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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

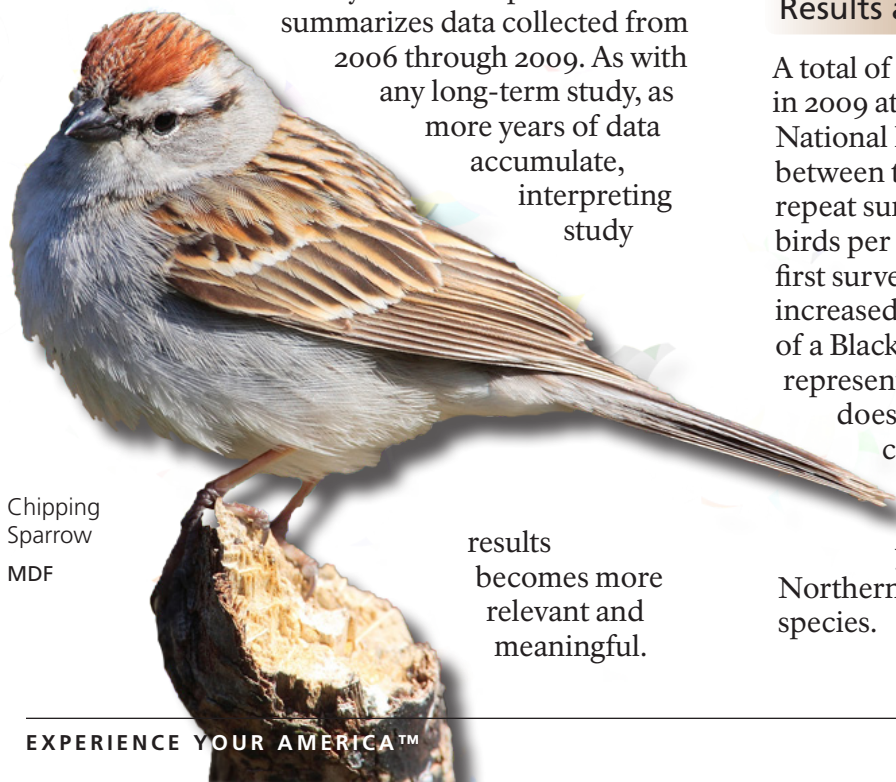
Results of Annual Breeding Landbird Survey

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 (Weir Farm lies in the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Coast 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.

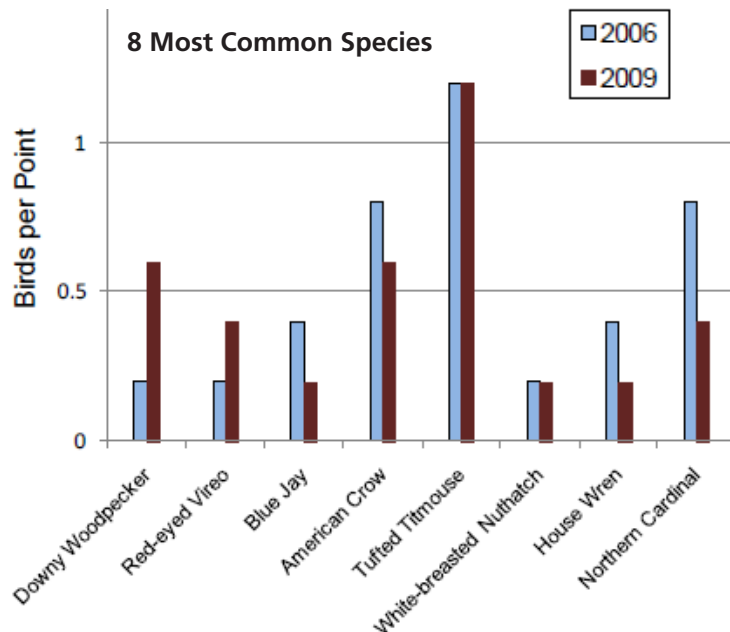
Purpose and Scope

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



Chipping Sparrow
MDF

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

A total of 61 individual birds of 21 species were detected in 2009 at five point count stations within Weir Farm National Historic Site. In total, 33 species were recorded between the two study years of 2006 and 2009. Excluding repeat surveys, there was an average abundance of 6.20 birds per point. In 2009, relative abundance during the first survey remained the same, while species richness increased by one. It should be noted that the observation of a Blackpoll Warbler during the first survey in 2009 represented a late migrant, as the species' breeding range does not extend into southern CT. Four species of conservation concern, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and Baltimore Oriole, were detected during the two survey years. Tufted Titmouse, American Crow, and Northern Cardinal were the most commonly detected species.

The park has a relatively low overall bird habitat ratings that reflect a low abundance of canopy species, and high abundance of shrub nesting species, indicative of the park's location within a suburban, fragmented landscape.

29 species detected in the park.

American Crow
American Redstart
American Robin
Baltimore Oriole
Black-capped Chickadee
Blackpoll Warbler
Blue Jay
Carolina Wren
Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Gray Catbird
Great Crested Flycatcher
House Wren
Northern Cardinal
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted Flicker)
Ovenbird
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Red-eyed Vireo
Red-tailed Hawk
Red-winged Blackbird
Scarlet Tanager
Song Sparrow
Tufted Titmouse
Warbling Vireo
White-breasted Nuthatch
Wood Thrush
Yellow-throated Vireo



Species Spotlight: Baltimore Oriole

With its brilliant orange and black plumage, the Baltimore Oriole is a perennial favorite whose return to bird feeders is awaited with much anticipation by birders each spring. Its preference for open areas with tall trees has made it a common inhabitant of parks and suburban areas.

The "orioles" of the Americas were named after similarly appearing birds in the Old World. The American orioles are not closely related to the true orioles in the family Oriolidae. They are more closely related to blackbirds and meadowlarks. Both New and Old world orioles are brightly colored with red, yellow, and black; have long tails and long pointed bills; build hanging, woven nests; and prefer tall trees around open areas.

In courtship the male will face the female, and bow with his wings, and tail spread out. Baltimore orioles like to breed in thickets with scattered tall trees near a forest edge or close to water. The nest built mostly by the female will often be in a tree or shrub 5 to 15 feet high, however they do put them much higher. They make a deep pouch or sock like nest that is bound at the top to branches. It is made of twigs, bark fibers, string, grasses, and other materials.

The nest is lined with moss, plant down, or fine grasses.



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More Information

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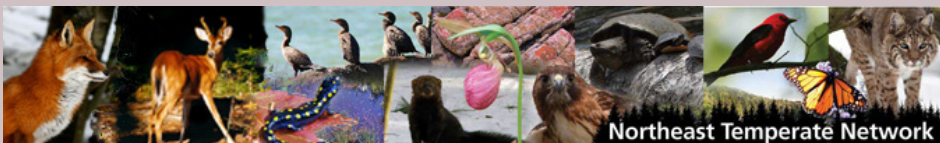
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Full Report online at:
<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/NETN/monitor/monitor.cfm>



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