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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 Annual Breeding Landbird Survey

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 (Home of FDR lies in the Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Plain 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.

White-breasted
Nuthatch
MDF photo

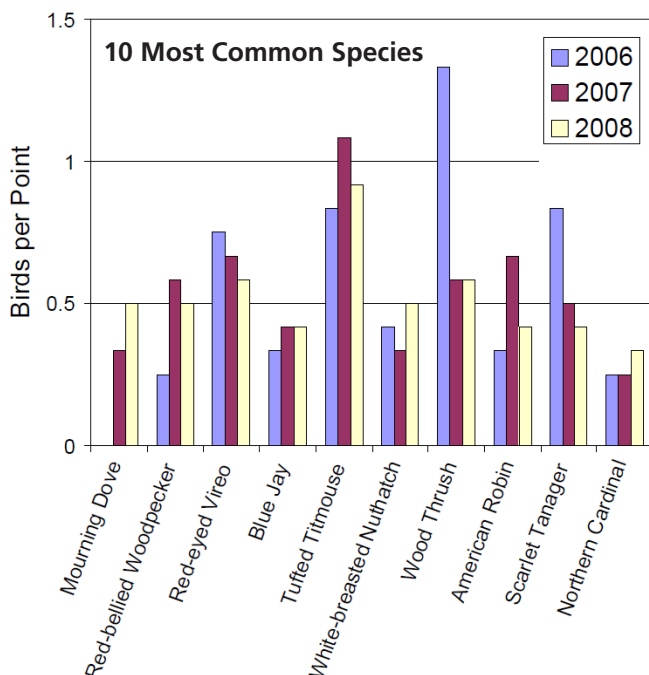


Purpose and Scope

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.

Results and Findings

Twelve point count locations were established at the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site and surveyed in all years except 2009. A total of 83 individual birds were detected in 2008, 101 in 2007, and 94 in 2006. In total, 40 species were recorded, and there was an average abundance of 7.72 birds per point. Both relative abundance and species richness declined between 2007 and 2008, despite some new species being encountered in 2008: Mute Swan, Yellow-Throated Vireo, and Carolina Wren. Three species of conservation concern were detected during the three survey years: Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, and Baltimore Oriole. Tufted Titmouse, Red-Eyed Vireo, and Wood Thrush were the most commonly detected species. A low proportion of single-brooded species may be indicative of the park's location within a fragmented landscape, while a lack of low-canopy foragers may reflect poor structural diversity within the forest, perhaps due to a deer over-browse problem.



40 species detected in the park.

American Crow
American Goldfinch
American Robin
Baltimore Oriole
Black-capped Chickadee
Blue Jay
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Blue-headed Vireo
Brown Creeper
Brown-headed Cowbird
Canada Goose
Carolina Wren
Common Grackle
Common Yellowthroat
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Fish Crow
Great Crested Flycatcher
Hairy Woodpecker
Least Flycatcher
Louisiana Waterthrush
Mourning Dove
Mourning Warbler
Mute Swan
Northern Cardinal
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted Flicker)
Ovenbird
Pileated Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Red-eyed Vireo
Red-tailed Hawk
Red-winged Blackbird
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Scarlet Tanager
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey
Wood Thrush
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Yellow-throated Vireo



Species Spotlight: Pileated Woodpecker

Almost the size of a crow, the Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) is the largest woodpecker in most of North America. It inhabits deciduous forests in eastern North America, the Great Lakes, the boreal forests of Canada, and parts of the Pacific coast.

It has a long, sticky tongue; a long and sharp pointed bill that help it to first excavate and the lap up insects from trees. They primarily eat insects, especially carpenter ants and wood-boring beetle larvae. They also feed on fruits, and nuts. A tell-tale symbol of a pileated's passing are the oblong holes chipped out of trees that they make when searching out insects.

Pileateds raise their young in a hole bored by the male into a hollow, often dead tree called a snag usually in April. The cavity is unlined except for wood chips. They have been observed to move eggs that have fallen out of the nest to another site, a rare habit in birds. Once the brood is raised the woodpeckers abandon the hole and do not reuse it the next year.

These former pileated nests, when abandoned, provide good homes for many other forest song birds and critters. Ecologically, the entire woodpecker family is important to the well being of many other bird species.

A Pileated Woodpecker pair stays together on its territory all year round. It will defend the territory in all seasons, but will tolerate floaters during the winter.



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More Information

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Full Report online at:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/NETN/monitor/monitor.cfm>



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