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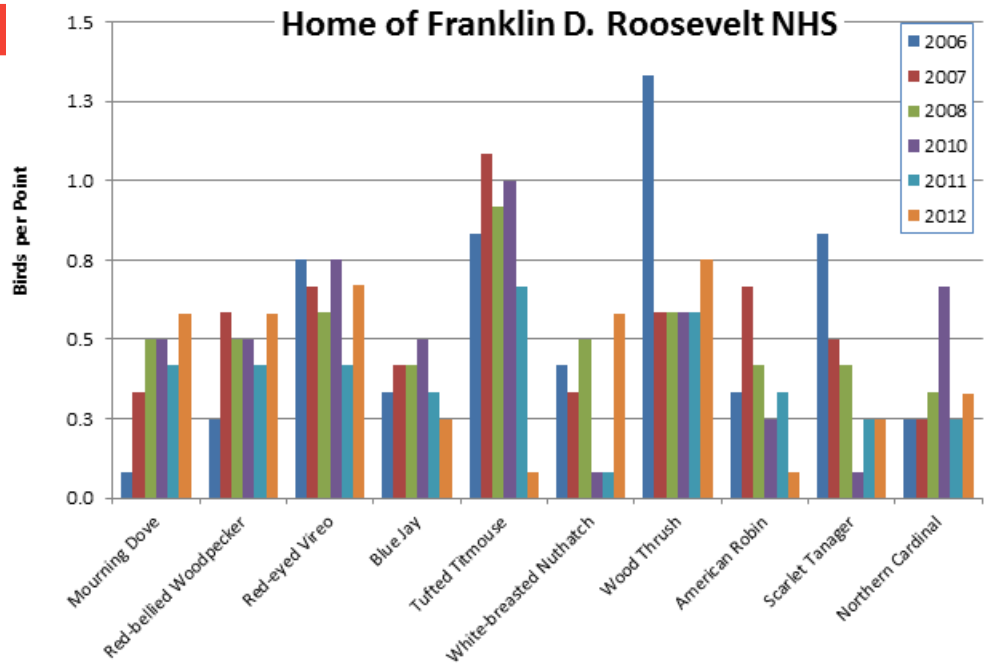
Spring Bird Monitoring with Sight and Song

Annual volunteer landbird survey results for Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS

Background

The Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) monitors a variety of natural resource indicators, called vital signs, for 12 parks in the northeast and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Breeding birds are one of these vital signs because they are a reliable indicator of ecological integrity and a high profile taxonomic group. 2012 was the sixth year of landbird monitoring in the forests of Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS. NETN and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies accomplished this only with the invaluable help of volunteer birders who crawled out of bed at ungodly early hours, endured hordes of biting mosquitoes and black flies, and contributed their time, efforts, and expert birding skills.

On a broad scale, all 13 NETN parks are located within the temperate deciduous forest biome. At a more refined level, the parks range across four Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) with this park lying in the Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Plain BCR. BCR's, developed by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, are ecologically defined areas that provide a consistent framework for bird conservation across North America. Each BCR has its own unique list of "priority" species ranked by conservation importance according to a standardized set of criteria.



Most commonly detected species in the park.

A recently published NETN report summarizes data collected from 2006 through 2012. In an attempt to better characterize the bird community at each park, the assessment results presented for each park were produced by combining data from all survey years (up to 7 years of data). In the future, project organizers plan to work with park managers to produce a parallel assessment based on park management goals.

Methods

One study site with 12 point count stations was established at the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in 2006 and has been surveyed in all years except 2009. Volunteer birders visit each point at least once per year between late May and June, and record the species of each individual bird as well as the time and distance away when they were first detected.

One way in which the health of the park's bird community is measured is through the Avian Ecological Integrity Assessment. This assessment is based on groups of bird species that require similar habitat, food, or other elements for their health and survival. Over time, it will help shed light on changes in a broader, landscape context and



Ruby-crowned kinglets can lay as many as a dozen eggs, with the total weighing as much as the female herself. Andy Jones photo.

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

All species that have been detected during initial point count surveys in the park.

indicate the direction that breeding bird habitat at the park may be going. For forest breeding birds, a rank of Good, Caution, or Significant Concern is assigned based on species richness thresholds and ranks. “Good” represents acceptable or desired conditions; “Caution” indicates a problem may exist; “Significant concern” indicates undesired conditions that may be in need of management actions. Project organizers recognize that the assessment is based on ecological criteria, and that especially at historical parks, management goals may not always seek to attain “ecological integrity.” A management assessment could be developed by those parks and NETN scientists that would reflect progress towards avian and ecological management goals. For more information about the avian ecological integrity assessment, as well as project methodologies, sampling scheme, etc., see the Breeding Landbird Monitoring Protocol available on NETN’s website.

Results and Findings

A total of 62 individual birds representing 20 species were detected in 2012, including two species detected for the first time during monitoring at the park (Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Chipping

Sparrow). In total, 46 species have been recorded, with an average abundance of 6.92 birds per point. Both relative abundance and species richness declined in 2012 to the lowest in the survey’s 6-year history. However, of the 10 most commonly detected species across all years, the relative abundances of only three (Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, and American Robin) declined from 2011 while the relative abundances for half were above the 6-year average. There was a big drop in Tufted Titmouse detections in 2012 (only 1 individual), along with an increase of White-breasted Nuthatches (7 individuals). Only one species of regional or USA/Canada conservation concern (Wood Thrush) was detected in 2012. A list of species, their relative abundances, and other summary statistics are provided in the full report.

The park-wide forest avian ecological integrity assessment for all years combined in the park resulted in three categories ranked as “Good,” nine ranked as “Caution,” and one ranked as “Significant Concern”. This represents a modest improvement over 2011 results, with two response guilds within the “Compositional” category (“Nest Predator/Brood Parasite” and “Resident”) each bumping up a notch. However, the “Shrub Nester” category dropped from “Caution” to Significant Concern.”

More Information

To get a “bird’s eye” view of all the park’s monitoring sites, visit the Google Earth Park Maps web page (accessible through the leftmost suite of menu choices on NETN’s homepage), which also contains bird monitoring routes, Avian Ecological Integrity Assessments and species detection frequencies for all participating NETN park units.

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Full Report online at:
<https://irma.nps.gov/App/Reference/Profile/2194186>

NETN Website
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