



## Bird Monitoring at George Washington Carver National Monument

### Importance:

Birds intrigue and excite visitors, having become a popular recreational activity at many National Park Service facilities. Beyond the pleasure that birds provide, they are an important component of ecosystems. Their high metabolism and position in the food web make them indicators of change in an ecosystem – the canary in the mine, so to speak. Preserving habitat for the wellbeing of bird populations preserves entire ecosystems for the benefit of all species.

### Long Term Monitoring:<sup>1</sup>

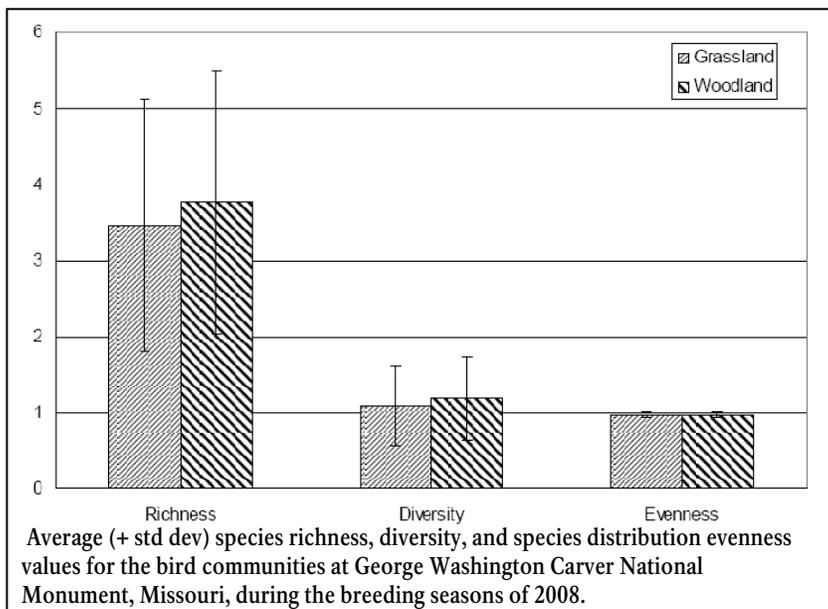
The Heartland Network Inventory and Monitoring Program monitors change in bird community composition and bird abundance to determine the health of the bird community. They accomplish this by surveying seasonal and year round resident birds in the monument during breeding season. These data and an evaluation of habitat structure and composition contribute to assessing bird community response to changes in habitat. The 2008 breeding bird survey provides plot-specific, habitat-specific, and park-wide baseline data on populations and breeding habitat of birds.



Eastern Bluebird

### Status and Trends:

Scientists found 49 species of breeding birds, dominated by Dickcissel, Brown-headed Cowbird, Indigo Bunting, Carolina Wren, and Northern Cardinal. Long-term trends in community composition and abundance of breeding bird populations provide one measure for assessing ecological integrity and sustainability. Bird monitoring initiated in 2008 at the monument will aid in assessing the success of management efforts by recording changes in the numbers and composition of bird communities that may reflect the quality of bird habitat. Scientists also discovered:



1. Partners in Flight classifies six of the species found during the survey as species of continental importance with three species being grassland obligates.
2. Although species richness in the grasslands was similar to values reported in other grasslands, the woodland obligate species richness was lower than comparative values elsewhere.



<sup>1</sup> Peitz, D.G. 2009. Bird monitoring at George Washington Carver National Monument, Missouri 2008 status report. Natural Resource Technical Report NPS/HTLN/NRTR–2009/193. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado.