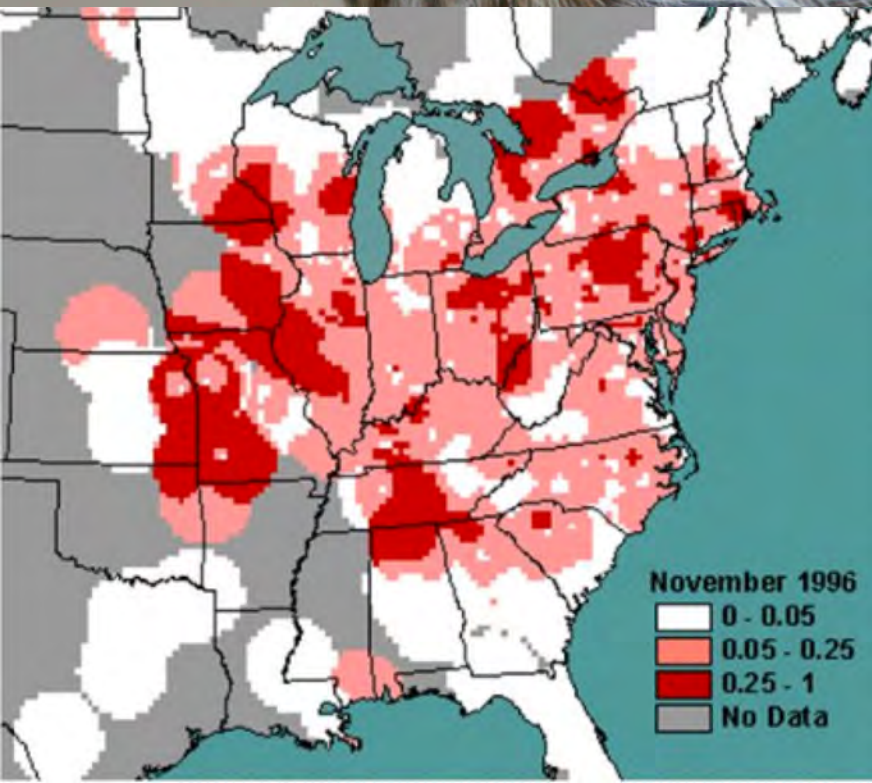
Parents have no
junk food policy

Strong evidence of
dependency among
the humans!

Feeder birds are healthier, but...



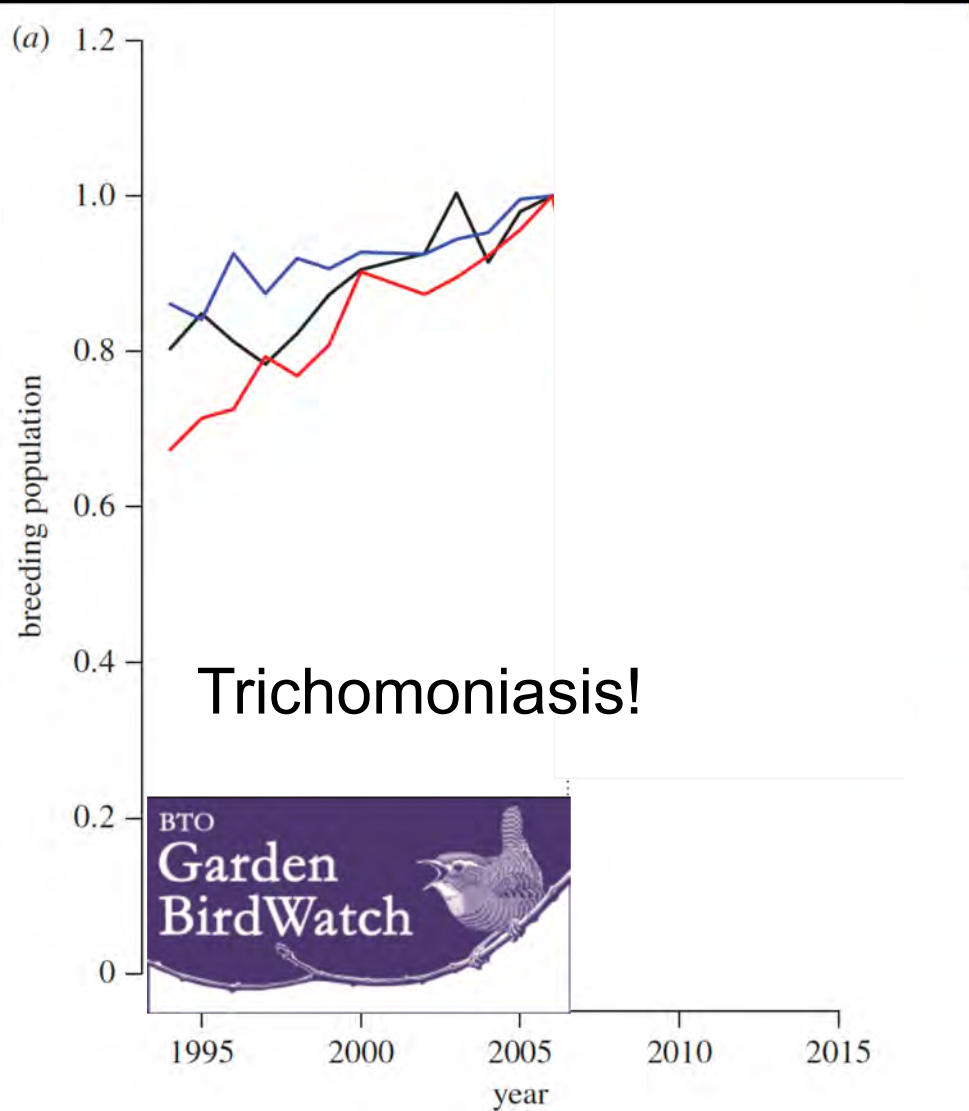
Disease?



House Finch

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Project FeederWatch

Greenfinch: seed led recovery; feeder led decline





Diet switching:
Natural propensity meets modern supply

Plenty happens when we feed birds!

We reconstruct bird communities

Some expand their range

They are usually more healthy

They do not become dependent

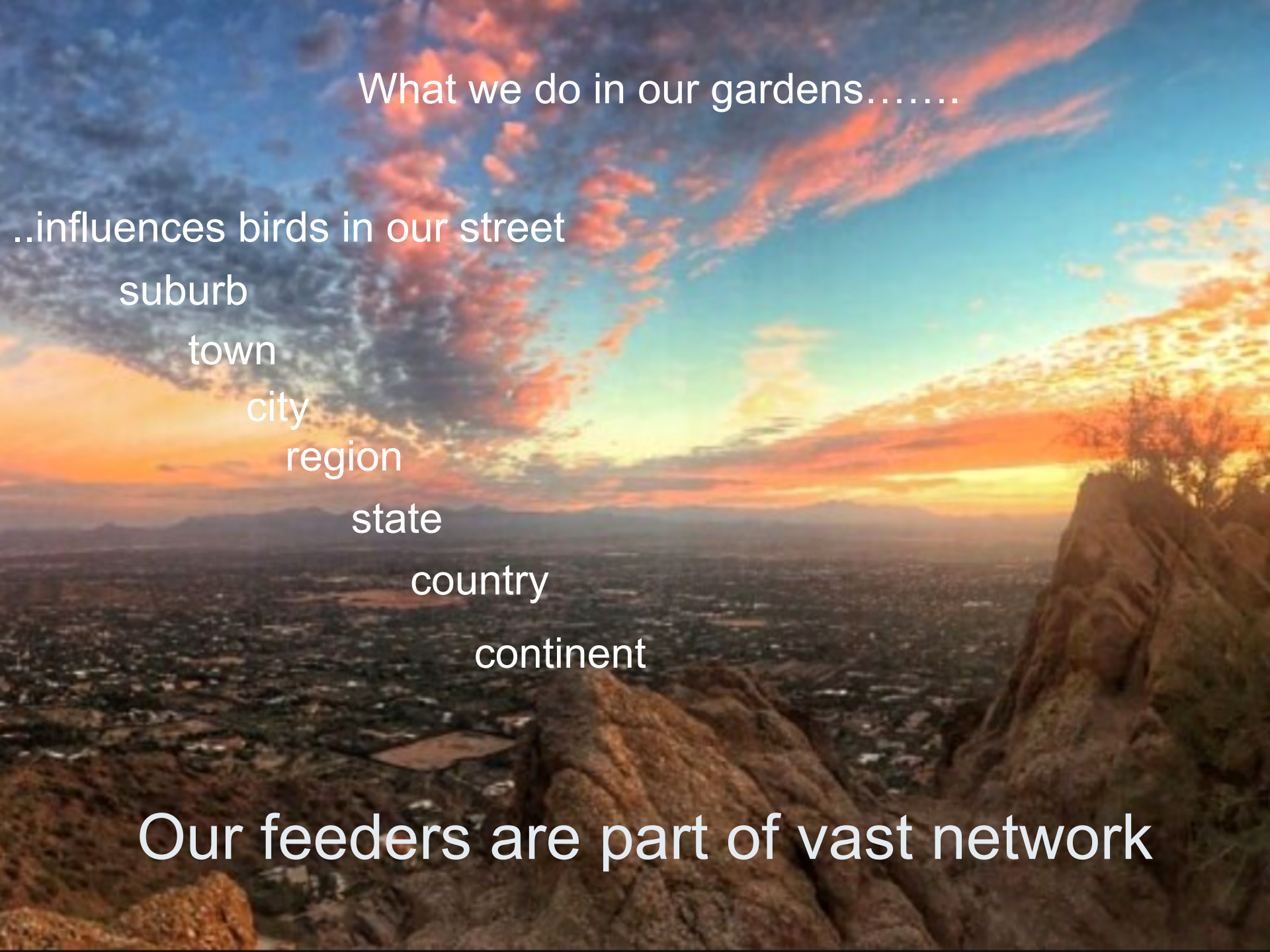


They reproduce more

They survive winter better

Some forget to migrate

...but are also more susceptible to disease



What we do in our gardens.....

..influences birds in our street

suburb

town

city

region

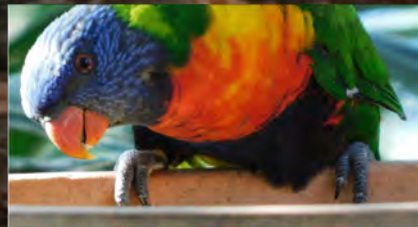
state

country

continent

Our feeders are part of vast network

Thank you WBFI



Darryl Jones