The Effect of Light on Birds

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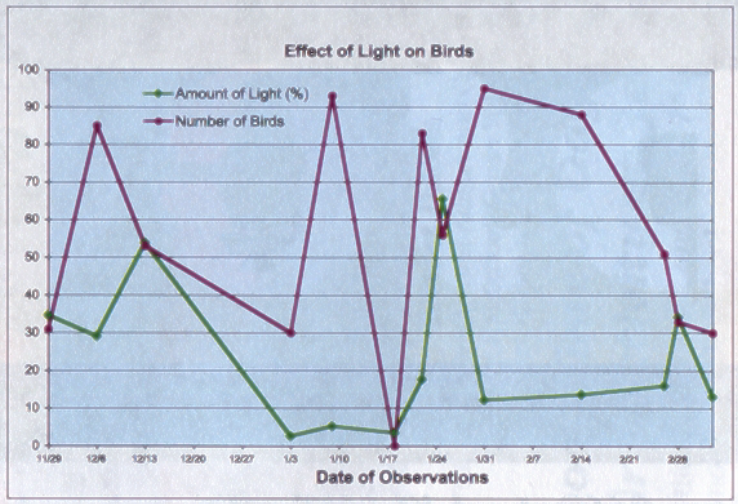

Introduction

I studied the effect that light has on the number of birds coming to feeders. Light affects humans, so I thought that it might also affect birds. Since birds can see color, they would see things that we do, and the differences in light would affect them. I don't like it on days that it is dark outside, and I know many people share this view. So I am guessing that birds are the same as humans, they will not like darkness either.

Materials and Method

My materials were my FeederWatch book, data that I collected from watching the birds, and our birdwatching station. We went outside to watch and tally the birds, and then record the data to use in our reports. Our twelve feeders have mixed seed and the feeders are spread at least 3 feet apart. There is also seed on the ground for the ground-feeding birds.

Results

I observed a total of 14 bird species at our feeders, and this year the majority of these were House Sparrows. We saw a big count of 95 birds in a day, and a lot of that was the 58 House Sparrows. We also had slow days, such as when we saw absolutely no birds! The light during the observations varied greatly, from a low light of 2.7% to a bright light of 65.6%. This is equivalent to varying from overcast to a very bright day. This gave me a wide range of light data to work with.

The amount of light showed no correlation to the number of birds that came to our feeder area. The birds came in multitudes, or some days none at all. When it was sunny, 31 birds came and when it was cloudy, 30 birds came. There still appeared to be no pattern in the data when it was paired up in different ways. The light seemed to have little or no affect on the birds.

Conclusion

My hypothesis was not supported. I thought that birds would be affected by the amount of light but this was not the case. There could have been other factors not included in my test, which may have changed my results. A change in barometric pressure or precipitation may have affected what we saw. Also, the temperature might have had an effect on the birds. There could have been many reasons for these results; I would have to conduct more extensive research to better understand what factors affect the number of birds visiting our feeders.

Bibliography

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