



*Ithaca's Non-Profit
Independent Movie Theater*
607-277-6115

View Our
Weekly
Schedule

ADVERTISEMENT



Chirp changes: Cornell study finds PCBs affect birdsong

PM, Sep 19, 2013 | Comments

Recommend

6 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.



Recommend 6

Tweet 0

+1 0

Pin it

Print A A +



Black-capped chickadees are frequent visitors to backyard bird feeders. / File photo

Written by
Associated Press

FILED UNDER

Local News
State

ALBANY — A chickadee's two-note [song](#) and a song sparrow's trill can be subtly modified by low levels of PCBs, according to a study published this week in the journal PLOS ONE.

The study compared the songs of birds from a stretch of the Hudson River contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls to those from an uncontaminated area in the Adirondacks. Lead author Sara DeLeon, who studied birdsongs for her doctoral thesis at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, said [computer](#) analysis of song patterns showed variations in the chickadee's "fee-bee" song and higher quality in the song sparrow's trills.

Blood samples confirmed the presence of PCBs, which the birds ingest by [eating](#) contaminated insects.

ADVERTISEMENT

Most Popular

Most Commented

More Headlines

- 1 Entire Cornell lacrosse team suspended for hazing
- 2 Cornell joins group offering free bachelor's degrees
- 3 Love letters survive Candor fire
- 4 Ex-NFL player's NY home trashed by partying teens
- 5 Ithaca program opens doors with affordable homes for first-time buyers

Most Viewed



TEACHER ACCUSED OF SEX WITH 12-YEAR-OLD TAKES STAND

Teacher says she gave teen student 'sexual therapy'



Sponsored Links



LifeLock® Official Site
Protect your Identity with LifeLock Ultimate™ Today.
LifeLock.com



Strange Fruit Burns Fat
Doctors are calling "Garcinia Cambogia" the breakthrough fat burner.
www.thsmartstyleliving.com

Learn More About

VESicare® (solifenacin succinate). Get Information about VESicare
www.VESicare.com

ADVERTISEMENT

The differences in the songs are not apparent to the human ear. But DeLeon identified distinct patterns by using sound analysis [software](#) developed at the Cornell lab. She said the songs of both species are well-studied and it's been documented that there's normally very little variation in the way black-capped chickadees sing.

Since dominant male chickadees are the ones that produce the most consistent songs, the variation linked to PCBs could have important consequences for breeding, DeLeon said.

A key finding was that the song disruption was tied to specific types of PCBs, which have 209 variations, say DeLeon and the other authors of the study released Wednesday.

"Effects of PCBs are extremely complicated," co-author Andre Dhondt of the Lab of Ornithology said. "What this demonstrates is that most previous PCB [studies](#) may not give us the whole picture because they did not look at the specific type of PCB involved but just measured overall levels."

He said DeLeon found that birds with PCB exposure had changes in their songs, and then took the next step to isolate the specific type of PCB causing it.

The ill effects of PCBs on birds and wildlife are well-documented by decades of research, including many studies centered on the massive Superfund cleanup site where General Electric is dredging contaminated sediment from a stretch of the Hudson north of Albany. Most of the research has looked at mortality, reproduction and growth.

The impact of prolonged exposure to low levels of PCBs is less studied.

The research was funded by New York Sea Grant, a joint program of the State [University](#) of New York, Cornell University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



View Comments (0) | Share your thoughts »

TOP VIDEO PICKS

selected by Taboola



Is wearable tech just a phase? | USA NOW video
Sep 4, 2013

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

- Read the local police monitor
- 14 Tompkins eateries cited for state sanitation code...
- Police: Sex acts committed on NY school bus
- Man dies after falling from roof in central NY
- Corbin Whyte set for third

SPONSORED LINKS

- 7 Common Signs That You May Have an Enlarged Prostate (eMedTV)
- 7 Reasons You Wake Up Feeling Groggy (Caring.com)
- Never Tell Your Boss These Eight Things (You Beauty)
- 7 Underwear Facts That Might

Sep 18, 2013

SPONSORED LINKS

by Taboola



Homeowners Are In For A Big Surprise...
Smart Life Weekly



Back to 'Made in America'
NYTimes

Fall for something Chic!

Joseph Ribkoff

Laser Brewer boutique
607-347-4154
1384 Dryden Rd., Ithaca

ADVERTISEMENT