

Frog and Toad Survey, 2000

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Abstract

The number of frog survey routes decreased to 77 in 2000 from 95 in 1999. The number of sites with Chorus Frog, Copes Gray Tree Frog, Leopard Frog, Pickerel Frog, Cricket Frog and Mink Frog present were at or above their long-term averages. Abundance of all twelve species was above their long-term means.

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has coordinated a volunteer frog and toad survey since 1984. The survey arose from concerns about declines in populations of some frog species and was endorsed and expanded by the WDNR Surveys committee in 1990. Wisconsin has 12 anuran species. One species (Blanchard's cricket frog) is endangered and 2 species (bullfrog and pickerel frog) are included on the Natural Heritage working list as "special concern". In general, anurans are considered to be good indicator species for the habitats where they are found.

Methods

Survey routes are distributed statewide, with a goal of 2 survey routes in each county of Wisconsin. Survey routes consist of 10 sites which are monitored 3 times yearly, 8-30 April, 20 May - 5 June, and 1-15 July. Surveys are started at dusk on evenings with wind velocities of less than 8 miles per hour. Water temperature is recorded at each stop where possible. The presence or absence of each frog species is determined at each site by their song. The abundance of each species is ranked by the relative number of calling individuals. Stops with species calling in which individuals can be counted and there is no overlap in calls has an abundance rank of 1. When calls of individuals can be distinguished but there is some overlapping of calls the abundance rank is 2. When calls are constant, continuous and overlapping (full chorus) the abundance rank is 3. Percent occurrence is determined for each species specific to geographic range and peak calling periods. Survey data are analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The calling index for each species was summed to provide an index to the route population each year. These route populations are regressed on time to create a species population trend.

Results

The number of survey routes run decreased, from 95 in 1999 to 77 in 2000. Observers decreased from last years level of 97 in 1999 to 75 in 2000 (Fig. 1). The number of routes run in each county is still well below our goal of 2 (Fig. 2). Additional routes will not be added until it is determined if the Wisconsin Survey is compatible with the new North American Amphibian Monitoring Program (NAAMP).

Of the 12 anuran species, 7 showed a increase in percent occurrence in 2000 from 1999 levels. These were the Wood Frog, Spring Peeper, Pickerel Frog, American Toad, Mink Frog, and Bull Frog (Fig. 3). All other frog species were below the previous year's mean. Population trends, based on the call index, for each anuran species can be reviewed in Figure 3.

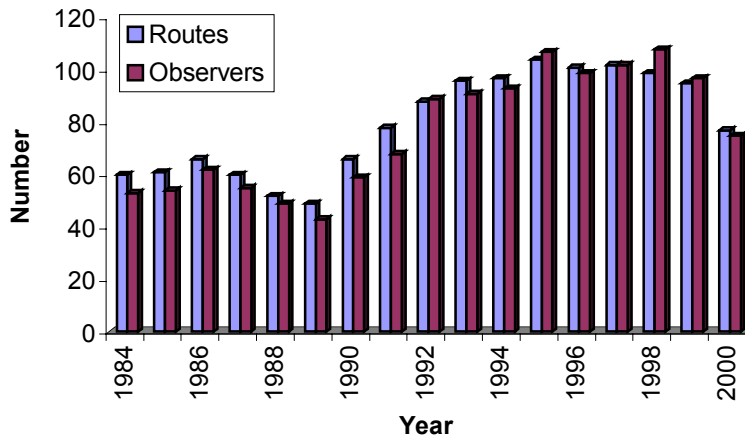


Figure 1. The number of observers and frog routes completed, 1984-00.

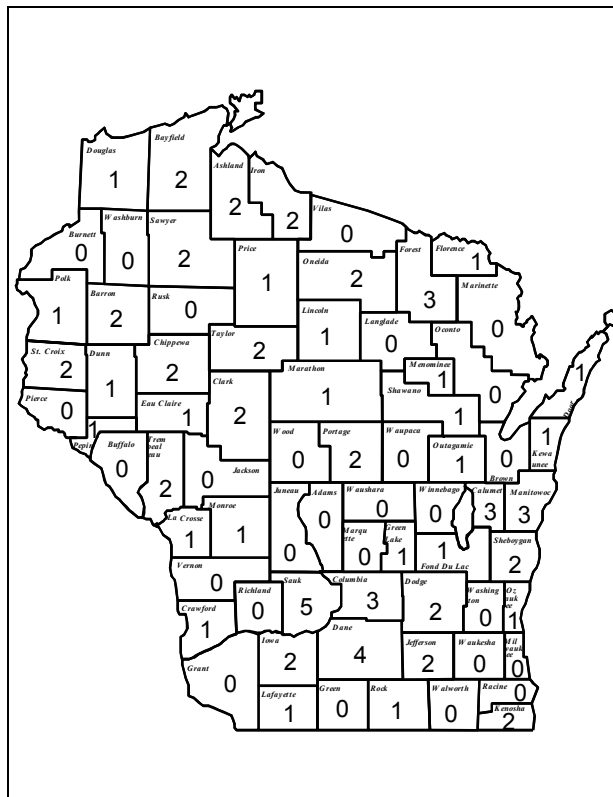


Figure 2. The number of frog survey routes run in each county in 2000.

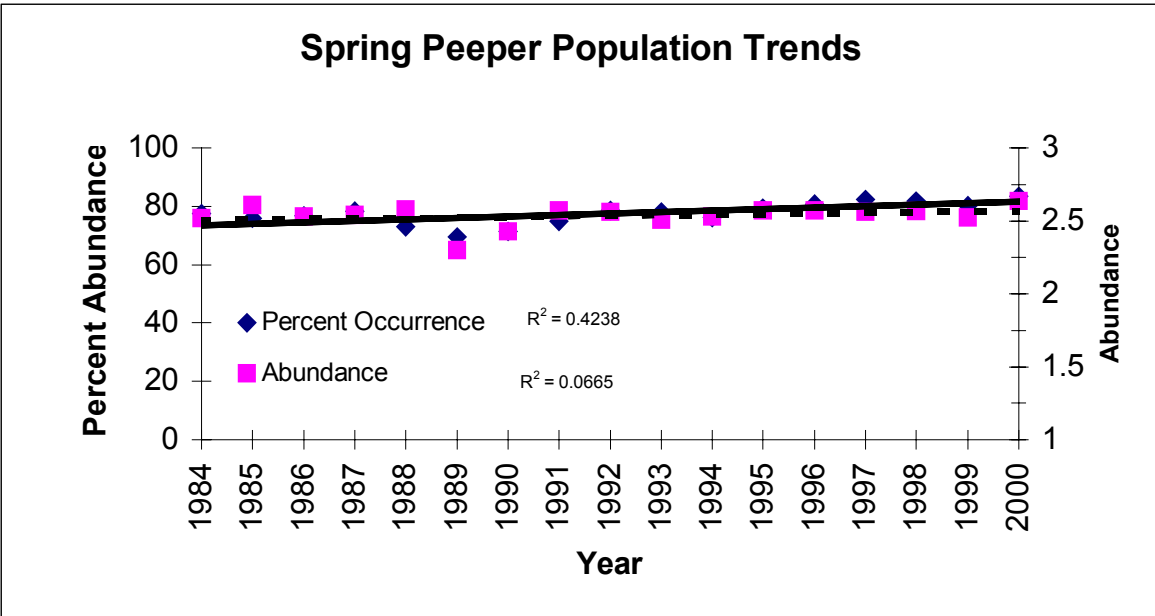
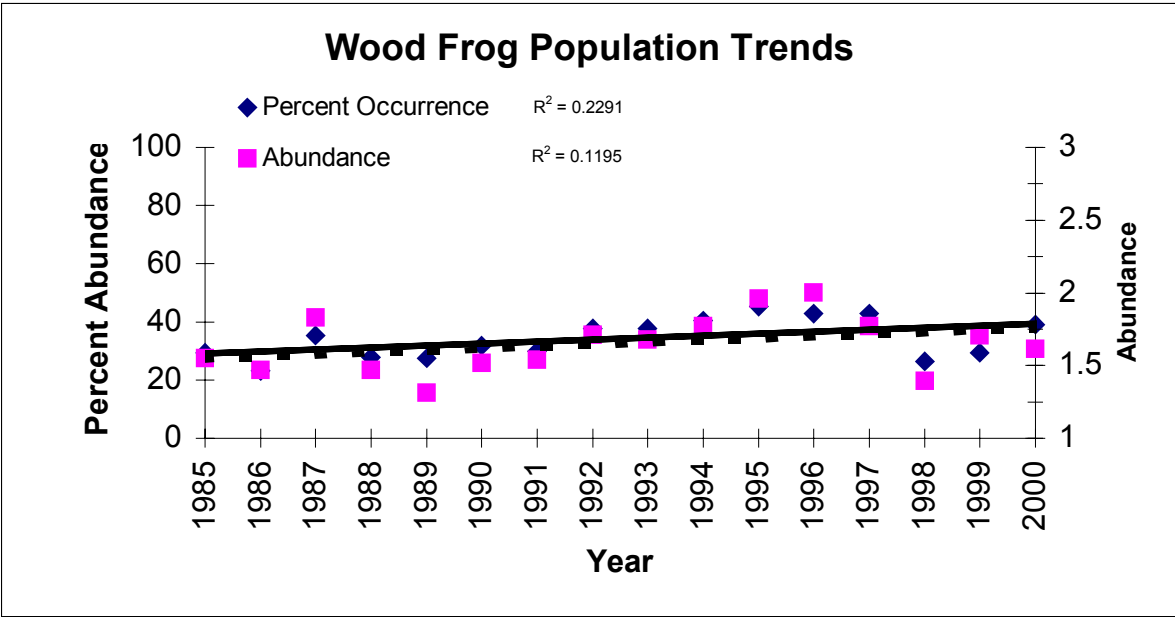


Figure 3. Percent occurrence and abundance of the 12 anuran species in Wisconsin, 1984-00.

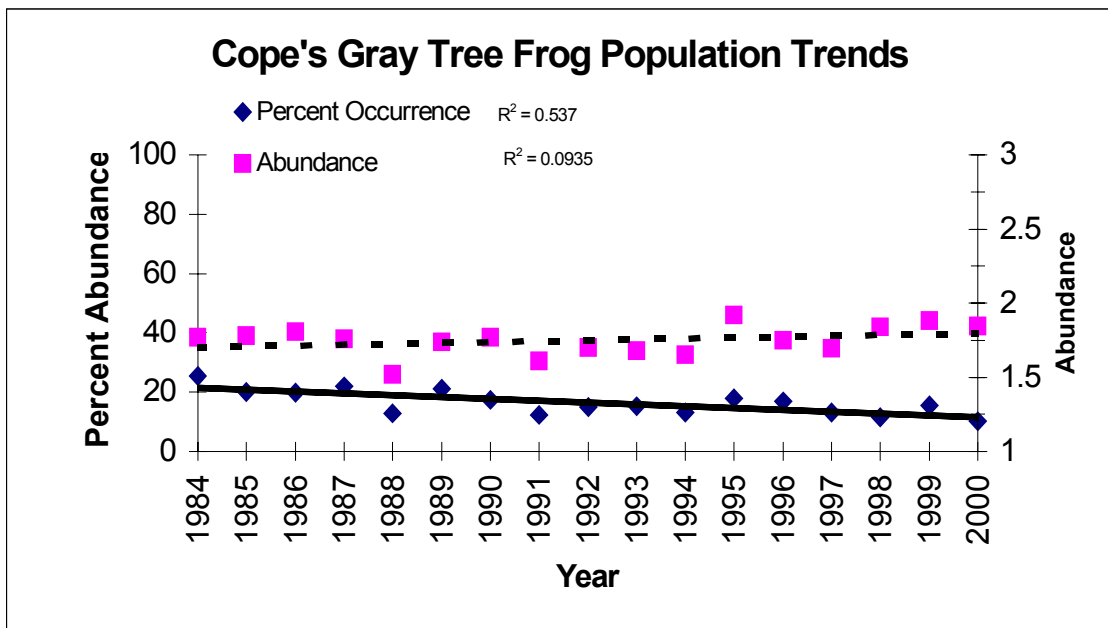
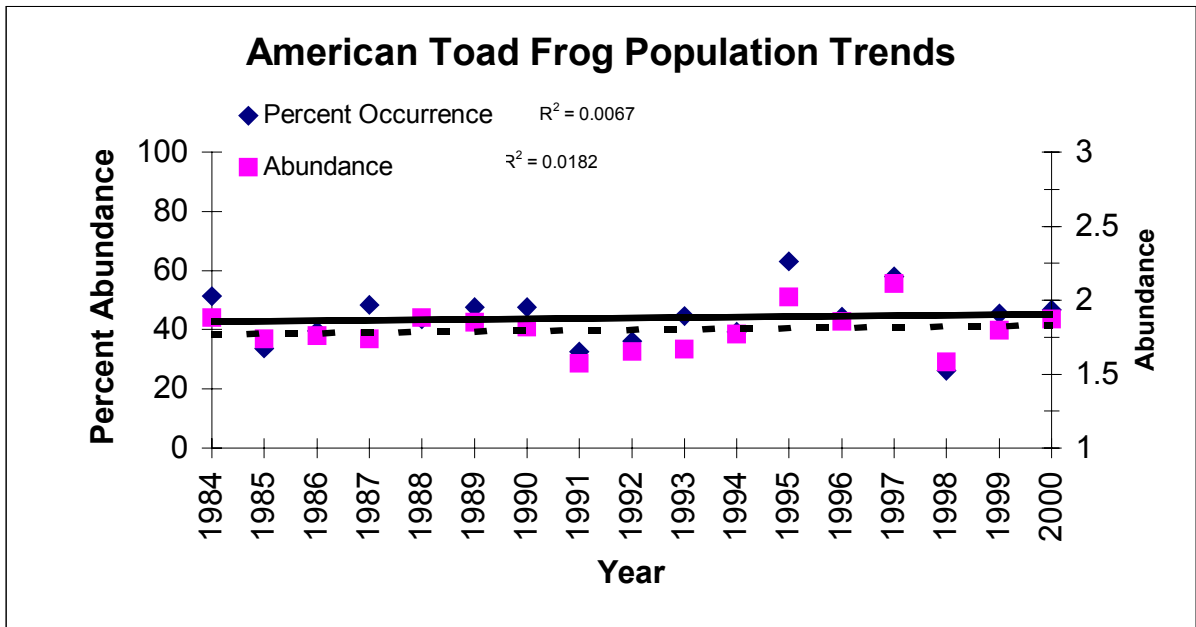


Figure 3. Continued.

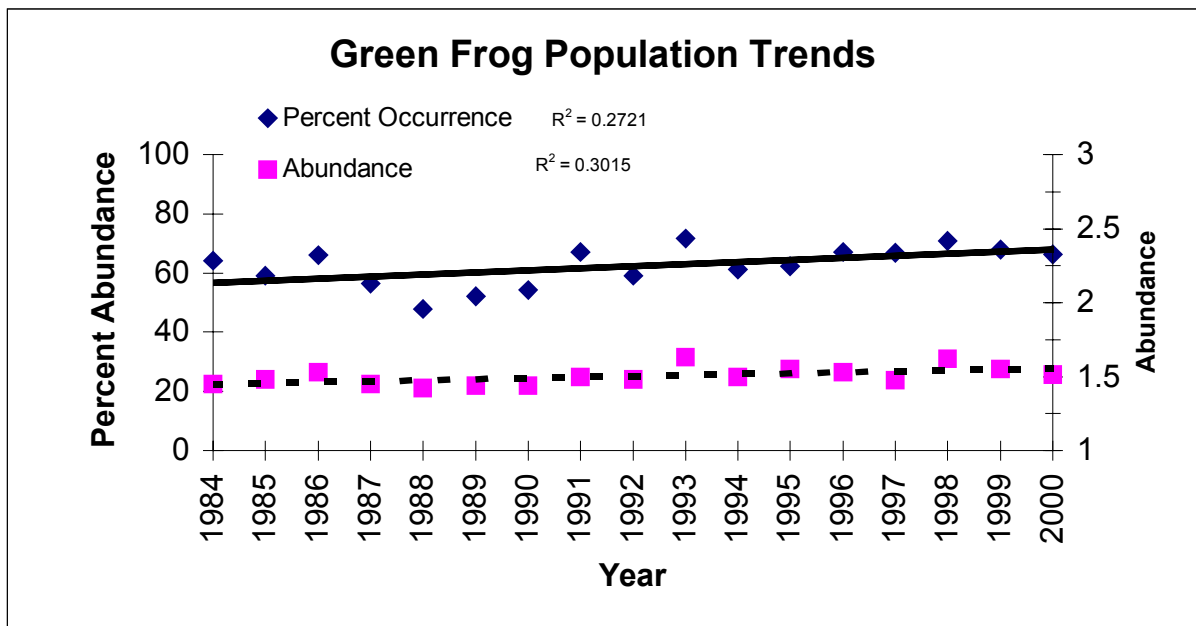
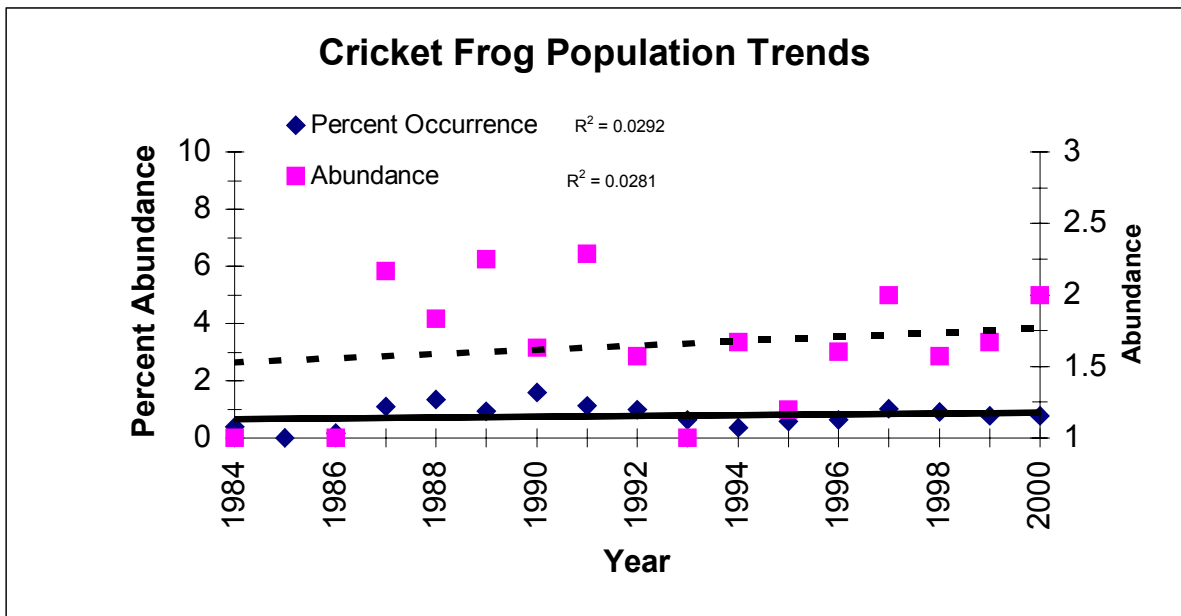


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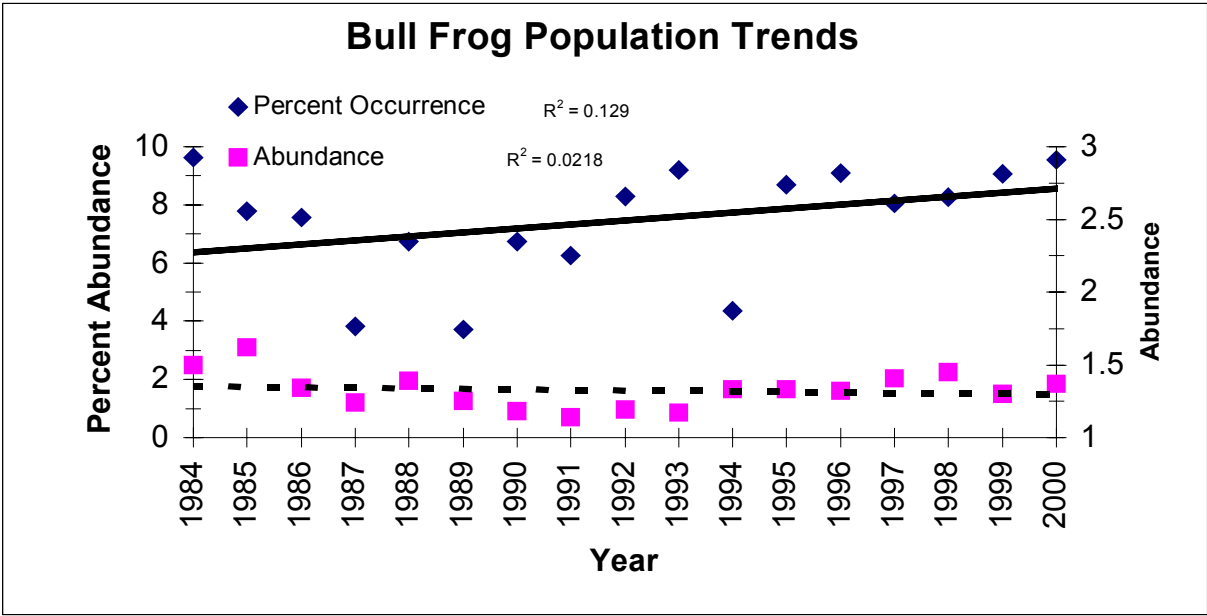
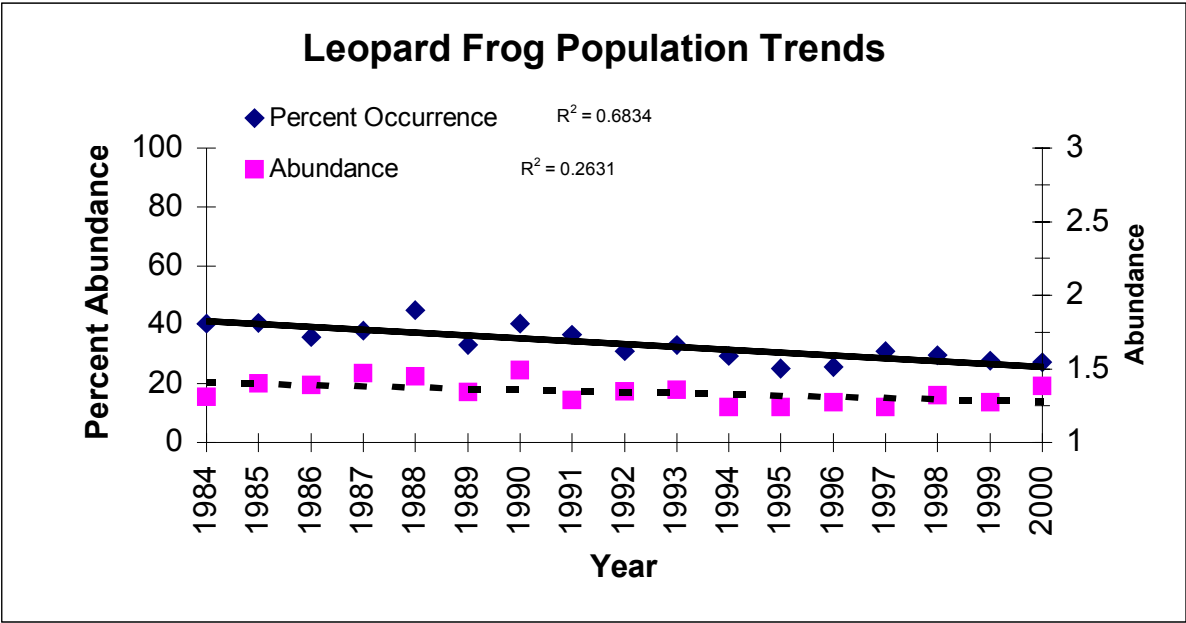


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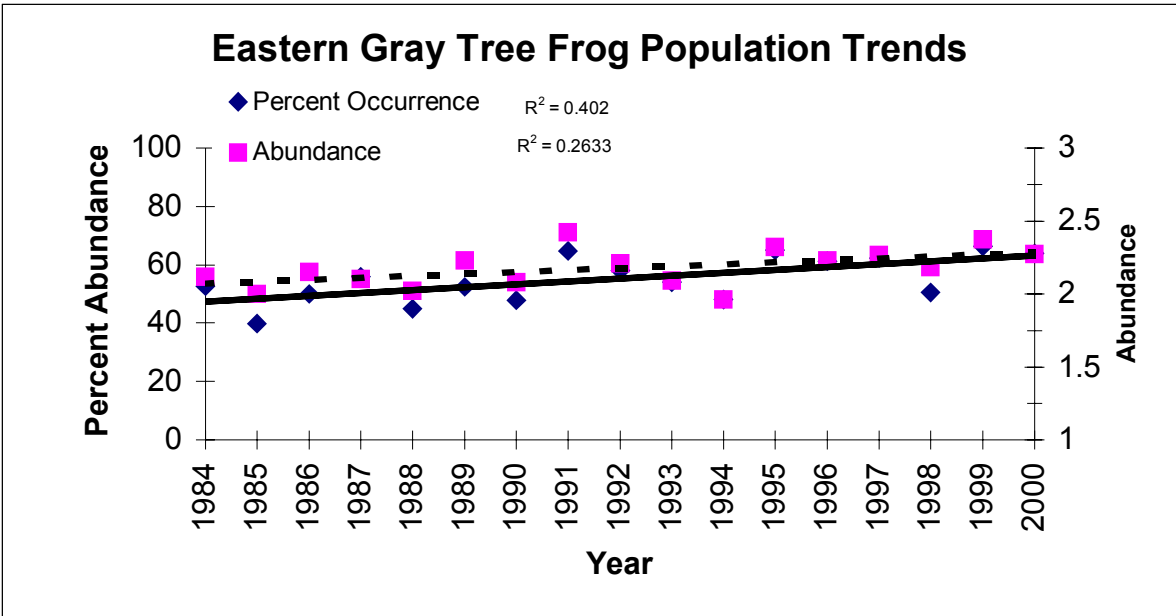
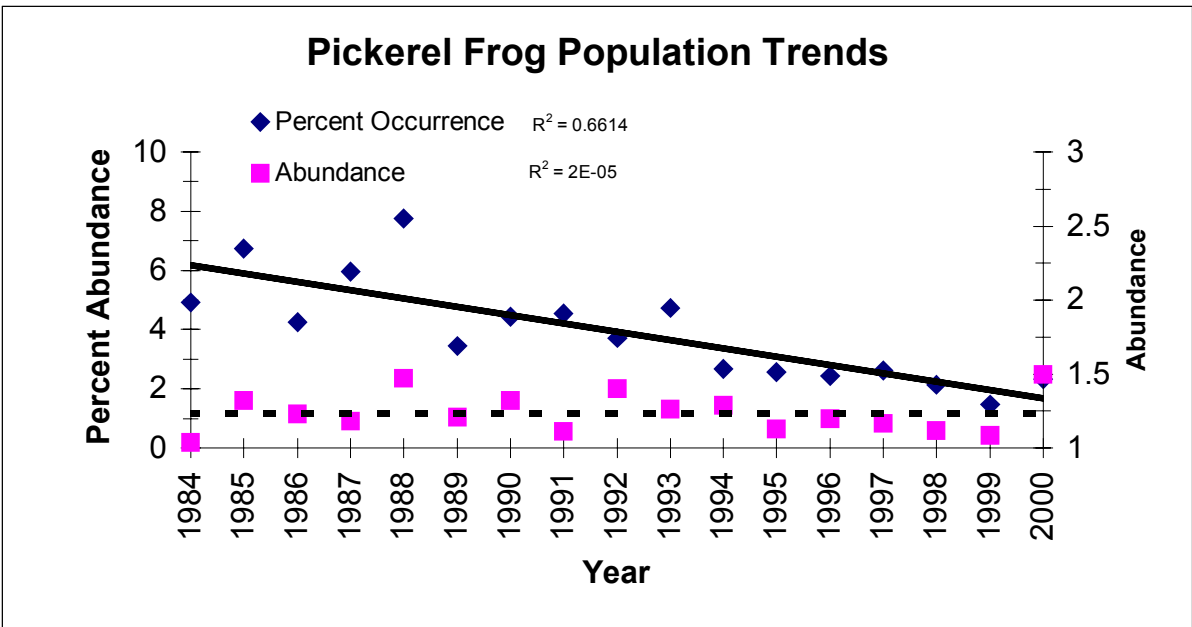


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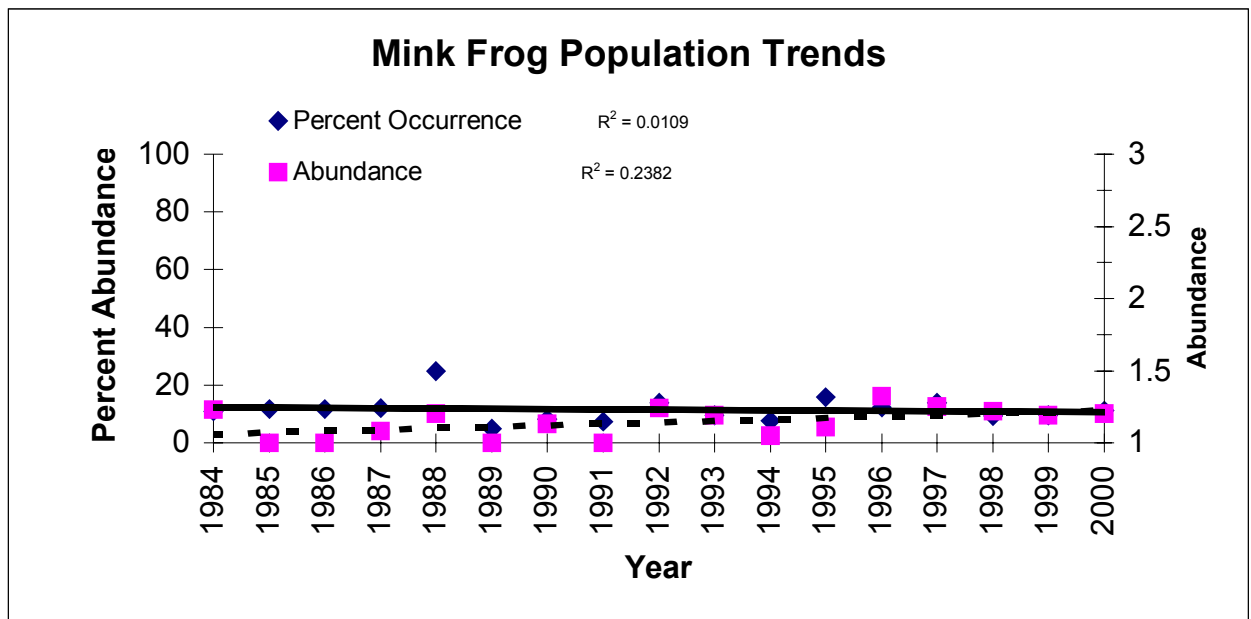
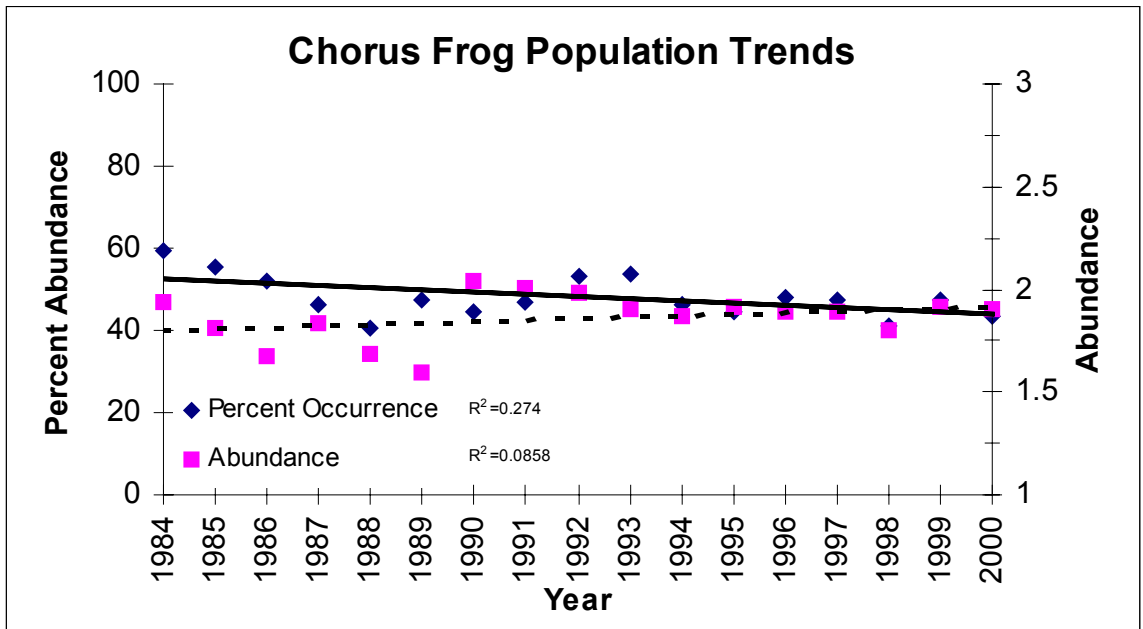


Figure 3. Continued.