



ACADIA NP • APPALACHIAN NST • BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS NRA • MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NHP • MINUTE MAN NHP
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 (Vanderbilt Mansion NHS 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.

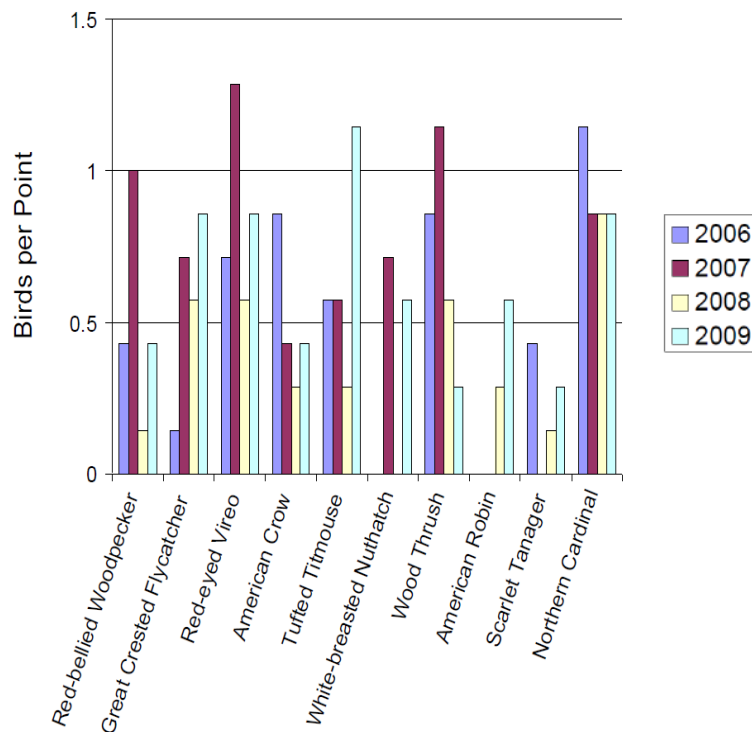
Purpose and Scope



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

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Ken Thomas photo

10 Most Common Species



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

Fifty-five individual birds were detected in 2009, compared to 43 birds in 2008, 63 in 2007, and 58 in 2006. In total, 30 species were recorded, and there was an average abundance of 7.82 birds per point. In 2009, relative abundance increased over 2008, while species richness declined. Four species of conservation concern, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, and Worm-Eating Warbler, were detected during the four survey years. Red-Eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, and Northern Cardinal were the most commonly detected species.

30 species detected in the park.

Canada Goose
American Crow
American Redstart
American Robin
Black-billed Cuckoo
Blue Jay
Carolina Wren
Chipping Sparrow
Common Yellowthroat
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Fish Crow
Great Crested Flycatcher
Hairy Woodpecker
House Wren
Indigo Bunting
Mourning Dove
Northern Cardinal
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted Flicker)
Ovenbird
Pileated Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Red-eyed Vireo
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Scarlet Tanager
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Wood Thrush
Worm-eating Warbler

More Information

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



Species Spotlight: Rose-breasted Grosbeak

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *Pheucticus ludovicianus*, is a large seed-eating songbird in the cardinal family. It breeds in cool-temperate North America, migrating to tropical America in winter. A common bird of forests and second growth, the grosbeak's song is like that of the robin, only as sung as if it had voice lessons, being mellower and more sweetly melodic.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak's breeding habitat is open deciduous woods across most of Canada and the northeastern USA. In particular the northern birds migrate south through the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, to winter from central-southern Mexico through Central America and the Caribbean to Peru and Venezuela. In winter, they prefer more open woodland, or similar habitat with a loose growth of trees, such as forest edges, parks, gardens and plantations, ranging from sea level into the hills, e.g. up to 5,000 ft (1,500 m) in Costa Rica.

The first birds leave the breeding grounds as early as August, while the last ones do not return until mid-late May. In general, however, they migrate south in late September or in October, and return in late April or early May. It appears they remain on their breeding grounds longer today than they did in the early 20th century, when migrants were more commonly seen in May and August than in April or September.

Fire prevention policies in the late 20th century have allowed forests to spread on the Great Plains in places where they would otherwise eventually burn down, thereby allowing the Rose-breasted Grosbeak to extend its range westwards. Increased hybridization with the Black-headed Grosbeak subspecies has been recorded as a consequence. In general it requires mature woodland to breed and is occasionally caught as a cage bird.



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