



Inventory and Monitoring Program

Biological Inventories:

Discovering the Region's Natural Resources

The National Park Service is implementing a nationwide Inventory and Monitoring (I & M) Program at over 270 National Parks. Participating parks have been grouped based on ecological and / or regional similarities. These groups of parks (32 total) are commonly referred to as networks. The National Capital Region contains a single network, the National Capital Region Network, and is composed of 11 parks (Antietam National Battlefield (ANTI), Catocin Mountain Park (CATO), C&O Canal National Historical Park (CHOH), George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), Harper's Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE), Manassas National Battlefield (MANA), Monocacy National Battlefield (MONO), National Capital Parks - East (NACE), Prince William Forest Park (PRWI), Rock Creek Park (ROCR), and Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts (WOTR)).

Parks of the National Capital Region Network represent critical natural areas within a fragmented landscape. They provide a refuge for many species, and serve as a migration or movement rest stop for wildlife. However, basic biological information, including plant and animal inventories, is lacking for many of the parks. The National Capital Region Network received funding through the Natural Resource Challenge in 2000 to begin inventories of vertebrates and vascular plants within the network.

The National Capital Region Network established three goals for the biological inventories:

- Document at least 90% of vertebrate and vascular plant species in the network parks through field investigations and existing (historical and recent) data.
- Gather additional information on distribution and abundance for species of high priority to a park.
- Provide baseline information needed to develop a long-term monitoring strategy tailored to specific park threats and resource issues.



Volunteers conduct an avian survey as part of the bird inventory at Manassas National Battlefield (Photo by Paula Sullivan).



The Jefferson salamander was just one of many species identified during the amphibian and reptile inventory.

In order to achieve the network goals, inventories of amphibians and reptiles, birds, fish, mammals (bats separately), and vascular plants are being conducted in select parks. In many cases, the inventories are being conducted by academic and research institutions through established cooperative agreements. In all instances, the approach taken was to provide quality information in the most cost-effective manner.

Biological Inventories (Year begun; Status; Cooperator):

Amphibian and Reptiles (2002; Ongoing; University of Pittsburgh).

Parks: CATO, CHOH, GWMP, HAFE, MANA, MONO, ROCR, and WOTR

Birds (2001; Ongoing; Volunteer program).

Parks: ANTI, CATO, MANA, PRWI, HAFE, and WOTR

Fish (2002; Ongoing; Frostburg State University).

Parks: ANTI, CHOH, GWMP, HAFE, MONO, and WOTR

Mammals (2001; Completed; Smithsonian Institution).

Parks: ANTI, CATO, CHOH, GWMP, HAFE, NACE, ROCR, and WOTR

Bats (2003; Ongoing; University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science).

Parks: ANTI, CATO, CHOH, GWMP, HAFE, MANA, MONO, NACE, ROCR, and WOTR

Vascular Plants (2003; Ongoing; George Mason University and University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science).

Parks: ANTI, MONO, PRWI, and WOTR

All inventories are to be completed by 2005.