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MORRISTOWN NHP • ROOSEVELT-VANDERBILT NHS • SAINT-GAUDENS NHS • SAUGUS IRON WORKS NHS • SARATOGA NHP • WEIR FARM NHS

Surveying is for the Birds

Results of 2009 Annual Bird Survey Released

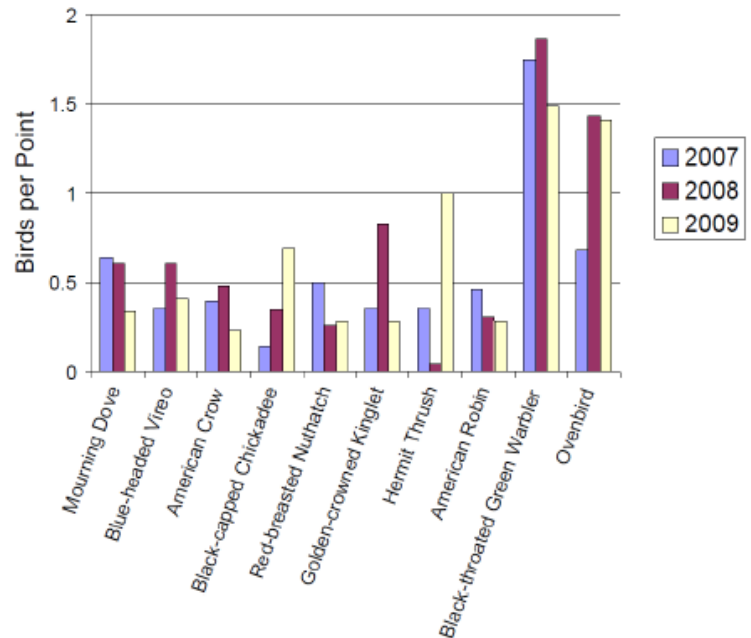
Background

Using volunteer birders, the Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) has been monitoring breeding landbirds in most network parks since 2006. On a broad scale, all 11 network parks are located within the temperate deciduous forest biome. At a finer scale, the parks range across four Bird Conservation Regions (Acadia lies in the Atlantic Northern Forest BCR). Bird Conservation Regions, developed by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, are ecologically defined units that provide a consistent spatial framework for bird conservation across North American landscapes. By employing broad scale units that are ecologically meaningful to bird populations, conservation efforts can be tailored to support groups of species throughout the heart of their ranges. Bird Conservation Regions are being used to help assign “conservation priority” scores for bird species. Each BCR has its own unique list of “priority” species ranked by conservation importance according to a standardized set of criteria.

Purpose and Scope

The recently released report summarizes data collected from 2006 through 2009. As with any long-term study, as more years of data accumulate, interpreting study results becomes more relevant and meaningful. Therefore, it is important to not read too much into the results of only a few years of data collection. NETN and VCE are currently working to improve quality control procedures for this project, including a thorough review of existing data. The results presented here may change slightly in future reports if data errors are detected and subsequently corrected.

Black-throated
Green Warbler
John Harrison



The 10 most common species detected at Acadia, 2007-2009.

Results and Findings

A total of 51 point count locations in seven study sites were established in 2007 at Acadia National Park. On Mount Desert Island, point counts were conducted at three sites during 2007-2009, and at two sites in 2009.

During 2009 surveys, a total of 525 individual birds were detected. Fifty-four total species have been recorded over the three years of monitoring. Average abundance increased from 9.36 birds per point in 2008 to 10.69 birds per point in 2009. Four species of regional conservation concern were detected during the surveys: Boreal Chickadee, Wood Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, and Eastern Towhee. Among the 10 most abundant species detected at all sites combined, 2009 levels of three species (Hermit Thrush, Black-capped Chickadee, and Redbreasted Nuthatch) were above 2008 levels, while the other seven species declined between 2008 and 2009. The park-wide avian forest scorecard for all years combined at Acadia National Park resulted in seven categories ranked as “Good”, six ranked as “Caution”, and none ranked as “Significant Concern”, indicating that the forest bird community appears to be doing well.

54 Species Found in Acadia

Alder Flycatcher
American Crow
American Goldfinch
American Robin
Black-and-white Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Black-capped Chickadee
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blue Jay
Blue-headed Vireo
Boreal Chickadee
Brown Creeper
Brown Thrasher
Cedar Waxwing
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Common Grackle
Common Loon
Common Raven
Common Yellowthroat
Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored Junco)
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Towhee
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Great Crested Flycatcher
Hairy Woodpecker
Hermit Thrush
Herring Gull
Least Flycatcher
Magnolia Warbler
Mourning Dove
Nashville Warbler
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted Flicker)
Northern Parula
Ovenbird
Pileated Woodpecker
Pine Siskin
Purple Finch
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Red-eyed Vireo
Red-winged Blackbird
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Swainson's Thrush
Swamp Sparrow
Veery
Winter Wren



Cephas photo

Alder Flycatcher
Wood Thrush
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle Warbler)

Species Highlight: Common Loon

Named for their clumsy, awkward appearance when walking on land, the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*), is a large, long lived (as long as 30 years in the wild) member of the loon, or diver, family of birds. They are known as the Great Northern Diver in Eurasia. Their unusual, some say haunting, cries vary from wails to tremolos to yodels, are distinct to individuals and can be heard at great distances. Loon calls are most prevalent during breeding season as pairs aggressively defend their territories.

The Common Loon is one of our most ancient birds, dating back 65 million years in the fossil record. Unlike most modern birds which have bones that are hollow and light, loons have solid bones. The extra weight helps them dive as deep as 250 feet for as long as five minutes to search for food. It swallows most of its prey underwater. They have sharp, rearward-pointing projections on the roof of their mouths and tongues that help it keep a firm hold on slippery fish.

Loons extra weight also makes it necessary for them to use a 100 to 600 foot "runway" in order to take off from a lake. Migrating Common Loons occasionally land on wet highways or parking lots, mistaking them for rivers and lakes and can become stranded without a considerable amount of open water for their long takeoff. A loon may also get stranded on a pond that is too small.

Loons are water birds, only going ashore to mate and incubate eggs. Their legs are placed far back on their bodies, allowing efficient swimming but only awkward movement on land.

More Information

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Full Report online at:
<http://science.nps.gov/im/units/NETN/monitor/monitor.cfm>



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