Station 9: Pines

White pines (*Pinus strobus*) support diverse ecosystems, providing habitat for many species of birds, mammals, and insects. Their large size and height contribute to vertical structure in forests. These trees play a role in water regulation by intercepting rainfall and promoting groundwater recharge, which is vital for maintaining healthy ecosystems. The fallen needles of white pines contribute to soil organic matter, enhancing soils and supporting other plant species.

Red pines (*Pinus resinosa*) provide habitat for various wildlife, including birds, small mammals, and insects. Their dense canopies offer shelter and nesting sites. Extensive root systems help prevent soil erosion, particularly on sandy soils where red pines are commonly found. Red pines are adapted to regeneration after wildfires. The thick bark protects the trees from fire and the pine cones will release their seeds after exposure to fire.

In Hayes Woods, white pine is far more abundant than red pine. One easy way to distinguish between a white pine and a red pine is by counting the number of needles held together by the papery sheath called a fascicle (or bundle). White pine has five needles in each bundle, whereas the red pine has two needles in each bundle. Look around this station and you might find a white pine and a red pine. Keep an eye out for warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets in the spring and early summer.