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Abstract

Forest bird response to partial cutting in lodgepole pine forests on caribou winter range in west-central British Columbia

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Breeding birds were surveyed 1 year pre-harvest (1995) and 4 years post-harvest (1996–2001) to measure the response to partial cutting in old lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* Dougl.) forests on the Chilcotin Plateau of British Columbia. The irregular group shelterwood and group selection systems recommended to manage northern caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou* Gmelin) habitat did not negatively affect the breeding bird community. In some years within the post-harvest period, dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis* L.), red crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra* L.), yellow-rumped warblers (*Dendroica coronata* L.), and gray jays (*Perisoreus canadensis* L.) showed significant ($\alpha = 0.05$) increases in use of the partial-cutting treatments compared with the no-harvest treatment. No species decreased significantly in any of the partial-cutting treatments. The increased observations of mostly common species resulted in significantly ($\alpha = 0.05$) higher species richness, and increased frequency of observations for the bird community in some years in the partial cuts. Partial cutting of caribou habitat will maintain bird communities typical of mature to older lodgepole pine forests.

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