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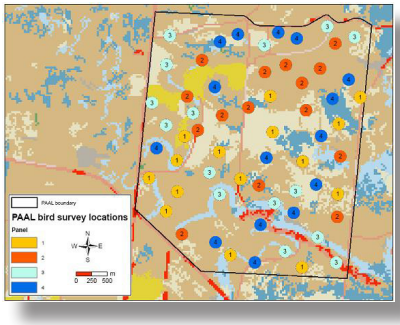
Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Monitoring Birds in National Parks of the Gulf Coast Network

The Challenge: Avian monitoring within the Gulf Coast Network of the National Park Service is challenged to provide valid quantitative data on bird populations within park boundaries with limited financial input. Thus, citizen science (volunteer) bird monitoring has been proposed to achieve reliable estimates of bird populations and to assess the effects of habitat change and temporal dynamics of bird populations.



The Science: Avian monitoring schemes are being developed for each of the eight National Parks within the Gulf Coast Network that rely on only a few (3 – 12) volunteer-days of annual effort, yet will yield useful information on populations of many bird species and have a reasonable expectation of long-term (>20 years) implementation. In addition, avian monitoring within Vicksburg National Military Park is being used to predict changes to this parks bird community that are expected as the result of restoration of habitat to conditions exemplifying those present during the Civil War.

The Future: Implementation of avian monitoring by volunteer citizen scientists will provide National Parks in the Gulf Coast Network with reliable, long-term assessment bird populations. Moreover, the effects of proposed habitat restorations on Park bird populations can be evaluated before habitat alterations are undertaken.

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