



Species Lists

Background

An important function of the National Park Service (NPS) is protecting and maintaining the level of biological diversity found within parks. Park managers, planners, and scientists require basic information on the status of species occurring in parks as a basis for making decisions and working with other agencies, the scientific community, and the public for the long-term protection of park ecosystems. As one of the 12 core natural resource inventories, the I&M program provided parks with funding and technical assistance to compile existing data and to undertake targeted field investigations to document the occurrence of at least 90 percent of the species of vascular plants and vertebrates (birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles) currently estimated to occur in parks.

Products

The core of the Species Lists inventory is the NPSpecies information system. This system is a compilation of existing species lists and evidence records (vouchers, scientific documents, and observation records that support the species occurrences) for vertebrates and vascular plants in more than 270 parks with significant natural resources. The data are quality-checked and certified by subject-matter experts.

NPSpecies includes standardized information associated with the occurrence of species in parks, including scientific names and their synonyms, common names, abundance, residency, nativity, T&E status, and reasons why a species may be of particular management interest to a park.

The certified species lists and supporting evidence records in NPSpecies support NPS staff and collaborators at the park, network, regional, and national levels by managing fundamental park-level species information, and making this information available to other applications and databases for more specialized analyses.

Status

In 2011, the NPSpecies information system was moved to a web-based information management platform known as IRMA (Integrated Resource Management Applications), accessible at <http://nrinfo.nps.gov>. This move has vastly increased the ease of access to NPSpecies data.

Within IRMA, a variety of searching and reporting options are available for NPSpecies, including the ability to:

- view a park species record and a list of all other NPS units in which the species is reported
- view park species and their USFWS Endangered Species Act status, as well as any state species-of-concern status
- view lists of species that are ozone-sensitive
- view the NatureServe Global Conservation Ranks of park species
- view the associated taxonomic hierarchy for any species
- easily and quickly view and download a park species list.



Cascade frogs (*Rana cascadae*) at Crater Lake National Park. The floating plants are a new species (*Eleocharis acicularis*) added to the park during the biological inventories..

NPSpecies also leverages a sophisticated taxonomic application within IRMA that allows species list customization to accommodate local naming conventions or preferences. It also allows multiple taxonomic sources, such as ITIS (Integrated Taxonomic Information System) or USDA PLANTS.

Species list edits and additions are managed through designated NPS Points of Contact, which ensures that records are carefully vetted, documented, and evaluated before entered into the system.

The initial work to produce certified species lists was completed in 2008. Up to this point the focus of NPSpecies has been limited to vertebrates and vascular plants because of data availability and funding constraints; however, the data system is now designed to manage information for all taxa and all parks in NPS. Development and expansion of NPSpecies data will be a continual process as NPS obtains funding and develops partnerships to conduct additional inventories of different species groups.

More Information

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