



Brown-headed nuthatch by Bill Tucker

Breeding Bird Monitoring Program

When you're in a national park, you can almost always hear them. Some are soft and quiet, while others are loud and brash. Some sing, some squawk, others gently call. Do you look? Do you listen?

They are birds, of course, and national parks are interested in their populations. For the last 10 years, the scientists of the National Park Service's Inventory and Monitoring Program have worked with skilled local volunteers

to monitor bird populations in your area. There are five participating national parks in Pennsylvania and Virginia that have benefited from the amazing work of more than 100 volunteers. The information gathered is being used to improve our understanding of the relationships between breeding birds, available habitats, and park resource management. The goal of this program is to develop the best available science so national parks can better understand and protect their resources.

We depend on volunteers.

Starting in 2009 in just three parks, the program now includes five parks and continues to grow. The monitoring program is volunteer based and skilled birders are always needed. Can you help?

Who? Skilled birders or those wishing to learn.

What? Identify bird species (by sight and sound) in the early morning.

When? Monitoring sites are visited once every two weeks, late-May through mid-July.

Where? At your local national park!

120 volunteers to date

142 species detected

381 sites monitored

3,868 surveys completed

55,468 birds identified



Carlton Noll searching the canopy at Richmond NBR by Art Ritter

How are the data used?

With more information about birds, scientists can better answer questions about park ecosystems and how park lands should be managed. Monitoring birds not only provides insights into the long-term trends of how many and what types of birds are present, but also helps determine the health of park ecosystems. Parks want to know:

- What habitats have the greatest abundance of birds?
- What types of birds are found in grasslands vs. forested lands?
- How are park management decisions influencing bird habitat use?



Black and white warbler by Bill Tucker

Volunteers extraordinaire!

We want to acknowledge the incredible contributions of our volunteers. This program would not exist without their tireless efforts and endless enthusiasm for birding. Thank you for your work—we are very grateful! A special thanks goes to the following volunteers, who as of 2019, have worked more than five years for their park:

Beverly Arnold	Mary Ellen Heisey	Matt Roland
Lewis Barnett	Tom Heisey	Wendy Sykora
Tim Clemens	Richard Keyser	Anne Tucker
Patricia Edwards	Michael Lott	Bill Tucker
Donna Finnegan	Les Murray	Lisa Tull
Ron Grubb	Paul Nasca	Rick Wolf
Michael Harvell	Geoffrey Rogalsky	Marty Wright

If you are a skilled birder, or would like to become better at bird identification, and are interested in volunteering, please contact your local national park as noted below:

Booker T. Washington NM: Timbo Sims
(timbo_sims@nps.gov)

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania NMP: Mark Johnson
(mark_johnson@nps.gov)

Petersburg NB: Tim Blumenschine
(tim_blumenschine@nps.gov)

Richmond NBP: Kristen Allen
(kristen_allen@nps.gov)

Valley Forge NHP: Kate Jensen
(kate_jensen@nps.gov)

What's next?



Yellow warbler
by Bill Tucker

With 10 years of monitoring completed, park scientists are working on data analyses and long-term trend reports. Numerous annual summary reports and other publications are available at the website below.

Other national parks, outside the Mid-Atlantic region, also support volunteer-based bird monitoring programs. Therefore, national park scientists recently created the Northeast and National Capital Region Bird Working Group to focus on regional-scale bird monitoring issues. This group includes monitoring programs from 32 national parks, from Virginia to Maine.

If you'd like to learn more, [visit the Mid-Atlantic Network website \(https://go.nps.gov/MIDNbirds\)](https://go.nps.gov/MIDNbirds).

Lead Scientist

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Network parks: Appomattox Court House NHP • Booker T. Washington NM • Eisenhower NHS • Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania NMP • Gettysburg NMP • Hopewell Furnace NHS • Petersburg NB • Richmond NBP • Shenandoah NP • Valley Forge NHP