

# Review of: "American Robin (*Turdus Migratorius*) Blood Lead Levels May Reflect Elevated Soil Lead Levels: Further Consequences of the Flint Water Crisis"

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**Potential competing interests:** The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

In this paper the authors investigate the potential impact of the Flint water crisis on American robin blood lead levels (BLL) during the breeding season in southeast MI by comparing BLL of birds captured at irrigated sites of Flint to those captured at three other sites. This is a statistically-sound analysis that relies on a reasonable sample size, although it is unclear whether the same birds could have been nest-mitted multiple times.

One ultimate goal is to explore whether robin BLL can be used as a bioindicator of soil lead in urban environments. Therefore, it is unfortunate that no soil lead sample was collected to validate the assumption that robin BLL and soil lead levels are related. Such soil samples would have also helped testing the assumption that irrigation with Flint water caused an increase in soil lead levels. Given the high density of highways in the City of Flint it is possible that air pollution would have caused soil lead levels to be higher in Flint vs Ypsilanti, prior to the Flint drinking water crisis. Another potential source of lead-contaminated dust is the demolition of older housing and information about the presence of such demolition sites in the vicinity of sampling sites would be useful for interpretation.