

1. Abstract

Blake, B. N.¹, H. L. Bateman¹, and K. L. Larson^{2,3}. *Paradoxical Stewardship and Social-Ecological Traps in Urban Bird Provisioning*.

Providing food and water for birds in residential yards is a widely practiced form of stewardship, with documented benefits for both wildlife and human wellbeing. However, these well-intentioned behaviors may co-occur with resident actions that could inadvertently cause harm to wildlife, such as provisioning for birds while allowing pet cats outdoors or providing nutritionally inadequate food sources, creating social-ecological traps. Using CAP LTER bird census data and Phoenix Area Social Survey responses, we explored trends in resident provisioning and pet ownership behaviors and evaluated their associations with bird abundance and diversity to identify patterns of paradoxical stewardship. Relationships between resident behaviors and bird abundance varied among bird guilds, with some guilds showing strong positive relationships with food and water provisioning. However, outdoor cat access may offset these potential benefits, particularly for species that frequently visit bird feeders. These results emphasize how well-meaning human actions can have unintended ecological outcomes that shape urban bird communities.

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2. Citation

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