Minutes from the 568th Meeting of the Connecticut Entomology Society

February 18th, 2022

Zoom

Members:

Guests:

Social pre-meeting began at approximately 18:30.

**Business Meeting:**

-Meeting called to order at 19:30 by president Ray Simpson.

**Reports:**

-Many more members paid their dues recently, compared to January, but there remain some members that need to pay dues.

-The April meeting will hopefully be in-person at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, but it’ll depend on what’s going on regarding Covid-19.

**Old Business:**

-There are only a few calendars remaining, so if you don’t have one already, it’s recommended that you get one soon.

**New Business:**

-Volunteers wanted for the March 2022 Student Colloquium! Any current student from high school, undergrads, to grad students are eligible to join. The talk you give must be arthropod-related. Prizes will be awarded!

-Dr. Molaei will be the speaker for the April meeting, where there’ll hopefully be a potluck as well.

-A field outing in May is planned, as well.

**Exhibits:**

-N/A

**Evening Presentation:**

-Dr. Rob Clark discussed the impacts of invasive barberry, honeysuckle, autumn olive, and burning bush on food webs. He states that by understanding arthropod food webs, we can get better outbreak models for “pests.” In areas where barberry dominates, less arthropod abundance and diversity was recorded. This can affect the amount of prey items for certain songbirds, but interestingly, ovenbirds seemed largely unaffected by areas dominated by barberry. This particular experiment took place in Great Hollow’s forests.

-The hypothesis was that invasive shrubs would negatively affect habitats of arthropods, and as a result, songbirds that rely on arthropods as prey would be affected as well.

-Insects were sampled three times from experimental branches and saplings in the spring and summer. Across 240 plants, over 17,000 invertebrates were collected!

-It was expected that birds would prefer foraging on native plants, while invasive plants would have fewer arthropods. But it turned out that arthropod abundance and diversity wasn’t notably different between native and non-native plants. Spiders were also more abundant on the invasive plants. However, lepidopterans were less abundant on the invasives. Hemipterans didn’t seem to be too affected. Honeysuckle was the best host for orthopterans, while barberry was the worst for them. Coleopterans were most abundant on autumn olive and other native species. Generally, there’s not much evidence that non-native plants are “abysmal” for invertebrates.

-The carbon:nitrogen ratio of arthropods consumed by birds could be an indicator of nutritional quality in a future analysis.

-Non-native plants can actually provide cover for some invertebrates.

Meeting adjourned at 20:34.

**Note: corrections and additions to the minutes are welcomed. Please email** **maxengel1@gmail.com****.**