



## MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL 2015 RESOURCE BRIEF

### LANDBIRD MONITORING



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Above: The northern flicker plays an important role in forested ecosystems. They excavate nesting and roosting cavities that are subsequently used by other birds, animals, and reptiles that cannot make their own.

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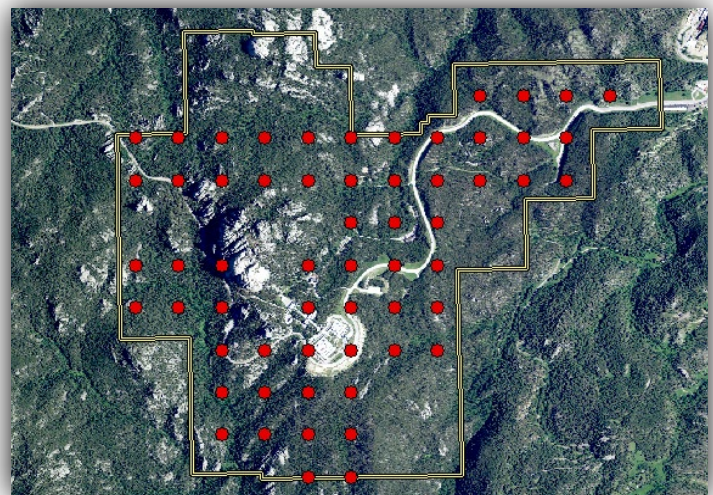
**Overview:** Mount Rushmore National Memorial was established to communicate the founding, preservation, and unification of the United States with the faces of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt carved out of granite. Besides the famous faces, Mount Rushmore NMEM has over 1,200 acres of ponderosa pine forest and associated bird species.

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 at the Memorial. This research is the beginning of a long-term effort to monitor species trends and densities.

Technicians surveyed 59 points in 2015 and a total of 543 birds representing 39 species were recorded.

**Highlights:** The red crossbill had the highest detection rate with 18% of the species composition. Other common species included the yellow-rumped warbler (9%), American robin (8%), chipping sparrow (7%), and the red-breasted nuthatch (6%).

Four species at the Memorial are listed as species of importance by Partners in Flight and the State of South Dakota (page 2). One of these species, the northern flicker, is listed as a common bird in steep decline. They are common and widespread throughout the United States, but their total population has declined by nearly 50% since 1966. One theory is that non-native European starlings compete for cavity nesting sites and may be driving flickers away.



Right: Point locations surveyed during the 2015 field season.



## BIRD SPECIES DETECTED AT MOUNT RUSHMORE NMEM

| Common Name             | 2014 | 2015 | Common Name             | 2014 | 2015 |
|-------------------------|------|------|-------------------------|------|------|
| American Crow           | 5    | 5    | Northern Flicker        | 23   | 21   |
| American Robin          | 51   | 43   | Ovenbird                | 6    | 7    |
| Bell's Vireo            | 1    | 0    | Pine Siskin             | 40   | 3    |
| Black-backed Woodpecker | 3    | 2    | Plumbeous Vireo         | 9    | 12   |
| Black-capped Chickadee  | 25   | 27   | Red Crossbill           | 30   | 98   |
| Black-headed Grosbeak   | 3    | 0    | Red-breasted Nuthatch   | 29   | 32   |
| Brown Creeper           | 10   | 2    | Red-eyed Vireo          | 0    | 1    |
| Brown-headed Cowbird    | 14   | 20   | Red-naped Sapsucker     | 19   | 10   |
| Canyon Wren             | 8    | 11   | Ruby-crowned Kinglet    | 6    | 9    |
| Chipping Sparrow        | 59   | 41   | Song Sparrow            | 3    | 1    |
| Cliff Swallow           | 1    | 1    | Spotted Towhee          | 1    | 2    |
| Common Grackle          | 1    | 0    | Swainson's Thrush       | 14   | 8    |
| Common Nighthawk        | 1    | 2    | Townsend's Solitaire    | 4    | 1    |
| Common Yellowthroat     | 0    | 8    | Tree Swallow            | 1    | 0    |
| Cordilleran Flycatcher  | 19   | 1    | Turkey Vulture          | 1    | 3    |
| Dark-eyed Junco         | 32   | 17   | Violet-green Swallow    | 68   | 24   |
| Downy Woodpecker        | 1    | 0    | Warbling Vireo          | 10   | 2    |
| Dusky Flycatcher        | 2    | 4    | Western Tanager         | 20   | 5    |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove  | 2    | 0    | Western Wood-Pewee      | 21   | 12   |
| Gray Jay                | 0    | 2    | White-breasted Nuthatch | 24   | 8    |
| Hairy Woodpecker        | 13   | 4    | White-throated Swift    | 51   | 20   |
| MacGillivray's Warbler  | 3    | 0    | Yellow Warbler          | 3    | 2    |
| Mountain Bluebird       | 2    | 0    | Yellow-rumped Warbler   | 115  | 53   |
| Mourning Dove           | 0    | 10   |                         |      |      |

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

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

**Protocol Contact:**  
Angela\_Jarding@nps.gov  
Data Manager  
605-341-2809

