

## 2011 NVBS Abundance of Species of Special Concern

### Grassland Species

Northern Bobwhite – Seventeen individuals were encountered this year so situation improving somewhat. Five were at Manassas NBP, 10 at OBNWR, and 2 at L/LH. Only two bobwhites were counted last year (2010) and both were at Occoquan Bay NWR. In 2009 13 were logged in (1 Manassas NBP, 11 Occoquan Bay NWR, 1 Lorton/Laurel Hill – first one at that site since 2005) compared to 21 in 2008 (1 Manassas NBP, 18 Occoquan Bay NWR, 2 Meadowood SRMA). In 2007 25 individuals were found (4 Manassas NBP, 20 Occoquan Bay NWR, 1 Meadowood SRMA). Counts both years (2008 and 2007) were far below that in 2006 when 59 individuals were logged in – 15 at Manassas NBP and 44 at Occoquan Bay NWR.

Eastern Meadowlark – They are holding on but still not looking good. Twenty-two (22) were logged in this year (16 at Manassas NBP and 6 at Meadowood SRA). 2010 total was 20 (down from the 2009 tally of 34) with 19 individuals at Manassas NBP and 1 at Ft. Belvoir's Davison Airfield (point 804). The year before (2009) 34 were logged in (31 at Manassas NBP and 3 at Ft. Belvoir's Davison Airfield (2 at point 803 and 1 at point 805). Twenty individuals were counted in 2008, 12 were at Manassas NBP, 3 at Ft. Belvoir's Davison Airfield (point 804) and 5 at Meadowood SRMA. Of the 16 logged in 2007, 10 were encountered at Manassas NBP, 1 at Occoquan Bay NWR, 1 at Lorton/Laurel Hill, 2 at Meadowood SRMA, and 2 at Davison Airfield (1 at point 803 and 1 at point 804). Only 2 meadowlarks participated in the 2006 survey and both were at Davison Airfield and as in 2007, points 803 and 804 had one each.

Grasshopper Sparrow – Thirteen individuals were encountered this year (9 at Manassas NBP and 4 at Ft. Belvoir's Davison Airfield (2 at point 801, 1 at point 803, and 1 at point 804). This brings the number close to the high of 14 in 2007. Eleven individuals, almost twice the number in 2009 were counted in 2010, 7 at Manassas NBP, 3 at Ft. Belvoir (all at Davison Airfield – 2 at point 801 and 1 at point 805), and 1 at Lorton/Laurel Hill. Six individuals were tallied in 2009, 1 at Manassas NBP and 5 at Davison Airfield (2 at point 801, 2 at point 803, and 1 at point 805). This was a continuation of a drop in numbers from a high of 14 in 2007 (12 at Manassas NBP and 2 at Ft. Belvoir's Davison Airfield's survey point 801) and 8 in 2008 (3 at Manassas NBP and 5 at Davison Airfield (2,1,2 at points 801,803, 804 respectively). Six were logged in in 2006 and all were at Davison Airfield (2 at points 801 and 803 each and a single bird at points 804 and 805).

Field Sparrow – There was an increase in numbers over last year. Fifty were tallied (34 at Manassas NBP, 2 at Occoquan Bay NWR, 2 at Riverbend Park, and 12 at Lorton/Laurel Hill) compared to thirty-two in 2010 (27 at Manassas NBP, 1 at Occoquan Bay NWR, and 4 at Lorton/Laurel Hill). However numbers remained low relative to the 2009 count of 75 (Manassas NBP (69), Occoquan Bay NWR (2), and one each at Accotink Bay WR, Ft. Belvoir Training Area (EGP, point 612), Frying Pan Park, and

Cub Run SVP. One hundred and five (105) were encountered in 2008 due in part to an increased number of points surveyed at Manassas NBP. The breakdown according to site was – Manassas NBP (81), Occoquan Bay NWR (8), Accotink Bay WR (1), Ft. Belvoir Training Areas (10), Lorton/Laurel Hill (4), and Frying Pan Park (1). The 2007 total was 54 (Manassas NBP (32), Occoquan Bay NWR (10), Accotink Bay WR (2), Ft. Belvoir Training Areas (4), Lorton/Laurel Hill (5), and Frying Pan Park (1). Fifty-nine were counted in 2006 - Manassas NBP (21), Occoquan Bay NWR (6), Accotink Bay WR (1), Ft. Belvoir Training Areas (27), Lorton/Laurel Hill (4).

American Woodcock – Still no woodcock. None have been reported since 2005 when a flock of three was sighted at Occoquan Bay NWR between survey points. We keep hoping.

### **Other Species of Interest**

Crows – The effect of West Nile virus on crow populations appeared to bottom out in 2005. The next year showed a good increase in numbers but the rate of increase slowed in 2007, and this rate continued until this year when it leveled off. Numbers of *Corvidae* family members counted 1998-2011 are shown in Table 6 and Fig. 9a. Fig. 9b plots total crows/100 survey points over time.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Number in parentheses is number/100 survey points.) – Cuckoo numbers peaked in 2004, the year the Brood X Linnaeus's 17-year Cicada (*Magicicada septendecim*) made their debut. One hundred thirty-nine (22) individuals were counted. Since then numbers have been lower – 85 (11) in 2005 followed by an increase to 116 (19) in 2006, and declines in 2007 and 2008 to 86 (14) and 37 (6). From 2009 through 2011 numbers increased from 49 (8) to 78 (13) to 95 (15).

Carolina Wren – 2009 vs. 2010 vs. 2011 - Numbers dropped from 573 individuals in 2009 to 164 in 2010 or from 6% to 2% of the total number of birds counted. This was reflected in the distribution data. In 2009 Carolina wren was present at 59% of the points surveyed (378 out of 652 points) and only 21% in 2010 (122 out of 585 points). This significant decline was most likely due to the inclement weather during the winter of 2009-2010 especially in February 2010. This year 323 Carolina wrens were encountered or 3% of the total number of birds counted and they were present at 35% of the points surveyed (224 out of 643 points), so the situation is improving.