

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

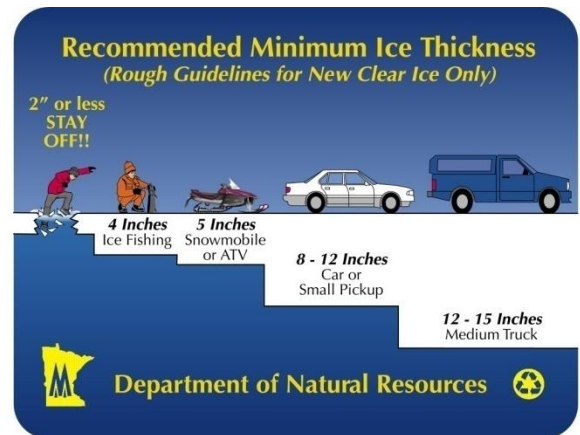


Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 January 2015

Snow & Ice Conditions

As of January 15, there was a good layer of ice on Indian Lake—at least 13 inches of good ice on the north end of the lake and 8 inches of poorer ice next. Ice fishing is allowed only on non-trout waters which include Indian and Narrow Lakes, Indian Pond, and Mud Lake. Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page: <http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/weather.aspx>.

Remember, always test ice depths on each water body before ice fishing. Areas near islands and areas above water flow tend to have thinner ice. (e.g., where the Indian River flows through Indian and Narrow Lakes, West Creek near Putney Lane, and streams in the Pleasant Creek and Trout Brook watersheds.) If you'd like to share your ice fishing or other outdoor stories and photographs with us, please send an e-mail to fortdrum@isportsman.net.



Mammals

Signs of mammals are easier to find this time of year than the mammals themselves. The snow in January was perfect for wildlife tracking. Bobcat, deer, snowshoe hare, and coyote tracks are among the several you can see in the training area this time of year. Check the NYSDEC for wildlife signs during winter: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/40343.html> and <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/40342.html>.

A bobcat was observed on January 22 near Angling Site 6 crouched next to Black Creek.

The Predator Project initiated on Fort Drum's Cantonment Area this summer/fall continues. A total of 13 foxes were trapped and 8 animals were radio collared—7 red fox and 1 gray fox. No coyotes were captured—in fact, they have been rarely seen in the Cantonment Area since the summer. One male red fox trapped and radio-collared on Fort Drum was recently found living in Watertown. The project will continue with trapping to start again in the spring when temperatures warm up.



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Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 January 2015 (continued)

Birds

There are few birds to report this month, partly because few birds are around at this time of year, and partly because Fort Drum biologists spend little time in the field during the dead of winter. However, there were a few surprises. An informal waterfowl survey in the Cantonment Area turned up the most unusual birds of the month, including a pair of Green-winged Teal and a single American Coot among the more typical Canada Geese, American Black Ducks, and Mallards. Generally speaking birding has been much better in the Cantonment than in the Training Areas, with additional Cantonment sightings including Red-bellied Woodpecker and White-throated Sparrows along West Creek. The most notable sightings in the Training Areas include an adult Bald Eagle seen over TA5D on 15 January, at least two continuing Snowy Owls in TAs 12 and 13, and a few small flocks of Common Redpolls moving around the installation's gray birch woodlands.

Species observed on Fort Drum from January 5 - January 23:

Canada Goose	Northern Shrike
American Black Duck	Blue Jay
Mallard	American Crow
Green-winged Teal	Common Raven
Ruffed Grouse	Black-capped Chickadee
Wild Turkey	White-breasted Nuthatch
Bald Eagle	American Robin
Cooper's Hawk	European Starling
Red-tailed Hawk	Cedar Waxwing
Rough-legged Hawk	Snow Bunting
American Coot	American Tree Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	White-throated Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Dark-eyed Junco
Snowy Owl	Northern Cardinal
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Common Redpoll
Downy Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Hairy Woodpecker	House Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 February 2015

Snow & Ice Conditions

Cold has been the order of every day in February. Indian Lake ice measurements were over 40”—the most since we began taking regular measurements in 2011. Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page: <http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/weather.aspx>

Birds

February is often the slowest month of the year for birding in northern New York, as the cumulative effects of prolonged cold and deep snow takes its toll on the already small number of birds that occur here during the cold months. This February has been especially slow, as many species seemed to be present in unusually low numbers to start the winter, and have been very hard to find over the past few weeks. Typical wintering species such as Northern Shrike, Snow Bunting, and American Tree Sparrow have been scarce all winter, and have gone virtually undetected on Fort Drum since mid-January, although at least a few must be present somewhere on the installation. In contrast, Snowy Owls are nearly as common this winter as they were during the previous, record-setting winter, and if anything have increased in abundance in Training Areas 12 and 13 recently. Bald Eagles have also been very conspicuous during the past month, with adults and immatures seen overhead all over Fort Drum and nearby areas. As is the case any year, a few individuals of species that normally vacate northern New York decided to stay for the winter, including one American Coot, one Northern Pintail, and a pair of Green-winged Teal using a series of spring-fed ponds in the Cantonment Area, and the continuing Red-headed Woodpeckers in Training Area 5D that have been present for the third winter in a row. The rarest find of the past month was a Hoary Redpoll observed in TA11B with at least 70 Common Redpolls on 11 February. Although it is an irruption year for redpolls, numbers are fairly low this winter, but there are a few flocks wandering around Fort Drum’s birch woodlands, presumably with a small number of Hoary Redpolls mixed in.

Species observed on Fort Drum from January 26 - February 24:

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker
American Black Duck	Hairy Woodpecker
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Pintail	Blue Jay
Green-winged Teal	American Crow
Ruffed Grouse	Common Raven
Wild Turkey	Black-capped Chickadee
Bald Eagle	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Cooper’s Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-tailed Hawk	European Starling
Rough-legged Hawk	American Tree Sparrow
American Coot	Dark-eyed Junco
Rock Pigeon	Northern Cardinal
Mourning Dove	Common Redpoll
Snowy Owl	Hoary Redpoll
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	House Sparrow



Snowy Owl on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 March 2015

Weather Conditions

The transition from winter to spring has begun! Most Fort Drum streams are free of snow and ice and the ones that aren't will be soon. However, most lakes still have a thin layer of ice on their surface. Snow amounts in the training areas vary and small patches of bare land can be seen. Snow melt and new vegetation growth are important for animals coming out of a long winter hibernation. A woodchuck was seen the second week of March searching for food. Skunks and raccoons have also been seen wandering along road edges, probably in search of food. Birds that typically migrate south for the winter have begun returning. Keep your eyes open and your ears alert for other animals that indicate an end to the long winter.

Fish

With early spring come three exciting events in the world of fisheries. The first and second events are the spawning of Walleye and Northern Pike which typically happen soon after ice-out. Both broadcast-spawning fish are known to spawn in the Indian River on Fort Drum. Northern Pike typically spawn over submerged streamside vegetation which their eggs cling to while the walleye prefer to spawn over gravel or other small rock in shallow waters. Both Northern Pike and Walleye seasons closed on March 15 and will reopen on Saturday, May 2. By this date, all Northern Pike and Walleye spawning activity should have ended. The third event is the spring opener of trout season on April 1. There have been some changes in trout fishing regulations this year that go into effect on April 1. See the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation web site for more information on regulation changes.

Birds

It is officially spring, but the northbound bird migration has barely started, and local birdlife still has a distinct winter feel. Most typical wintering species can still be found on Fort Drum as of 25 March, although many individuals appear to have departed. For instance Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls are still present, but are much tougher to find than they were during February and early March, and there have been no sightings of Common Redpoll since 10 March. One winter species that was not seen earlier made an appearance on 25 February, when a flock of about 120 Bohemian Waxwings turned up along Pleasant Road.

The long and very cold winter likely resulted in high mortality for birds and other wildlife. In December and early January many sparrows were found in several locations on Fort Drum where they were not seen again after the start of seriously cold weather later in January. Many of these birds presumably perished unless they were able to find bird feeders to get them through the winter. An American Coot that wintered on a spring-fed pond in the Cantonment almost made it through the winter, but on 3 March seemed to be in poor health and was not found on the next visit on 9 March. The Northern Pintail and pair of Green-winged Teal that were also seen regularly on this same pond apparently survived the winter. It seems reasonable to expect low abundance this summer of many resident species of birds and other animals.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 March 2015 (continued)

Birds (cont.)

Given the general scarcity of birds this past month, it shouldn't be surprising that there were few notable sightings. Among the exceptions not mentioned above were several Common Goldeneye and one Common Merganser that appeared on very small patches of open water on Fort Drum streams in late February and early March; these ducks were presumably frozen out of other bodies of water and desperately searching for someplace to feed that was not frozen over. On 13 March a Northern Goshawk was seen flying over FUSA Boulevard. Several Bald Eagles were seen this period, as this species made an unprecedented showing throughout inland portions of northern New York.



Common Goldeneye
(Image: US Fish & Wildlife Service)

So far spring migration has barely been noticeable, which is probably a good thing given the persistent cold, snowy conditions. During many years large numbers of geese, ducks, Turkey Vultures, Killdeer, Song Sparrows and blackbirds would be present by 15-20 March, and although a very small trickle of these species has been noted, most are just starting to arrive in very modest numbers as of 25 March. With the early spring migration being bottled up by poor weather, the next warm spell could bring large numbers of birds north, especially if it is accompanied by strong southerly winds.

Species observed on Fort Drum 25 February to 25 March:

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker
American Black Duck	Hairy Woodpecker
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Pintail	Northern Shrike
Green-winged Teal	Blue Jay
Common Goldeneye	American Crow
Common Merganser	Common Raven
Ruffed Grouse	Horned Lark
Wild Turkey	Black-capped Chickadee
Turkey Vulture	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Bald Eagle	White-breasted Nuthatch
Cooper's Hawk	American Robin
Northern Goshawk	European Starling
Red-tailed Hawk	Bohemian Waxwing
Rough-legged Hawk	Snow Bunting
American Coot	Song Sparrow
Killdeer	Common Redpoll
Ring-billed Gull	House Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	
Mourning Dove	
Snowy Owl	

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 April 2015

Fish

Both Walleye and Northern Pike were seen in their Indian River spawning grounds during the middle of the month when river water temperatures were 51.2 °F. This temperature is higher than the preferred spawning range for walleye, so walleye spawning had likely already occurred even though a few individuals remained on the grounds. Staging for the Northern Pike happened near the beginning of the month when patchy surface ice still covered portions of the River. An interesting [video of downriver walleye spawning](#) taken at Rossie, NY by a NYSDEC officer has been posted on-line.

Trout fishing season opened on April 1st. Until area creeks are stocked, the best bets for trout fishing on Fort Drum are on Quarry Pond, Trout Brook, and Pleasant Creek headwater tributaries. Because of the long winter, state stocking operations are delayed by approximately 2 weeks this year, pushing Fort Drum stocking into May. We will post the stocking locations on the web site after stocking occurs. Remember that the trout regulations have changed this year with a 5 fish per day with no more than 2 trout over 12" retention limit.

Black Bass fishing of any kind remains closed in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties until June 20, 2015. Catch-and-release bass fishing in Lewis County is permitted outside of the regular season using artificial lures only. Some of Fort Drum's best bass fishing sites are located in Lewis County including Indian Pond, Indian Lake, Narrow Lake and Mud Lake.

High stream levels accompanied this year's snow melt. Flood conditions on the Indian River below FUSA Boulevard allowed direct paddling between the Indian River and Narrow Lake. Canoeing and kayaking the river to the lakes become more challenging as waters subside and large downed logs become evident, requiring portaging.

Birds

The spring bird migration got off to a late start in March, and has been mostly sluggish ever since. Migrants that often arrive to northern New York in good numbers by 10-15 March remained scarce until a large push of birds came through 29 March to 3 April, including the first large flocks of Snow Geese and numerous Great Blue Herons, Killdeer, Turkey Vultures, Horned Larks, American Robins, and blackbirds, and even a few Pine Siskins. New arrivals have mostly trickled



This time of year, high waters on the Indian River at FUSA Boulevard make for easy paddling to Indian and Narrow Lakes.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 April 2015 (continued)

Birds (cont.)

in at a slow pace for most of April, thanks to predominantly northerly winds, except for about a week starting 11 April when southerly winds brought many new arrivals, including Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Barn Swallow, Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers, and Field, Savannah, Vesper, Swamp, and Fox Sparrows. Nearly all of these species arrived at or later than historic average arrival dates, but a Northern Waterthrush found on Plank Road 23 April was a record early arrival for Fort Drum.

Despite the generally slow pace of migration, there have been a few interesting sightings. On 26 March 2 Red Crossbills were seen picking up grit on Lake School Road near Route 3A, for the only observation of this species in many months. On 30 March an immature Golden Eagle flew over U.S. Military Highway near Woods Mill Road. The last Snowy Owl observation of the year was on 3 April near Antwerp Road. Also on 3 April, 2 Cackling Geese passed over TA17B during a large flight of Snow and Canada Geese, along with a possible Greater White-fronted Goose, and a flock of 21 Bohemian Waxwings was seen near Pleasant Road. On 28 April an immature Northern Goshawk carrying a Wood Duck was flushed off Plank Road, where it had been tearing the feathers out of the duck. Also on 28 April, at least three Rough-legged Hawks remaining in TA12, where this species often persists long after nearly all other “Roughies” have departed New York for the season.

Birds observed on Fort Drum 25 March – 28 April:

Snow Goose	Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird
Cackling Goose	Herring Gull	Hermit Thrush
Canada Goose	Rock Pigeon	American Robin
Wood Duck	Mourning Dove	European Starling
American Black Duck	Eastern Screech-Owl	Bohemian Waxwing
Mallard	Snowy Owl	Northern Waterthrush
Northern Pintail	Barred Owl	Pine Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Belted Kingfisher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Red-headed Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Bufflehead	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Chipping Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Downy Woodpecker	Vesper Sparrow
Common Merganser	Hairy Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Pileated Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey	American Kestrel	Swamp Sparrow
Common Loon	Merlin	White-throated Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Shrike	Dark-eyed Junco
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Phoebe	Northern Cardinal
Turkey Vulture	Blue Jay	Red-winged Blackbird
Bald Eagle	American Crow	Rusty Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Common Grackle
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Horned Lark	Brown-headed Cowbird
Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow	Purple Finch
Northern Goshawk	Barn Swallow	House Finch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Red Crossbill
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Common Redpoll
Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Pine Siskin
Rough-legged Hawk	Brown Creeper	American Goldfinch
Golden Eagle	House Wren	House Sparrow
Killdeer	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
American Woodcock	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 May 2015

Birds

Bird migration was mostly very slow through most of April, but started picking up during the last few days of the month, and by 4 May large numbers of birds were starting to arrive on Fort Drum. Several substantial waves of migrants appeared during the subsequent two weeks, and by the middle of the month nearly all of Fort Drum's breeding bird species had arrived, although a few species remained relatively scarce until after 20 or 25 May. Most of Fort Drum's regularly-occurring breeding species have been observed this month, the primary exceptions being such scarce nesters as Least Bittern and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Sedge Wren, a species that often doesn't arrive until June or even July.

Migration through the first half of May was steady, with few very large waves but a nice mix of migrants present most days. The heaviest movements noted were on 4 May, when more than a dozen new species were observed for the year, including the first Henslow's Sparrow in TA 12 the first double-digit day for warbler species. Another nice push was noted on 13 May in TA6A, including such species as Brant, Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Migration has been much slower since 22 May, although Blackpoll and Tennessee Warblers have been heard most days, an Olive-sided Flycatcher was in TA14 on 26 May, and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was in TA 3A on 27 May.

A few unusual species were seen in May, the highlight being a White-eyed Vireo in TA8C on 21 May that unfortunately was not observed again. This was the first White-eyed Vireo ever found on Fort Drum, and one of only a handful of records for northern New York. Less unusual but still noteworthy were several flocks of Red Crossbills found in various areas of Fort Drum on four days in May, and an Orchard Oriole chasing a Cooper's Hawk in TA6A on 13 May.



White-eyed Vireo in Training Area 8C on 21 May 2015.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 May 2015 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum April 28 – May 27:

Canada Goose	Olive-sided Flycatcher	American Redstart
Wood Duck	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Cerulean Warbler
Mallard	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Northern Parula
Hooded Merganser	Alder Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Willow Flycatcher	Bay-breasted Warbler
Wild Turkey	Least Flycatcher	Blackburnian Warbler
Common Loon	Eastern Phoebe	Yellow Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Great Crested Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
American Bittern	Eastern Kingbird	Blackpoll Warbler
Great Blue Heron	White-eyed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Green Heron	Yellow-throated Vireo	Palm Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Blue-headed Vireo	Pine Warbler
Osprey	Warbling Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Bald Eagle	Red-eyed Vireo	Prairie Warbler
Northern Harrier	Blue Jay	Black-throated Green Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	American Crow	Canada Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Common Raven	Wilson's Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Horned Lark	Eastern Towhee
Broad-winged Hawk	Tree Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Clay-colored Sparrow
Rough-legged Hawk	Bank Swallow	Field Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Barn Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Common Gallinule	Black-capped Chickadee	Savannah Sparrow
Killdeer	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Grasshopper Sparrow
Upland Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Henslow's Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Brown Creeper	Song Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	House Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Woodcock	Winter Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird	White-crowned Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Veery	Dark-eyed Junco
Eastern Screech-Owl	Swainson's Thrush	Scarlet Tanager
Great Horned Owl	Hermit Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Barred Owl	Wood Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Short-eared Owl	American Robin	Indigo Bunting
Common Nighthawk	Gray Catbird	Bobolink
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Northern Mockingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Chimney Swift	Brown Thrasher	Eastern Meadowlark
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	European Starling	Rusty Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	American Pipit	Common Grackle
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Brown-headed Cowbird
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Ovenbird	Orchard Oriole
Downy Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	Baltimore Oriole
Hairy Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Purple Finch
Pileated Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	House Finch
American Kestrel	Black-and-white Warbler	Red Crossbill
	Tennessee Warbler	Pine Siskin
	Nashville Warbler	American Goldfinch
	Mourning Warbler	House Sparrow
	Common Yellowthroat	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 Jun 2015

Fish

The beginning of June was atypically dry causing unusually low stream water levels. This changed near the end of summer and especially on the 23rd of June when local flooding was apparent in many Fort Drum streams. Flooding often causes bank erosion and suspension of sediments which can harm the fragile gills of fish. This is especially true of fish that live in fast flowing waters. It can also wash fish with poor swimming ability downstream. Positive effects of flooding include inundation of stream banks full of a fairly untapped food supply of terrestrial invertebrates. Not only do these invertebrates wash into the main channel of streams, they are also directly accessible to fish that swim into their habitat seeking refuge from high mid-channel water flows.

Black Bass season opened for the year on June 19. This popular fishery is the last freshwater fishery to open for the year. The FREE FISHING weekend (June 27-28) is a great opportunity for all to enjoy fishing New York State waters because no state fishing license is needed to fish. If you are accessing Fort Drum training areas to fish, you will need a Fort Drum Recreational Access Pass and must follow Fort Drum Regulation 420-3 available on the web site.



A male Pumpkinseed guards its nest at Quarry Pond at the beginning of June. The majority of sunfish spawning is over for the year.

Mammals

This year the Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program is collaborating with Cornell University to study the survival of white-tailed deer fawns in the Cantonment Area. Radio-collars are being placed on the fawns and tracked over time to gather information on their movements and whether they survive, or determine what caused their death.

Fourteen fawns have been found in the Cantonment Area. The first fawn was found on May 24, only a few hours after his birth in the Nancy Drive community. The last fawn captured was on June 25 on St. Lawrence Avenue. Fittingly, the 10th fawn was found on the fields near division headquarters and his home range includes many of the memorials in that area. As of June 25th our oldest fawn is 35 days old, and our youngest is 8 days old. To date, one fawn was killed by a predator and one was killed by a car.



Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 Jun 2015 (continued)

Birds

Migration was largely over by 28 May, with only a small number of obvious migrants observed after that date. The most surprising birds of this period were both seen on 29 May, the first being an apparent Connecticut Warbler heard singing in TA13A but that unfortunately stopped singing and could not be found for a visual confirmation. Connecticut Warblers are very rare migrants through New York in the spring, and there is only one prior spring record for Fort Drum. Later that day an immature Golden Eagle soaring over TA16 was harassed by a Sharp-shinned Hawk that looked very tiny by comparison. After this date a very few Tennessee and Blackpoll Warblers were observed on Fort Drum, but no other signs of migration were noted.

As usual Red-headed Woodpeckers are nesting in TAs 5B and 5D, as well as in a couple of adjacent areas that are not usually open for recreation. Several pairs currently have young in the nests that are nearly ready to fledge, and at least one nest has probably fledged. The easiest place to see a Red-headed Woodpecker this year is along the north side of the Main Tank Trail just east of Bagram Road (look north about 200 yards east of the concrete circle at the intersection of these two roads). Sometimes a Red-headed Woodpecker can be seen from the road here.

A graduate student from the University of Massachusetts is studying Eastern Whip-poor-will habitat use on Fort Drum this year, so we should have excellent survey data for this species by the end of the season. Unfortunately, persistently poor weather has made it difficult to survey nightjars so far this year. Many whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks can be found in sandy areas throughout the southern portion of Fort Drum, such as around the airfield. A convenient place to listen for both species is where State Highway 3A passes between TAs 7D and 7G, immediately east of the railroad track crossing. Many Vesper Sparrows and a few Grasshopper Sparrows are also in the fields here, and both species are very common around the airfield and at other open areas on sandy soil. A few Upland Sandpipers occur around the airfield, but this species is usually very hard to find on Fort Drum.

Among the highlights of ongoing grassland bird surveys are at least two, probably three, and maybe even four or more pairs of Short-eared Owls (see photo on right), four Sedge Wrens, and five Henslow's Sparrows. At least five pairs of Northern Harriers have also been found in the large old fields in TAs 12 and 13, along with several American Bitterns and dozens of Clay-colored Sparrows. Visitors looking for these birds are reminded to stay on roads and trails so as to avoid stepping on nests or needlessly harassing ground-nesting birds.



Short-eared Owl nestlings on 16 Jun 2015.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 Jun 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Golden-winged Warbler surveys are finished for the season and results have not been completely tabulated, but more than 60 Golden-winged Warblers were observed on Fort Drum this season. Unfortunately, Blue-winged Warblers continue to increase, and in some areas have virtually completely replaced Golden-winged Warblers. Both species are mostly finished singing for the year, and finding a Golden-winged Warbler in late June or early July can be very difficult. The best chance of finding one is to walk around suitable habitat hoping for an adult feeding young. The western and central portions of Reedville Road is among the most likely places to find a Golden-winged Warbler on Fort Drum.

Cerulean Warblers have been found in two maple stands so far, one in the center of TA13A and one along Canfield Road north of OP5A. At least four or five males are in the latter area, and one has sometimes been observed foraging directly over the road. Depending on where they are coming from, visiting birders often want to see Mourning and/or Prairie Warblers, both of which can be found in TA6A. The Mourning Warbler occurs here in deciduous woods with a broken canopy and dense shrubby understory, and the Prairie Warbler in a large regenerating clearcut.

Species observed on Fort Drum May 28 – Jun 23:

Canada Goose	Belted Kingfisher	American Robin	Song Sparrow
Wood Duck	Red-headed Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	Swamp Sparrow
Mallard	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Northern Mockingbird	White-throated Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Downy Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Scarlet Tanager
Common Merganser	Hairy Woodpecker	European Starling	Northern Cardinal
Ruffed Grouse	Pileated Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wild Turkey	American Kestrel	Ovenbird	Indigo Bunting
Common Loon	Merlin	Northern Waterthrush	Bobolink
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Golden-winged Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
American Bittern	Alder Flycatcher	Blue-winged Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Great Blue Heron	Willow Flycatcher	"Brewster's Warbler"	Common Grackle
Green Heron	Least Flycatcher	"Lawrence's Warbler"	Brown-headed Cowbird
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Phoebe	Black-and-white Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Osprey	Great Crested Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Bald Eagle	Eastern Kingbird	Nashville Warbler	Purple Finch
Northern Harrier	Yellow-throated Vireo	CONNECTICUT WARBLER	House Finch
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Blue-headed Vireo	Mourning Warbler	Red Crossbill
Cooper's Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Common Yellowthroat	Pine Siskin
Northern Goshawk	Red-eyed Vireo	American Redstart	American Goldfinch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Blue Jay	Cerulean Warbler	House Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	American Crow	Magnolia Warbler	
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Raven	Blackburnian Warbler	
Golden Eagle	Tree Swallow	Yellow Warbler	
Killdeer	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Chestnut-sided Warbler	
Spotted Sandpiper	Bank Swallow	Blackpoll Warbler	
Upland Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Wilson's Snipe	Black-capped Chickadee	Pine Warbler	
American Woodcock	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch	Prairie Warbler	
Rock Pigeon	Brown Creeper	Black-throated Green Warbler	
Mourning Dove	House Wren	Canada Warbler	
Eastern Screech-Owl	Winter Wren	Eastern Towhee	
Great Horned Owl	Sedge Wren	Chipping Sparrow	
Barred Owl	Marsh Wren	Clay-colored Sparrow	
Short-eared Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Field Sparrow	
Common Nighthawk	Eastern Bluebird	Vesper Sparrow	
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Veery	Savannah Sparrow	
Chimney Swift	Hermit Thrush	Grasshopper Sparrow	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Wood Thrush	Henslow's Sparrow	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 Jul 2015

Fish

During the majority of July, the training areas have been closed to recreation. Mud Lake has still been accessible through Lake Bonaparte, which has provided a few recreationists with good fishing. Black Bass, Bluegill, and Pumpkinseeds were among the fish species caught last week by boaters on the lake. Fishing conditions in Mud Lake were generally good despite the abundant lilies, water milfoil, and water marigold floating near or on the water surface which tends to clog up boat motors and cause fishing tackle to frequently snag. Therefore I recommend staying in the more open areas of the lake.

Three invasive aquatic plant species have been found on Mud Lake. These include Eurasian Watermilfoil, Variable Watermilfoil, and a multicellular algae, Starry Stonewort. Be sure to clean all your fishing gear including tackle, boats, trailers, and boots of all aquatic plant and animal species before entering Lake Bonaparte and before leaving the launch site. The state of New York has made it illegal to transport aquatic vegetation overland in order to reduce invasive species introductions. Link to this website for more information about the new aquatic species transportation ban: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/98240.html> .

Mammals

This year the Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program is collaborating with Cornell University to study the survival of white-tailed deer fawns in the Cantonment Area. Radio-collars are being placed on the fawns and tracked over time to gather information on their movements and whether they survive, or determine what caused their death.

Seventeen fawns have been found and radio-collared in the Cantonment Area. Seventeen fawns have been radio-collared and only three have been killed by predators.

Birds

Late June and July is the period of the nesting season on Fort Drum when the largest number of species tend to fledge young, and juvenile birds have been conspicuous over the past few weeks. A walk just about anywhere on Fort Drum during this period turned up numerous juvenile birds and adults caring for young. Although in some ways this is the peak of the nesting season, hints of fall migration are already apparent.



Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 Jul 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Starting in late June, Yellow Warblers and Bobolinks—among the earliest species to start their southward migration following the nesting season—were increasingly heard flying overhead in areas where they do not nest, and by early July most Bobolinks on Fort Drum had gathered into pre-migratory flocks of up to 75-80 individuals. On 13 July two Solitary Sandpipers were seen on West Creek mudflats, representing the first certain “fall” migrants observed on Fort Drum this year.

Grassland birds continued to be the most noteworthy birds observed on Fort Drum this summer, especially the presence of at least three and possibly as many as five pairs of nesting Short-eared Owls. Earlier in June Short-eared Owl chicks were found in two locations in TA13A about 250 meters apart, and were thought to represent two different nests, although no more than one adult was ever seen in the immediate area. Additional pairs were consistently observed in two other locations in TA12, sometimes engaging in behavior strongly suggestive of local nesting, and on 8 July a fledged juvenile was found at one of these suspected nest sites. Upset Short-eared Owls were observed one time only in two additional locations, but repeated visits to these spots never yielded additional sightings, so currently it is suspected that either three or four pairs are present on the installation this summer.

Other noteworthy birds in the TA 12 and 13 grasslands include 7-9 singing male Henslow’s Sparrows, at least two of which were observed behaving as if they were near young; 8-9 singing male Sedge Wrens, most of which arrived on Fort Drum sometime after the third week of June and at least three of which were paired by 1 July; 7-11 pairs of Northern Harriers; and numerous Clay-colored Sparrows in several fields mostly well off roads. On 3 July surveys of several areas in TAs 12 and 13 with abundant high-quality habitat for Clay-colored Sparrows turned up 45 individuals, and would likely have yielded and even higher tally had it not been for a thunderstorm that interrupted survey work.

The other notable sighting of late July was a pair of agitated Upland Sandpipers in a sandplain grassland restoration site where this species had not been observed since the 1990s. Nearby were several Grasshopper Sparrows, including one carrying food, which also benefited from the restoration of grassland habitat at this site. Another upset Upland Sandpiper was found in an off-limits area near a range in TA 8.



Sedge Wren in Training Area Jun 2015.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 Jul 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Perhaps not notable to visiting birders from most of the northeastern United States but unusual for Fort Drum were one Red-bellied Woodpecker and two Tufted Titmice along West Creek in the Cantonment Area on 13 July. This area and TA6A are the only locations on Fort Drum where Red-bellied Woodpeckers have been found repeatedly over several years, although one or two are found elsewhere just about every year but then not seen again. Titmice are even rarer on Fort Drum, with most sightings coming in the fall that are suspected to represent dispersing birds. The fact that two were found together in July suggests that this species may finally be attempting to nest on the installation.

Species observed on Fort Drum June 25 – Jul 16:

Canada Goose	Hairy Woodpecker	Ovenbird
Wood Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
Mallard	American Kestrel	Golden-winged Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Merlin	Blue-winged Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Wood-Pewee	“Brewster’s Warbler”
Ruffed Grouse	Alder Flycatcher	“Lawrence’s Warbler”
Wild Turkey	Willow Flycatcher	Black-and-white Warbler
Common Loon	Least Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Phoebe	Mourning Warbler
American Bittern	Great Crested Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Kingbird	American Redstart
Green Heron	Yellow-throated Vireo	Cerulean Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Blue-headed Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Osprey	Warbling Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Bald Eagle	Red-eyed Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Northern Harrier	Blue Jay	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Cooper’s Hawk	American Crow	Pine Warbler
Northern Goshawk	Common Raven	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Tree Swallow	Prairie Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Bank Swallow	Canada Warbler
Killdeer	Barn Swallow	Eastern Towhee
Spotted Sandpiper	Black-capped Chickadee	Chipping Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	Tufted Titmouse	Clay-colored Sparrow
Upland Sandpiper	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Wilson’s Snipe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
American Woodcock	Brown Creeper	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	House Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Winter Wren	Henslow’s Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Sedge Wren	Song Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Marsh Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Barred Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	White-throated Sparrow
Short-eared Owl	Eastern Bluebird	Scarlet Tanager
Common Nighthawk	Veery	Northern Cardinal
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Hermit Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Chimney Swift	Wood Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	American Robin	Bobolink
Belted Kingfisher	Gray Catbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Common Grackle
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling	Brown-headed Cowbird
Downy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Baltimore Oriole
		Purple Finch
		House Finch
		American Goldfinch
		House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2015

Fish

Brown trout have been seen recently at angling sites 11 and 14 though most anglers fishing at site 14 have reported catching only creek chubs. A brown trout was captured by biologists in a reach of the Black Creek between Angling Sites 14 and 15.

Anglers have reported recent successes in rainbow trout fishing at Quarry Pond though none have been large sized trout stocked in previous years. Do you have any Fort Drum fishing stories or photos you'd like to share? If so, please e-mail them to: fortdrum@isportsman.net

Invertebrates

Rhyacophilidae or green sedges have recently been hatching in the Pleasant Creek drainage. These caddisflies are common in Pleasant Creek among the rocky riffle reaches. The following four photographs show a hatching caddisfly.



Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2015 (continued)

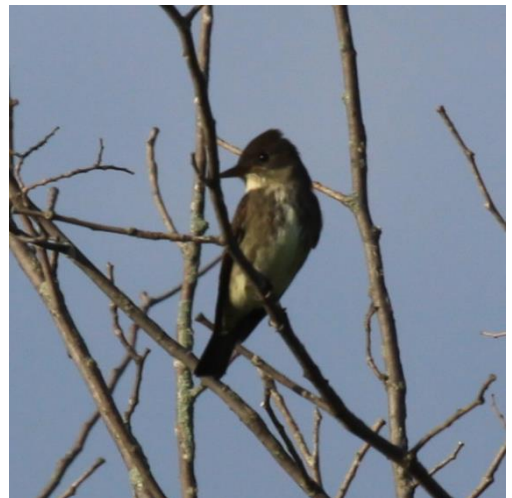
Birds

A few bird species have not yet completed their nesting seasons, for instance a Red-eyed Vireo was observed on the last day of August feeding young, but for many species migration had started by the beginning of August, and by the last week of the month a good variety of species were on the move. During many years late August is when some of the largest and most diverse flocks of migrating songbirds are seen on Fort Drum, but so far this year migrant flocks have seemed smaller than usual, perhaps because persistent southerly winds are preventing most birds from moving. Among the most frequently seen migrants during the last 10 days of the month included Least Flycatcher and Black-throated Green, Blackburnian Warblers, and Magnolia Warblers with smaller numbers of many other warbler species, including Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers. A few species peaked earlier in August and were already scarce on Fort Drum by 31 August, most notably Eastern Kingbird and Yellow Warbler.

Most grassland birds were very quiet and hard to find for most of August, although some sang well into the first week of the month. The last Henslow's Sparrow heard this season was singing in TA12B on 4 August, and on 6 August nine Sedge Wrens were heard in the same area, but none have been heard since. Upland Sandpipers were heard flying over the Training Area 12 fields on several dates in early August and were presumed to be migrating; Upland Sandpipers have not nested in this part of Fort Drum in many years. Several Short-eared Owls remain in these fields, but they apparently have not been active during daylight hours since shortly after their nests fledged young. Among the month's surprises was a Least Bittern in a small patch of cattails on the pond at Dogwood Road on 5 August. Also present in the cattails was one each Marsh Wren and Virginia Rail.

Numbers of Pied-billed Grebes and Common Gallinules fluctuate dramatically from year to year at Matoon Marsh in TA17B, and this year both seem to be present in unusually high numbers. On 17 August 19 Pied-billed Grebes were at Matoon, including two broods of two-each just-hatched chicks and another grebe was still on a nest. Several broods of grebes were found here a month earlier. Also on 17 August a total of 18 juvenile Common Gallinules were seen, including at least two broods of very young chicks and two broods of roughly month-old chicks, all tended by six adults.

Perhaps the most notable sighting of the month was an Olive-sided Flycatcher along FUSA Boulevard just south of Alpina Dam on 5 August. This is the first Olive-sided Flycatcher documented on Fort Drum between 15 June and 15 August, although it is certainly possible that this bird was an early migrant or wandering individual. Olive-sided Flycatchers have always been considered a possible but unlikely breeder on Fort Drum, with apparently suitable habitat in the northeastern portion of the installation (for instance the area where this bird was observed). However, nearly all breeding sites in New York are above 1000 feet in elevation, and Fort Drum is entirely below 1000 feet, so local nesting would be very unusual.



Olive-sided Flycatcher in Training Area 15C in May 2013.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum August 1 – August 31:

Canada Goose	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Golden-winged Warbler
Wood Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Pileated Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler
Green-winged Teal	American Kestrel	Nashville Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Merlin	Common Yellowthroat
Ruffed Grouse	Olive-sided Flycatcher	American Redstart
Wild Turkey	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Cape May Warbler
Common Loon	Alder Flycatcher	Northern Parula
Pied-billed Grebe	Willow Flycatcher	Blackburnian Warbler
American Bittern	Least Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler
Least Bittern	Eastern Phoebe	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Green Heron	Eastern Kingbird	Pine Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-throated Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Osprey	Blue-headed Vireo	Prairie Warbler
Bald Eagle	Warbling Vireo	Black-throated Green Warbler
Northern Harrier	Red-eyed Vireo	Canada Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Blue Jay	Eastern Towhee
Red-shouldered Hawk	American Crow	Chipping Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Common Raven	Clay-colored Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Tree Swallow	Field Sparrow
Common Gallinule	Barn Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Black-capped Chickadee	Savannah Sparrow
Killdeer	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Grasshopper Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Henslow's Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	Brown Creeper	Song Sparrow
Upland Sandpiper	House Wren	Swamp Sparrow
American Woodcock	Sedge Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Marsh Wren	Scarlet Tanager
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Cardinal
Mourning Dove	Veery	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Great Horned Owl	Hermit Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Barred Owl	Wood Thrush	Bobolink
Short-eared Owl	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Nighthawk	Gray Catbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Northern Mockingbird	Common Grackle
Chimney Swift	Brown Thrasher	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	European Starling	Baltimore Oriole
Belted Kingfisher	Cedar Waxwing	Purple Finch
Red-headed Woodpecker	Ovenbird	American Goldfinch
	Northern Waterthrush	House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 September 2015

Fall Foliage

Red maples and sumac are starting to change color on Fort Drum. Take advantage of living in the northeastern U.S. and check out fall foliage. For more information and a list of recommendations in the Adirondacks: <http://visitadirondecks.com/what-to-do/fall-foliage>.



Fish

In the North Country, the end of September coincides with the end of most trout fishing. It also marks the start of better salmon fishing on the Salmon River and Sandy Creek in Oswego County south of Fort Drum. Steelhead, Chinook Salmon, and Coho Salmon are among the species stocked in the region that typically run during the fall. For more information about fishing on the Salmon River, see the NYSDEC web site at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/37926.html>.

October is when female Brook Trout and Brown Trout begin building their redds, or nests, in which they will lay their eggs. Most spawning on Fort Drum takes place in mid-October through mid-November. Brook trout spawn over gravel, pebble and even sandy substrate, often near seeps or springs. West Creek, Trout Brook, Pleasant Creek, Black Creek, and the West Branch of Black Creek are all home to trout.

Birds

Although September is often considered the peak month for the southbound passage of migrating birds, field biologists on Fort Drum have observed relatively few birds this month. As is so often the case, the weather is the culprit here—this month's long series of clear, warm days with mostly light southerly winds has certainly been pleasant for people, but has prevented many large movements of migrating songbirds from developing. This is not necessarily bad for the birds—birdwatchers have often known that the best birding often occurs in the worst weather, frequently when weather conditions force migrating birds to the ground. The generally slow birding seen this month probably indicates that many birds moved southward at a slow, steady pace, and at least in this area were not grounded by poor weather.

(continued)



Ovenbird in Training Area 8C on September 21, 2015.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 September 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Some early-migrating bird species appear to have departed Fort Drum almost entirely before September even started. For instance, large numbers of Eastern Kingbirds and Baltimore Orioles were observed on the installation during the last week of August, but neither species was seen at all during September. The majority of Yellow Warblers had also departed by 1 September, although a few individuals persisted into the middle of the month. A group of at least 29 Common Nighthawks passing over Training Area 7D on 1 September was the last date this species was observed on Fort Drum this year.

Wood-warblers often make up the largest number of September migrants, but this fall the warbler migration has been slow. Nearly all of the usual species have been observed, except for Cape May Warbler which hasn't been seen on Fort Drum since late August, but daily counts of both species and numbers of individuals have been unusually low. The only real exceptions were on 4 September, when 17 species of warbler were observed in Training Area 6A, including double-digit counts for Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, and Chestnut-sided Warblers and Common Yellowthroat, and on 24 September, when a survey of Training Area 14C turned up 11 species of warbler including about 35 each Blackpoll and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Perhaps the most notable warbler sighting of the month was a very late Northern Waterthrush seen in Training Area 8C on 22 September, about two to three weeks later than the last sighting most years.



***Palm Warbler in Training Area 12C
on September 15, 2015***

Red-headed Woodpeckers were quite conspicuous in Training Areas 5B and 5D until about the third week of September, after which only one has been seen, and none were seen on an extended search of these areas on 28 September. Late September is about when the last Red-headed Woodpeckers leave Fort Drum for the winter most years, but several individuals spent the past three winters in these areas, something that had not been documented prior to 2012. Large acorn crops likely allowed these woodpeckers to survive the past few winters, and there seems to be another good acorn crop this year, so it seems possible that one or more Red-headed Woodpeckers could stay for another winter, although it certainly appears that most have left for the year.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 September 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum September 1 – September 28:

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Nashville Warbler
Wood Duck	Merlin	Mourning Warbler
Mallard	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Common Yellowthroat
Green-winged Teal	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	American Redstart
Hooded Merganser	Least Flycatcher	Northern Parula
Ruffed Grouse	Eastern Phoebe	Magnolia Warbler
Wild Turkey	Great Crested Flycatcher	Bay-breasted Warbler
Common Loon	Yellow-throated Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Blue-headed Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Warbling Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
American Bittern	Philadelphia Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Green Heron	Blue Jay	Palm Warbler
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	Pine Warbler
Osprey	Common Raven	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Bald Eagle	Tree Swallow	Prairie Warbler
Northern Harrier	Barn Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Canada Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Wilson's Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
Broad-winged Hawk	Brown Creeper	Chipping Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	House Wren	Clay-colored Sparrow
Common Gallinule	Marsh Wren	Field Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Vesper Sparrow
Killdeer	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Savannah Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs	Eastern Bluebird	Grasshopper Sparrow
American Woodcock	Veery	Song Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Swainson's Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Wood Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Barred Owl	American Robin	Scarlet Tanager
Short-eared Owl	Gray Catbird	Northern Cardinal
Common Nighthawk	Brown Thrasher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Eastern Whip-poor-will	European Starling	Indigo Bunting
Chimney Swift	American Pipit	Bobolink
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Cedar Waxwing	Red-winged Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	Lapland Longspur	Eastern Meadowlark
Red-headed Woodpecker	Ovenbird	Common Grackle
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Northern Waterthrush	Brown-headed Cowbird
Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	Purple Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 October 2015

Fall Foliage

October was a great month to appreciate the beauty of autumn. Maples were particularly brilliant this year. Leaves are still hanging on the trees, but wind the last week of October has knocked off many of them making visibility a little better.



Birds

Conforming to the pattern seen all fall, bird migration this past month was generally slow, with waterfowl being particularly scarce on Fort Drum. Although there have been a few modest Canada Goose flights, goose and duck numbers were quite low all month. The songbird migration was somewhat better, and some of the heaviest movements of the fall occurred during early October. Although songbird numbers and diversity dropped rapidly after the first week of the month, a few species were seen at unusually late dates during the second and third weeks of the month. By the last few days of October birds were becoming hard to find, as most migrant species had departed the area for the year, although several wintering species were just starting to move in.

The avian highlight of the month was a Lark Sparrow in Training Area 6A on 5 October, the first ever documented on Fort Drum. This Lark Sparrow was seen on a one-mile transect that also turned up 46 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, an excellent tally, and six warbler species including Tennessee, Nashville, Orange-crowned, Blackpoll, and Yellow-rumped Warblers and Common Yellowthroat. The fifth was the last date this year that more than five species of warblers were seen in one day on Fort Drum, but additional Orange-crowned Warblers were in TA6A on 15 and 16 October. Also seen on weekly walks along this transect were several species at unusually late dates for Fort Drum, including a Swainson's Thrush on 15 October, and a Blue-headed Vireo and Common Yellowthroat on 21 October. (continued)



Lark Sparrow
(photo: www.allaboutbirds.org)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 October 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

•Sparrows typically make up a large percentage of songbird migrants during October, and this month was no different. In addition to the Lark Sparrow, sparrows documented on Fort Drum this month included American Tree, Chipping, Field, Vesper, Savannah, Fox, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Junco. Training Area 5 often holds large numbers and high diversity of sparrows during September and October, but sparrows were generally scarce there this year. However, on 13 October two flocks totaling more than 100 Chipping Sparrows were in Training Area 5D, accompanied by at least one each Field and Vesper Sparrows, although the flocks appeared to contain almost nothing but Chipping Sparrow.

The first wintering birds started arriving on Fort Drum during the last week of October. The first Snow Bunting of the season was observed on FUSA Boulevard on 23 October, and was followed by observations of single individuals on several dates over the next week. On 27 October the first American Tree Sparrows of the season were present in Training Area 6A, and by 29 October this species was widespread on the installation. A Rough-legged Hawk in TA13A on 29 October was another first for the season. Large southward movements of Snowy Owls and Common Redpolls have been reported from parts of Canada and the Midwestern United States, and although none of these birds appear to have reached northern New York yet, it looks like the looming winter could be an interesting one for birds.



Chipping Sparrow in Training Area 4B in 2008.



Snow Bunting along FUSA Blvd. in 2008.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 October 2015 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum September 29 – October 29:

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Pine Warbler
Wood Duck	Merlin	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Black Duck	Eastern Phoebe	Black-throated Green Warbler
Mallard	Blue-headed Vireo	Eastern Towhee
Hooded Merganser	Blue Jay	Chipping Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	American Crow	Field Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Common Raven	Vesper Sparrow
Common Loon	Horned Lark	LARK SPARROW
Pied-billed Grebe	Black-capped Chickadee	Savannah Sparrow
American Bittern	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Fox Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Brown Creeper	Lincoln's Sparrow
Bald Eagle	House Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Winter Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	White-crowned Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Goshawk	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	Swainson's Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rough-legged Hawk	Hermit Thrush	Red-winged Blackbird
Golden Eagle	American Robin	Rusty Blackbird
Common Gallinule	Gray Catbird	Common Grackle
Greater Yellowlegs	European Starling	Purple Finch
American Woodcock	American Pipit	House Finch
Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing	Pine Siskin
Rock Pigeon	Snow Bunting	American Goldfinch
Mourning Dove	Ovenbird	House Sparrow
Red-headed Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Nashville Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat	
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Parula	
Northern Flicker	Blackpoll Warbler	
Pileated Woodpecker	Palm Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2015

Birds

Birds were unusually scarce on Fort Drum for nearly all of November. It is no surprise that few songbirds were seen, as most passerines depart northern New York by mid-October, but very few of the hoped-for northern irruptives moved south by the end of November. A bigger surprise was the near lack of waterfowl on or over Fort Drum nearly all month. Except for a very modest number of Canada Geese moving south there was virtually no sign of a waterfowl migration over the installation this month, and even most of the Canada Geese were birds moving around locally rather than actual migrants.

The most noteworthy bird sighting of the month was a Bohemian Waxwing flying over Training Area 6A on 2 November, which was the first one reported in the state of New York this season. Another Bohemian Waxwing over Pleasant Road on 5 November was the only other Fort Drum sighting this month. Also on 5 November, at least 58 American Tree Sparrows were on Dogwood Road along with two Fox Sparrows, and the season's first Northern Shrike was nearby. A late Hermit Thrush in TA6A on 16 November was the only other unusual sighting of the month. Most trips into the field turned up remarkably few birds given the overall mild conditions.



American Tree Sparrow in Training Area 17.

Species observed on Fort Drum November 1-30:

Canada Goose	Northern Shrike	Chipping Sparrow
Mallard	Blue Jay	Fox Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Common Raven	Swamp Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Black-capped Chickadee	White-throated Sparrow
Northern Harrier	White-breasted Nuthatch	White-crowned Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Brown Creeper	Dark-eyed Junco
Rough-legged Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Northern Cardinal
American Woodcock	Hermit Thrush	Red-winged Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	American Robin	Rusty Blackbird
Rock Pigeon	European Starling	Common Grackle
Mourning Dove	American Pipit	Purple Finch
Downy Woodpecker	Bohemian Waxwing	House Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	American Goldfinch
Northern Flicker	Snow Bunting	House Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 December 2015



There was no wildlife viewing report for the month of December.