



WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK 2015 RESOURCE BRIEF

LANDBIRD MONITORING

Overview: Wind Cave, is one of the world's longest and most complex caves. It was first protected in 1903 as the eighth national park. The Park also protects 30,000 acres of above-ground features including mixed-grass prairie, ponderosa pine forest, and associated wildlife.

The Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network developed a bird monitoring protocol jointly with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory). The 2015 breeding season was the third year of bird surveys for Wind Cave National Park.

Technicians surveyed 159 points and a total of 1,964 birds representing 63 species were recorded.

Highlights: The western meadowlark had the highest detection rate with 23% of the species composition. Other common species included spotted towhee (7%), grasshopper sparrow (7%), mourning dove (5%), vesper sparrow (5%) and the American crow (5%).

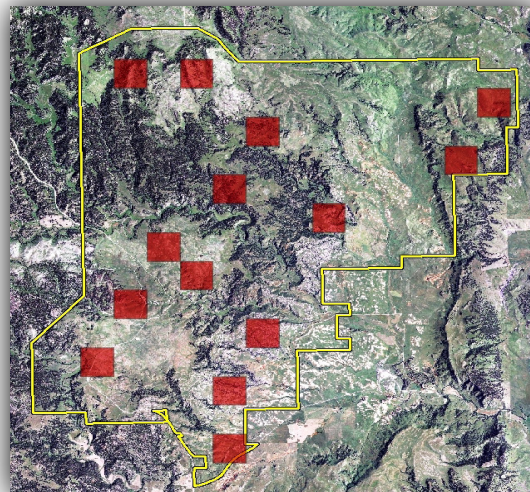
The blue-gray gnatcatcher was detected for the first time at Wind Cave NP in 2015. Its breeding range has been shifting northward since the early twentieth century and it is now breeding in South Dakota. Research shows the blue-gray gnatcatcher's expansion northward is linked to warmer January temperatures.

Wind Cave NP had 19 birds listed as species of importance by Partners and Flight and the state of South Dakota (page 2). One of these species, the lark sparrow, is identified by Partners in Flight as a regional species of concern. According to the Breeding Bird Survey, the lark sparrow's population has been declining across most of its range, especially in the east. It comprised 3% of the species composition at Wind Cave NP in 2015.

The lark sparrow prefers open habitat interspersed with trees and shrubs. It is the only species in its genus and has a unique courtship display. The male struts on the ground with its tail feathers spread and its wings drooping.



Above: Unlike other songbirds that hop, the lark sparrow walks on the ground. They only hop during the mating season.



Right: Grid locations surveyed during the 2015 field season.



BIRD SPECIES DETECTED AT WIND CAVE NP

Common Name	2014	2015	Common Name	2014	2015	Common Name	2014	2015	Common Name	2014	2015
American Crow	75	97	Cliff Swallow	5	23	Lazuli Bunting	13	1	Rock Wren	7	7
American Goldfinch	23	42	Common Goldeneye	6	0	Least Flycatcher	1	1	Savannah Sparrow	1	0
American Kestrel	17	4	Common Grackle	3	0	Lewis's Woodpecker	1	0	Say's Phoebe	3	0
American Redstart	1	0	Common Nighthawk	32	24	Long-billed Curlew	0	2	Sharp-tailed Grouse	4	0
American Robin	70	62	Common Poorwill	1	0	Marbled Godwit	0	3	Spotted Towhee	157	155
Barn Swallow	4	1	Common Yellowthroat	3	0	Mountain Bluebird	17	8	Swainson's Thrush	0	1
Black-backed Woodpecker	2	0	Cordilleran Flycatcher	5	0	Mourning Dove	107	107	Townsend's Solitaire	1	0
Black-billed Magpie	68	78	Dark-eyed Junco	14	6	Northern Flicker	69	63	Tree Swallow	1	3
Black-capped Chickadee	32	47	Downy Woodpecker	2	0	Orchard Oriole	1	0	Turkey Vulture	7	17
Black-headed Grosbeak	7	0	Dusky Flycatcher	1	3	Ovenbird	3	2	Upland Sandpiper	29	42
Blue Jay	2	2	Eastern Bluebird	2	1	Pine Siskin	2	0	Vesper Sparrow	61	92
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	0	3	Eastern Kingbird	22	5	Pinyon Jay	3	0	Violet-green Swallow	3	0
Brewer's Blackbird	60	72	Eurasian Collared-Dove	3	0	Plumbeous Vireo	7	1	Western Kingbird	1	3
Brown Creeper	2	0	European Starling	2	1	Red Crossbill	16	42	Western Meadowlark	483	454
Brown Thrasher	7	6	Field Sparrow	45	37	Red-breasted Nuthatch	21	21	Western Tanager	24	33
Brown-headed Cowbird	60	38	Golden Eagle	0	1	Red-eyed Vireo	4	1	Western Wood-Pewee	60	27
Bullock's Oriole	3	2	Grasshopper Sparrow	129	140	Red-headed Woodpecker	23	20	White-breasted Nuthatch	22	3
Canada Goose	4	0	Gray Catbird	1	1	Red-naped Sapsucker	1	0	Wild Turkey	4	5
Cedar Waxwing	13	5	Hairy Woodpecker	9	3	Red-tailed Hawk	1	2	Yellow Warbler	22	19
Chipping Sparrow	90	56	Horned Lark	27	4	Red-winged Blackbird	1	0	Yellow-breasted Chat	18	27
Clark's Nutcracker	1	0	House Wren	11	18	Ring-necked Pheasant	1	0	Yellow-rumped Warbler	29	5
Clay-colored Sparrow	3	1	Lark Sparrow	22	51	Rock Pigeon	3	2			

Species of Importance: Determined by Partners in Flight priority species list and State of South Dakota priority list.

New Species For Park

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies 2016. The Rocky Mountain Avian Data Center. Brighton, CO. <http://adc.rmbo.org>. (Accessed January 24, 2016).

Protocol Contact:

Angela_Jarding@nps.gov
Data Manager
605-341-2809

