

Lovette, I. J. and R. T. Holmes. 1995. Foraging behavior of American Redstarts in breeding and wintering habitats: Implications for relative food availability. *Condor* 97, 782-791.

Abstract: We investigated food availability for a long-distance migrant species, the American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), in both its summer breeding habitat in New Hampshire and in its winter habitat in Jamaica. We used four components of foraging behavior (prey attack rate, foraging speed, time spent foraging, and foraging maneuver use) as indicators of the relative availability of prey in the two seasons. Redstarts attacked prey at a significantly greater rate in summer than in winter, indicating that foraging birds encountered prey more frequently in summer. The winter prey-encounter rate was low even though redstarts moved almost twice as fast while foraging in winter as in summer. Male redstarts also spent more time foraging in winter (85%) than in summer (43-65%), possibly to balance the low rate at which they encountered prey. In winter, redstarts used more foraging maneuvers that were directed towards small flying prey, whereas in summer they used maneuvers that resulted in the capture of relatively large and presumably energy-rich prey such as lepidopteran larvae. That wintering redstarts foraged faster, attacked prey less often, and spent more time foraging than those in summer indicates that the winter is a period of relative food scarcity for this species, whereas the breeding season is a period of greater resource abundance.