



## Pipe Spring National Monument

### Background

Birds are useful indicators of ecological change because they are highly mobile and generally conspicuous. As climate in a particular place changes, suitability may worsen for some species and improve for others. These changes in climate may create the potential for local extirpation or new colonization. **This brief summarizes projected changes in climate suitability by mid-century for birds at Pipe Spring National Monument (hereafter, the Monument) under two climate change scenarios (see Wu et al. 2018 for full results, and Langham et al. 2015 for more information regarding how climate suitability is characterized).** The high-emissions pathway (RCP8.5) represents a future in which little action is taken to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases. The low-emissions pathway (RCP2.6) is a best-case scenario of aggressive efforts to reduce emissions. These emissions pathways are globally standardized and established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for projecting future climate change. The findings below are model-based projections of how species distributions may change in response to climate change. A 10-km buffer was applied to each park to match the spatial resolution of the species distribution models (10 x 10 km), and climate suitability was taken as the average of all cells encompassed by the park and buffer.

### Results

#### **Climate change is expected to alter the bird community at the Monument, with greater impacts under the high-emissions pathway than under the low-emissions pathway (Figure 1).**

Among the species likely to be found at the Monument today, climate suitability in summer under the high-emissions pathway is projected to improve for 6, remain stable for 24 (e.g., Figure 2), and worsen for 4 species. Suitable climate ceases to occur for 10 species in summer, potentially resulting in extirpation of those species from the Monument. Climate is projected to become suitable in summer for 26 species not found at the Monument today, potentially resulting in local colonization. Climate suitability in winter under the high-emissions pathway is projected to improve for 8, remain stable for 10, and worsen for 8 species. Suitable climate ceases to occur for 3 species in winter, potentially resulting in extirpation from the Monument. Climate is projected to become suitable in winter for 40 species not found at the Monument today, potentially resulting in local colonization.

### IMPORTANT

This study focuses exclusively on changing climatic conditions for birds over time. But projected changes in climate suitability are not definitive predictions of future species ranges or abundances. Numerous other factors affect where species occur, including habitat quality, food abundance, species adaptability, and the availability of microclimates (see Caveats). Therefore, managers should consider changes in climate suitability alongside these other important influences.

We report trends in climate suitability for all species identified as currently present at the Monument based on both NPS Inventory & Monitoring Program data and eBird observation data (2016), plus those species for which climate at the Monument is projected to become suitable in the future (Figure 1 & Table 1). This brief provides park-specific projections whereas Wu et al. (2018), which did not incorporate park-specific species data and thus may differ from this brief, provides system-wide comparison and conclusions.

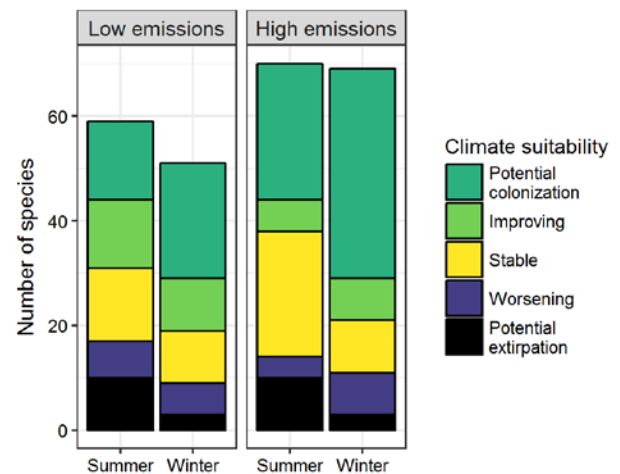


Figure 1. Projected changes in climate suitability for birds at the Monument, by emissions pathway and season.

## Results (continued)

### Potential Turnover Index

**Potential bird species turnover for the Monument between the present and 2050 is 0.28 in summer (48<sup>th</sup> percentile across all national parks) and 0.18 in winter (24<sup>th</sup> percentile) under the high-emissions pathway. Potential species turnover declines to 0.18 in summer and 0.11 in winter under the low-emissions pathway.** Turnover index was calculated based on the theoretical proportions of potential extirpations and potential colonizations by 2050 relative to today (as reported in Wu et al. 2018), and therefore assumes that all potential extirpations and colonizations are realized. According to this index, no change would be represented as 0, whereas a complete change in the bird community would be represented as 1.

### Climate Sensitive Species

The Monument is or may become home to 8 species that are highly sensitive to climate change across their range (i.e., they are projected to lose climate suitability in over 50% of their current range in North America in summer and/or winter by 2050; Table 1; Langham et al. 2015).

### Management Implications

Parks differ in potential colonization and extirpation rates, and therefore different climate change adaptation strategies may apply. **Under the high-emissions pathway, Pipe Spring National Monument falls within the high turnover group.** Parks anticipating high turnover can focus on actions that increase species' ability to respond to environmental change, such as increasing the amount of potential habitat, working with cooperating agencies and landowners to improve habitat

### Caveats

The species distribution models included in this study are based solely on climate variables (i.e., a combination of annual and seasonal measures of temperature and precipitation), which means there are limits on their interpretation. Significant changes in climate suitability, as measured here, will not always result in a species response, and all projections should be interpreted as potential trends. Multiple other factors mediate responses to climate change, including habitat availability, ecological processes

While the Monument may serve as an important refuge for 7 of these climate-sensitive species, one, the Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), might be extirpated from the Monument in summer by 2050.



**Figure 2.** Climate at the Monument in summer is projected to remain suitable for the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) through 2050. Photo by KS Black/Flickr (Public Domain).

connectivity for birds across boundaries, managing the disturbance regime, and possibly more intensive management actions. Furthermore, park managers have an opportunity to focus on supporting the 7 species that are highly sensitive to climate change across their range (Table 1; Langham et al. 2015) but for which the park is a potential refuge. Monitoring to identify changes in bird communities will inform the selection of appropriate management responses.

that affect demography, biotic interactions that inhibit and facilitate species' colonization or extirpation, dispersal capacity, species' evolutionary adaptive capacity, and phenotypic plasticity (e.g., behavioral adjustments). Ultimately, models can tell us where to focus our concern and which species are most likely to be affected, but monitoring is the only way to validate these projections and should inform any on-the-ground conservation action.

## More Information

For more information, including details on the methods, please see the scientific publication ([Wu et al. 2018](#)) and the [project overview brief](#), and visit the [NPS Climate Change Response Program website](#).

### References

eBird Basic Dataset (2016) Version: ebd\_relAug-2016. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.

Langham et al. (2015) Conservation Status of North American Birds in the Face of Future Climate Change. PLOS ONE.

Wu et al. (2018) Projected avifaunal responses to climate change across the U.S. National Park System. PLOS ONE.

### Contacts

Gregor Schuurman, Ph.D.  
Ecologist, NPS Climate Change Response Program  
970-267-7211, [gregor\\_schuurman@nps.gov](mailto:gregor_schuurman@nps.gov)

Joanna Wu  
Biologist, National Audubon Society  
415-644-4610, [science@audubon.org](mailto:science@audubon.org)

## Species Projections

Table 1. Climate suitability projections by 2050 under the high-emissions pathway for all birds currently present at the Monument based on both NPS Inventory & Monitoring Program data and eBird observation data, plus those species for which climate at the Monument is projected to become suitable in the future. "Potential colonization" indicates that climate is projected to become suitable for the species, whereas "potential extirpation" indicates that climate is suitable today but projected to become unsuitable. Omitted species were either not modeled due to data deficiency or were absent from the I&M and eBird datasets. Observations of late-season migrants may result in these species appearing as present in the park when they may only migrate through. Species are ordered according to taxonomic groups, denoted by alternating background shading.

\* Species in top and bottom 10th percentile of absolute change

^ Species that are highly climate sensitive

- Species not found or found only occasionally, and not projected to colonize by 2050

x Species not modeled in this season

Common Name	Summer Trend	Winter Trend
Mallard	Potential extirpation <sup>^</sup>	-
Blue-winged Teal	-	Potential colonization
Northern Shoveler	-	Improving
Green-winged Teal	-	Stable
Ring-necked Duck	-	Improving
Greater Scaup	-	Potential colonization <sup>^</sup>
Bufflehead	-	Improving
Hooded Merganser	-	Potential colonization <sup>^</sup>
Ruddy Duck	Stable	-
Gambel's Quail	Stable	Stable
Pied-billed Grebe	x	Improving
Wood Stork	Potential colonization	-
American Bittern	-	Potential colonization <sup>^</sup>

Common Name	Summer Trend	Winter Trend
Great Egret	-	Potential colonization
Cattle Egret	Potential colonization	-
Green Heron	Improving	Potential colonization
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Potential colonization	-
Golden Eagle	-	Stable
Northern Harrier	-	Stable
Harris's Hawk	Potential colonization	Potential colonization
Swainson's Hawk	Stable <sup>^</sup>	-
Red-tailed Hawk	Stable	Stable
Rough-legged Hawk	-	Potential extirpation
Common Gallinule	-	Potential colonization
American Avocet	-	Potential colonization <sup>^</sup>

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Summer Trend</b>	<b>Winter Trend</b>
Mountain Plover	Potential colonization	-
Spotted Sandpiper	-	Potential colonization
Long-billed Curlew	-	Potential colonization
Dunlin	-	Potential colonization <sup>^</sup>
Least Sandpiper	-	Potential colonization
Gull-billed Tern	-	Potential colonization
Eurasian Collared-Dove	x	Improving
White-winged Dove	Potential colonization	Potential colonization
Mourning Dove	Stable	Improving
Inca Dove	Potential colonization	-
Lesser Nighthawk	Potential colonization	-
Common Pauraque	-	Potential colonization
White-throated Swift	x	Potential colonization
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Stable	-
Anna's Hummingbird	-	Potential colonization
Costa's Hummingbird	Potential colonization	-
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	Potential colonization	-
Northern Flicker	-	Worsening
Gilded Flicker	Potential colonization	Potential colonization
Gray Flycatcher	-	Potential colonization
Dusky Flycatcher	-	Potential colonization
Black Phoebe	Improving	-
Say's Phoebe	Stable	-
Vermilion Flycatcher	-	Potential colonization

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Summer Trend</b>	<b>Winter Trend</b>
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Improving	-
Brown-crested Flycatcher	Potential colonization	-
Cassin's Kingbird	Stable	-
Western Kingbird	Stable	-
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Potential colonization	-
Bell's Vireo	Potential colonization	-
Hutton's Vireo	-	Potential colonization
Warbling Vireo	Potential extirpation	-
Pinyon Jay	Potential extirpation	Worsening*
California/Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (Western Scrub-Jay)	Potential extirpation	Worsening*
Common Raven	Potential extirpation	Potential extirpation
Horned Lark	Potential extirpation	Worsening*
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Stable	Potential colonization
Violet-green Swallow	Worsening	Potential colonization
Cave Swallow	Potential colonization	-
Oak/Juniper Titmouse (Plain Titmouse)	-	Worsening*
Verdin	Potential colonization	-
Bushtit	Worsening	Worsening*
Rock Wren	Worsening*	-
House Wren	-	Potential colonization
Bewick's Wren	Stable	-
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Stable	-
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	Potential colonization	Potential colonization
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Stable	Improving

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Summer Trend</b>	<b>Winter Trend</b>
Townsend's Solitaire	Stable^	Stable
American Robin	Stable	Worsening
Bendire's Thrasher	-	Potential colonization
LeConte's Thrasher	Potential colonization	-
Crissal Thrasher	Potential colonization	-
Sage Thrasher	Potential extirpation	-
Northern Mockingbird	Stable	Improving*
European Starling	Stable	Stable
Sprague's Pipit	-	Potential colonization
Phainopepla	-	Potential colonization
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	Potential colonization
Lucy's Warbler	Potential colonization	-
Common Yellowthroat	-	Potential colonization
Yellow Warbler	Stable	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Stable	-
Black-throated Gray Warbler	-	Potential colonization
Yellow-breasted Chat	Potential colonization	-
Abert's Towhee	Potential colonization	-
Cassin's Sparrow	-	Potential colonization
Chipping Sparrow	Potential extirpation	-
Brewer's Sparrow	Stable	-

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Summer Trend</b>	<b>Winter Trend</b>
Vesper Sparrow	-	Potential colonization
Lark Sparrow	Worsening*	Potential colonization
Black-throated Sparrow	Stable	-
Henslow's Sparrow	-	Potential colonization
Song Sparrow	-	Stable
White-crowned Sparrow	-	Stable
Dark-eyed Junco	x	Worsening
Summer Tanager	Potential colonization	-
Western Tanager	Potential extirpation	-
Northern Cardinal	-	Potential colonization
Pyrrhuloxia	Potential colonization	-
Blue Grosbeak	Improving*	-
Lazuli Bunting	Potential extirpation	-
Painted Bunting	Potential colonization	-
Eastern Meadowlark	-	Potential colonization
Bronzed Cowbird	Potential colonization	Potential colonization
Brown-headed Cowbird	Improving	-
Bullock's Oriole	Stable	-
Scott's Oriole	Improving	-
House Finch	Stable	Stable
Lesser Goldfinch	Stable	-
House Sparrow	x	Potential extirpation