Preliminary comparisons of avifauna found in protected, restored, and urban habitats of south Texas

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The riparian corridor and surrounding forests of the Rio Grande provide valuable habitat for a broad range of species, but extensive habitat loss (over 95% of native habitats) to agriculture and urbanization has led to population declines and local extirpation of some species. The goal of this study was to evaluate the success of revegetation efforts carried out by US Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies over the past 30-35 years, as well as collect data on bird use of urban areas in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Data from 106 census points was used to compare use by the native thorn-forest avian community. Abundant species such as Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) did not make a strong distinction between mature and revegetated habitat, indicating successful restoration, but were not found in urban residential habitat. Other species typical of mature thorn-forest, such as Long-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma longirostre*) and White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), were strongly associated with mature habitat and made lower use of revegetated habitats. Even small, isolated tracts of thorn-forest in urban areas attracted mature forest birds like White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) and Plain Chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*), as well as supporting recent expansion of the tropical Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*). Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifons*), Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*), and Black-crested Titmouse (*Baeolophus atricristatus*) had highest frequencies of detection in urban residential habitats, indicating that urban forests can support populations of the native avian community. We suggest that future revegetation focus on thorn-forest species such as Texas Ebony (*Ebenopsis ebano*) and Coma (*Sideroxylon celastrinum*) and that increased use of native tree species in urban areas may help expand use by native thorn-forest avifuana.