



2016 Landbird Monitoring Mount Rushmore National Memorial



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The most common bird detected at Mount Rushmore NM in 2016 was the red crossbill. They use their unique crossed tip bill to harvest cone seeds.

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 with most of the avifauna being forest species.

The Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network developed a bird monitoring protocol jointly with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory). The 2016 breeding season was the fourth year of bird surveys at the Memorial. This research is the beginning of a long-

term effort to monitor species trends and densities.

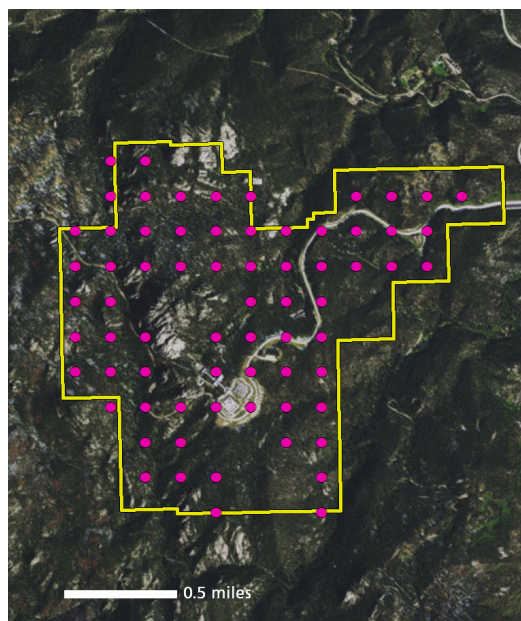
Technicians surveyed 70 points in 2016 and recorded 928 birds representing 48 species.

Highlights

The red crossbill had the highest detection rate with 15% of the species composition. Other common species included the yellow-rumped warbler (10%), red-breasted nuthatch (9%), and American robin (7%). Species that were detected for the first time since monitoring began in the park included the blue jay, Cassin's finch, golden-crowned kinglet, and western meadowlark.

Interesting Fact

The location of crossbill populations vary widely between years as the birds search for a good cone crop. Unlike other North American passerines who only breed during summer; it can breed any time it finds a sufficient cone crop. The birds will also feed the cone seeds to their young. Their unique crossed tip bill allows them to harvest cone seeds efficiently.



Locations of the 70 points surveyed at Mount Rushmore National Memorial during the 2016 field season (purple circles).

Results of bird surveys at Mount Rushmore NM

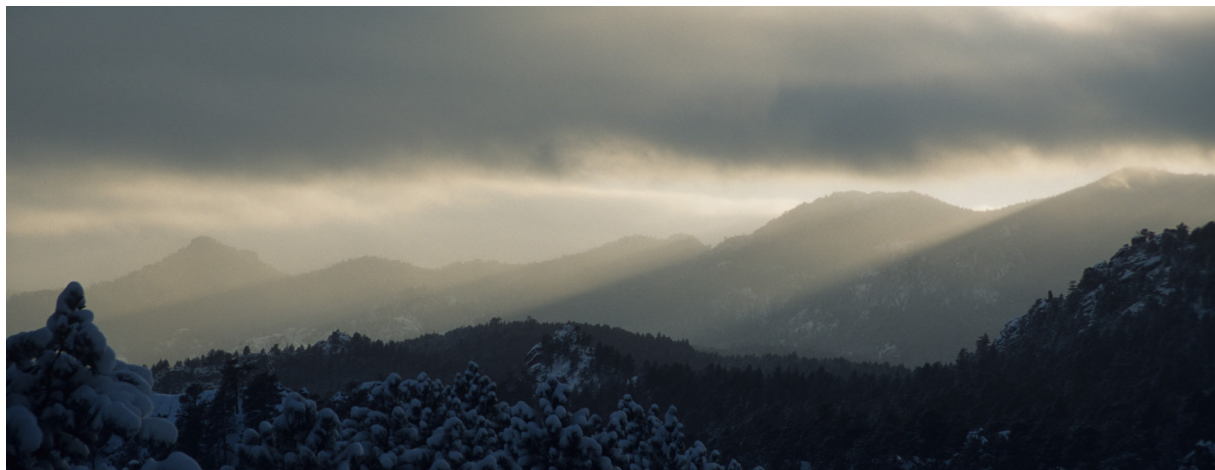
* **Names of species of Importance are bold.** These were determined using priority lists from Partners in Flight and the State of South Dakota.

Common Name	2015	2016
American Crow	5	4
American Goldfinch	0	1
American Redstart	0	8
American Robin	43	64
Barn Swallow	0	2
Black-backed Woodpecker*	2	0
Black-capped Chickadee	27	32
Black-headed Grosbeak	0	5
Blue Jay	0	1
Brown Creeper	2	18
Brown-headed Cowbird	20	33
Canyon Wren	11	13
Cassin's Finch	0	1
Chipping Sparrow	41	34
Cliff Swallow	1	0
Common Nighthawk*	2	4
Common Yellowthroat	8	7
Cordilleran Flycatcher	1	12
Dark-eyed Junco	17	32
Downy Woodpecker	0	2
Dusky Flycatcher	4	24
Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	1
Gray Jay	2	0
Hairy Woodpecker	4	14
House Wren	0	1
Mountain Bluebird	0	3

Common Name	2015	2016
Mourning Dove	10	19
Northern Flicker*	21	7
Ovenbird	7	22
Pine Siskin*	3	22
Plumbeous Vireo	12	8
Red Crossbill*	98	143
Red-breasted Nuthatch	32	83
Red-eyed Vireo	1	3
Red-naped Sapsucker	10	10
Rock Pigeon	0	2
Rock Wren*	0	8
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9	7
Song Sparrow	1	1
Spotted Towhee	2	0
Swainson's Thrush	8	21
Townsend's Solitaire	1	16
Turkey Vulture	3	1
Violet-green Swallow	24	36
Warbling Vireo	2	29
Western Meadowlark*	0	1
Western Tanager	5	23
Western Wood-Pewee	12	24
White-breasted Nuthatch	8	1
White-throated Swift	20	28
Yellow Warbler	2	2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	53	95

Protocol Contact

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Mount Rushmore NM
in winter. NPS photo

For more bird data

Visit the Rocky Mountain
Avian Data Center online:
<http://adc.birdconservancy.org>

Northern Great Plains Network

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Rapid City, SD 57701
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Network Parks: Agate Fossil Beds NM • Badlands NP • Devils Tower NM • Fort Laramie NHS • Fort Union Trading Post NHS • Jewel Cave NM • Knife River Indian Villages NHS • Missouri NRR • Mount Rushmore NM • Niobrara NSR • Scotts Bluff NM • Theodore Roosevelt NP • Wind Cave NP