



ARTICLE

Landbird Monitoring in the San Francisco Bay Area

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (<https://www.nps.gov/goga/>), Point Reyes National Seashore (<https://www.nps.gov/pore/>)



Charismatic Allen's Hummingbirds are among the most commonly detected birds in the parks.

NPS / Will Elder

Why Are Landbirds Important?

With their varied microclimates, large swaths of protected wild lands, and position along a major migratory pathway, the National Parks in the San Francisco Bay Area host some of the largest and most diverse assemblages of landbirds in the United States. Landbirds in the Bay Area produce a great deal of public interest. Besides their aesthetic value, landbirds are good indicators of changing ecological conditions such as climate. They are also relatively easy to monitor and are therefore well suited for community-level (multi-species) surveys. Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore have a long history of landbird monitoring, with some sites surveyed since the mid-1960s.





Ruby-crowned Kinglet sightings have declined significantly since monitoring began.
NPS / Will Elder

Why Do We Monitor Landbirds?

- To determine long term population trends for riparian-associated landbird species during breeding, fall, and winter seasons
- To determine long-term changes in productivity and annual survival for riparian-associated landbird species

How Do We Use the Monitoring Data?

- To inform decisions about issues such as changes in climate and habitat quality
- To evaluate management actions like invasive plant removal or habitat restoration
- To combine data with regional and national datasets to assess landbird population status and trends at broader landscapes



Wilson's Warblers are commonly observed through the course of landbird monitoring, and their numbers have been increasing.

NPS / Will Elder

What Have We Learned?

Partners at [Point Blue Conservation Science \(http://www.pointblue.org/\)](http://www.pointblue.org/) have found that landbird abundance has been generally stable throughout riparian areas at Golden Gate and Point Reyes over the last 11 to 15 years. Although there were some increases and some decreases, neither trend dominated. The most commonly detected landbirds in riparian habitat at the two parks included Song Sparrow, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, Allen's Hummingbird, Fox Sparrow and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Monitoring identified significant declines in four species, including Olive-sided Flycatchers, a California Bird Species of Special Concern, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Golden-crowned Sparrows, and American Robins. However, monitoring also showed significant increases for Wilson's Warblers and Purple Finches.

For More Information

Inventory & Monitoring Program Manager, SF Bay Area Network

[Jena R. Hickey \(https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=4180D5BAA2DBA6BF9FBE0A8FF707B8E3419250&r=/articles/landbird-monitoring.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=4180D5BAA2DBA6BF9FBE0A8FF707B8E3419250&r=/articles/landbird-monitoring.htm)

Links

[San Francisco Bay Area Inventory & Monitoring Network](https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/landbirds.htm)

[\(https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/landbirds.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/landbirds.htm)

[Pacific Coast Science and Learning Center \(https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/landbirds.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/landbirds.htm)

Summary by Sarah Wakamiya, August, 2014.

[Download PDF \(https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2216968\)](https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2216968) from the NPS Data Store



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