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

The Early Bird Gets...Counted!

Results from 2010 Breeding Landbird Survey at Morristown

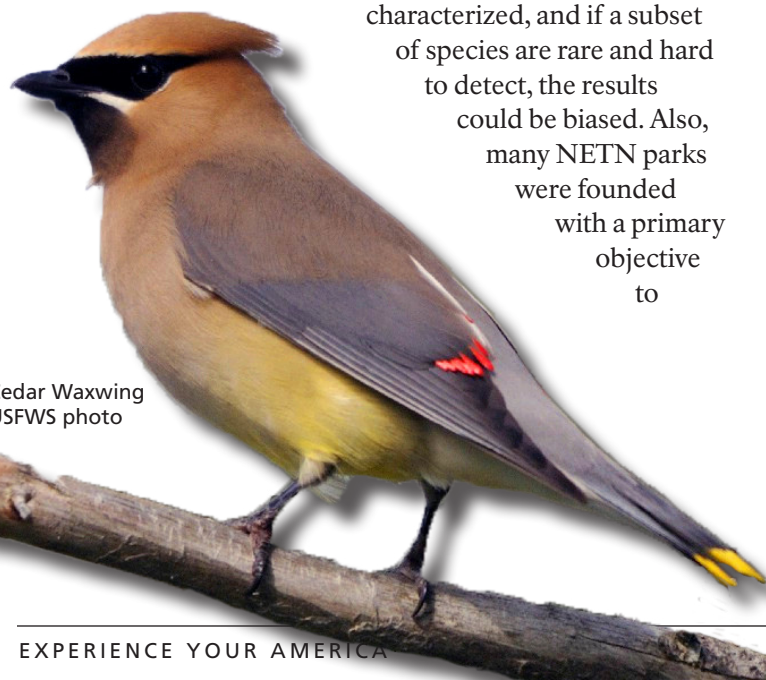
Background

With the invaluable help of volunteer birders that traverse mosquito infested forests and who start their surveys even before the sun wakes up in the morning, the Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) have been monitoring breeding landbirds in most network parks since 2006. On a broad scale, all 13 network parks are located within the temperate deciduous forest biome. At a finer scale, the parks range across four Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) with Morristown lying in the Appalachian Mountains 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.

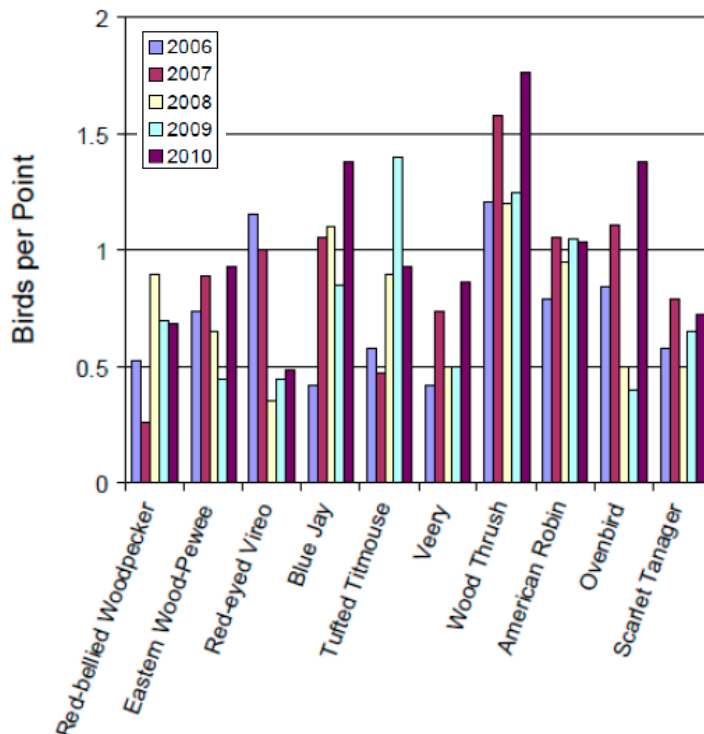
Purpose and Scope

This latest report summarizes data collected from 2006 through 2010. 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. Readers of the report should also treat the Ecological Integrity Assessment results as provisional because the assessment assumes that the bird community is completely

characterized, and if a subset of species are rare and hard to detect, the results could be biased. Also, many NETN parks were founded with a primary objective to



Cedar Waxwing
USFWS photo



The 10 most common species detected at Morristown, 2006 - 2010.

manage for the historical landscape rather than biological integrity or ecosystem structure and function; thus, management action may not always be warranted when some groups of bird species are rated "significant concern." In an attempt to better characterize the bird community at each park and reduce bias, the 2010 assessment results presented for each park were produced by combining data from all survey years at the park. In the future, NETN plans to work directly with park managers to produce a parallel assessment based on park management goals.

Results and Findings

Three study sites were established in the park in 2006. During 2010 surveys, observers detected a total of 441 birds of 39 species (29 point counts), compared to 416 of 36 species (40 point counts) in 2009, 442 of 36 species (40 point counts) in 2008, 263 of 36 species (19 point counts) in 2007, and 200 of 35 species (19 point counts) in 2006. A total of 53 species were recorded during the 4-survey years. Average abundance during the first site visit increased from 11.4 birds per point in 2009 to 15.2 birds per point in 2010. A total of eleven species of regional conservation concern were detected during the 5-survey years, including three species (Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, and Eastern Towhee) that were detected in all 5 years, and two (Acadian Flycatcher and Cerulean

53 Species Found in Morristown

Acadian Flycatcher	Wood Thrush
American Crow	Worm-eating Warbler
American Redstart	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
American Robin	Yellow-throated Vireo
Baltimore Oriole	
Black-and-white Warbler	
Black-capped Chickadee	
Blackpoll Warbler	
Blue Jay	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	
Blue-headed Vireo	
Brown-headed Cowbird	
Canada Warbler	
Carolina Wren	
Cedar Waxwing	
Cerulean Warbler	
Chipping Sparrow	
Downy Woodpecker	
Eastern Bluebird	
Eastern Phoebe	
Eastern Towhee	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	
Fish Crow	
Gray Catbird	
Great Crested Flycatcher	
Great Horned Owl	
Hairy Woodpecker	
Hooded Warbler	
House Wren	
Indigo Bunting	
Kentucky Warbler	
Louisiana Waterthrush	
Mourning Dove	
Northern Cardinal	
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted Flicker)	
Ovenbird	
Pileated Woodpecker	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	
Red-eyed Vireo	
Red-tailed Hawk	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	
Scarlet Tanager	
Swainson's Thrush	
Tufted Titmouse	
Turkey Vulture	
Veery	
White-breasted Nuthatch	
Wild Turkey	

Warbler) which were detected for the first time in 2010. In addition, Eastern Wood-Pewee and Wood Thrush were among the 10 most abundant species detected. The park-wide forest avian Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA) for all years at Morristown resulted in three categories ranked as “Good,” nine ranked as “Caution,” and one ranked as “Significant Concern”. This could be related to the low structural

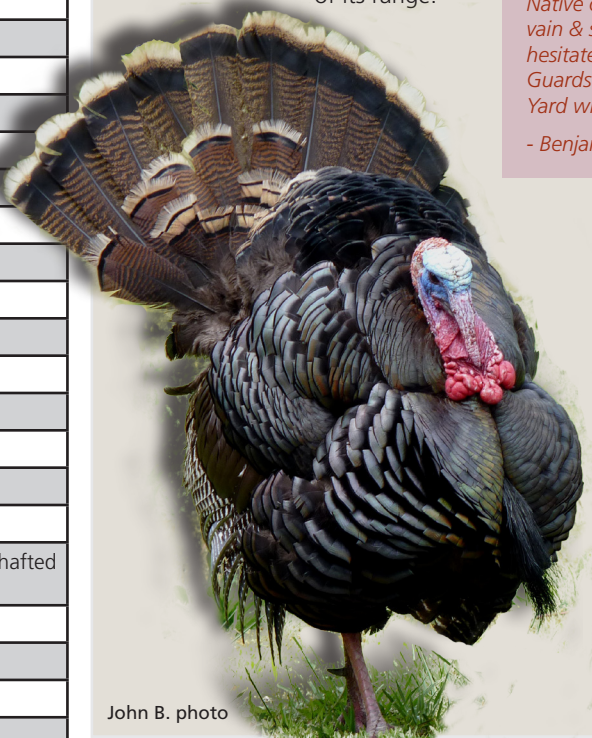
diversity throughout much of the park; the legacy of a high deer population which has resulted in very limited forest regeneration. The EIA has been calculated for each site individually, and the results are provided in Appendix C of the report. For more information on findings for this park and all other Network parks, download the report from NETN’s Monitoring webpage.



Species Spotlight: Wild Turkey

Benjamin Franklin's bird of choice for the United States' national bird, Wild Turkeys

were in the Americas long before Europeans arrived and were a very important food animal to Native Americans. By the early 1900's it was eliminated from much of its range.



John B. photo

"For my own part I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly... For the Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America. He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on."

- Benjamin Franklin in a letter to his daughter.

Reintroduction programs that began in the 1940's successfully reestablished the Turkey in most of its original range, and even into areas where it never occurred before. It is one of only two domesticated

birds originating in the New World (the Muscovy Duck is the other).

European explorers took Wild Turkeys to Europe from Mexico in the early 1500s. They were so successfully domesticated in Europe that English colonists brought them back with them when they settled on the Atlantic Coast. The domestic form has retained the white

tail tip of the original Mexican subspecies, and that characteristic can be used to distinguish wandering barnyard birds from wild turkeys which have chestnut-brown tail tips.

Wild turkeys typically forage on forest floors, but can also be found in grasslands and swamps. They feed on nuts, seeds, fruits, insects, and salamanders.

Male Wild Turkeys grow to about 4-feet long, including the tail, and are the ones that display the ruffled feathers, fanlike tail, bare blue head, and bright red beard commonly associated with these birds. They also gobble with a distinctive sound that can be heard a mile away. Females lay 4 to 17 eggs, and feed their chicks after they hatch, but only for a few days. Young turkeys quickly learn to fend for themselves as part of mother/child flocks that can include dozens of animals. Males take no role in the care of young turkeys.

More Information

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Full Report online at:
http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/NETN/monitor/flashmo_220_nature/monitor_flash.cfm



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