

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 April 2017

Birds

We have not posted a wildlife viewing report since the fall, and at least in terms of birds not much happened to write about for most of that time. Winter was very slow on Fort Drum, and it seemed like many fewer birds were around than usual. There was no significant southward irruption of finches like there is some years, so that partly explains the seeming lack of birds.

More surprisingly, virtually no hawks were in the large fields in TAs 12 and 13 all winter—in fact surveys conducted twice a month along Antwerp Tank Trail did not turn up any hawks at all in the fields that often support good numbers of wintering buteos. A similar scarcity of winter raptors was widely reported in the region, perhaps because of a crash in small mammal populations.

The most interesting avian events of the winter happened early and late in the season. As has become the norm in recent years, Snow Geese mostly passed through the Fort Drum area in early to mid-December, with many flocks seen actively migrating during a snowstorm. At the other end of the winter, freakishly warm weather in late February brought such migrants as Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Ring-billed Gull, and Red-winged Blackbird to Fort Drum at very early dates or in unprecedented numbers for the month. The only Rough-legged Hawk seen on Fort Drum all winter was during this warm spell.

Species observed on Fort Drum from December 2016 – February 2017:

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird
American Black Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	American Robin
Mallard	Northern Flicker	European Starling
Hooded Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	Snow Bunting
Ruffed Grouse	Merlin	American Tree Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Northern Shrike	Dark-eyed Junco
Bald Eagle	Blue Jay	White-throated Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow	Northern Cardinal
Rough-legged Hawk	Common Raven	American Goldfinch
Golden Eagle	Black-capped Chickadee	
Ring-billed Gull	Tufted Titmouse	
Rock Pigeon	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Mourning Dove	Brown Creeper	

The warm spell that ended February persisted into the first couple of days of March, and the majority of new and in some cases record early arrivals were seen at this time. A Pied-billed Grebe in the Cantonment on 1 March was almost a month earlier than the previous early arrival date for Fort Drum. Several American Woodcock were seen along Carr Road on 3 March and had probably been present for four or five days; this is the first year woodcock have been found on Fort Drum before the third week of March. Among the other migrants seen in early March were Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Golden Eagle, Killdeer, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle. **(continued)**

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 April 2017 (continued)

Migration was generally slow for most of the rest of March, with geese passing over the installation but few new species appearing. Migration finally picked up during the last week of the month as good numbers of waterfowl, raptors, and blackbirds moved through. New species for the year seen in late March included Eastern Phoebe, Fox Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird.

The pace of new arrivals picked up in early April. On 3 April the season's first Wilson's Snipe, Tree Swallow, and Eastern Meadowlark were found. Also on that date was a nice mix of waterfowl at Mattoon Marsh, including American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, and Bufflehead; the latter two species seemed to be on every body of water for a few days. A Swamp Sparrow in the Cantonment was a first for the year on 6 April. The first truly warm day of the spring was 10 April, and the southerly winds that brought that warmth also brought many new arrivals to Fort Drum, including Virginia Rail, Pine Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow. A number of raptors were also moving in the south winds, including Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Bald Eagle. The Virginia Rail heard calling at Mattoon Marsh was about 10 days earlier than the previous record for Fort Drum. Also surprising on 10 April was a Tundra Swan in a small pond in TA12C, only the second documented occurrence of this species on the installation.



Tundra Swan in TA12C on 10 April 2017.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 April 2017 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum from March 1 – April 10, 2017:

Snow Goose	Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird
Canada Goose	Herring Gull	American Robin
Wood Duck	Great Black-backed Gull	European Starling
American Wigeon	Rock Pigeon	Snow Bunting
American Black Duck	Mourning Dove	Pine Warbler
Mallard	Belted Kingfisher	American Tree Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Field Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Vesper Sparrow
Bufflehead	Hairy Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Northern Flicker	Fox Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Pileated Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	American Kestrel	Swamp Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Merlin	White-throated Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Phoebe	Dark-eyed Junco
Turkey Vulture	Northern Shrike	Northern Cardinal
Osprey	Blue Jay	Red-winged Blackbird
Bald Eagle	American Crow	Rusty Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Eastern Meadowlark
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Horned Lark	Common Grackle
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	House Finch
Rough-legged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Virginia Rail	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Killdeer	Brown Creeper	
Wilson's Snipe	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
American Woodcock	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 July 2017

Birds

Fort Drum has been very busy this June, and most of the Training Areas (TAs) that are home to the installation's more interesting or unusual birds have been closed to recreation since the Memorial Day weekend. With Independence Day approaching training has slowed down, and many TAs are likely to be accessible for the next few days. It therefore seems like a good time for an update on the birds observed during surveys this past month.

The most interesting species found this season are a trio of rarities discovered during the last week of June. On 24 June a Dickcissel was found in TA13A southeast of the intersection between Antwerp Tank Trail and Dogwood Road, and has been seen daily through 30 June. The only vocalization heard from this Dickcissel has been a very strange buzzy trill completely unlike any song or call typical of this species, which it often produces frequently from the tops of several favored perches, so it must be what passes for a song by this bird. During a visit on 26 June to see whether the Dickcissel was still present a Philadelphia Vireo was heard and then seen in the nearest patch of trees. Dickcissels are very rare anywhere in northern New York, and while Philadelphia Vireos breed in and near the Adirondacks, they are rare during the nesting season on Fort Drum.

Directions to the Dickcissel and Philadelphia Vireo: The vireo has been singing from a patch of trees immediately adjacent to Antwerp Tank Trail about 200 yards south of the intersection between that road and Dogwood Street. The Dickcissel's territory is about 150-300 yards southwest of this patch of trees. Often the Dickcissel can be seen from Antwerp Road by looking east from the road just south of the trees; usually it will be perched atop one of several dead woody stems sticking up out of the grass. If TA13A is closed for recreation, as it often is, you will have to be content with looking from the road. If TA13A is open for recreation, go south a short distance to a gravel road that enters a mowed field to the east, and then walk north following the edge of the mowed field and searching for the Dickcissel near the edge of the unmowed portion of the field. Remember that this bird isn't singing a typical Dickcissel song, and that its vocalization is easily passed off as the tail end of a distant, poorly heard Savannah Sparrow song.

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***Dickcissel in Training
Area 13A in June 2017.***

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 July 2017 (continued)

The third rarity recently found on Fort Drum was a female-plumaged Summer Tanager in TA5D, seen well at close range on 29 May during a Red-headed Woodpecker survey. On 30 June a couple of Summer Tanager call notes were heard but the bird was not seen again, and the precise area it is using is not well known. This bird was in the oak woodland about 300 yards east of Bagram Road and 750 yards south of the Main Tank Trail—unfortunately, Bagram Road is closed to civilian vehicles, so anybody hoping to find this bird would have to walk in from the Main Tank Trail. Such a walk would likely turn up one or two Red-headed Woodpeckers as well as Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows and possibly Common Nighthawk. All of these species are common throughout the sandy areas in TA5D and along the Main Tank Trail where it passes around Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield.



Female Summer Tanager.
(Image: Audubon.org)

Highlights of grassland bird surveys so far this season include 7 Henslow's Sparrows and 4 Sedge Wrens. Unfortunately, none of these birds are close to any roads, and to limit the potential for wandering birders to step on nests of the many ground-nesting birds in these areas we are not going to advertise the locations of these birds. Often many Sedge Wrens arrive on Fort Drum in early July, so perhaps one or more will show up soon in places where they can be seen easily.

Golden-winged Warbler surveys conducted throughout Fort Drum in May and June indicate that this species continues to decline as Blue-winged Warblers increase. As recently as 2010 Golden-winged Warblers modestly outnumbered Blue-winged Warblers on Fort Drum, but results from surveys conducted this year suggest that Blue-wings are now nearly twice as abundant as Golden-wings. In some areas, such as TA6A, Golden-winged Warblers seem to have disappeared entirely, and the question now is whether the same will happen across the entire installation, or whether a few will persist over the long-term.

A few other notes: only a few Cerulean Warblers nest on Fort Drum, with the largest number occurring in TA15. If TA15A and 15C are open for recreation, a good place to look is along Canfield Road in the woods northeast of OP5A. Prairie Warblers have historically nested in very modest numbers on Fort Drum, but this year seem to be much more common than usual, especially in several regenerating clearcuts along the Main Tank Trail west of Wheeler-Sack Airfield and along the western edges of TAs 7D and 7G. Clay-colored Sparrows are also easily found in these areas. In contrast, Mourning Warblers seem to be unusually scarce this year, with few to none seen in many areas where they occur most years. One place where Mourning Warbler has been seen recently is along Figert Road just north of Fishing Access site 17.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 July 2017 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum in June 2017:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2017

Birds

This is the first wildlife viewing report we have posted since late June, so before summarizing the early southbound bird migration we are including a brief summary of the latter portion of the nesting season. The most exciting observations of the breeding season were of several rare birds found in late June, some of which continued into July. The Summer Tanager found on 29 June was not seen again, but the Dickcissel found a few days earlier in Training Area 13A continued to 21 July, and the Philadelphia Vireo found nearby was last seen on 9 July. Yet another rarity, a Chuck-will's-widow, a nightjar of the southeastern United States, was found calling along the edge of the Main Tank Trail just inside the airfield fence on 4 July. Unfortunately, the Chuck-will's-widow was found just before a period of heavy training activity limited visitor access, but a handful of birders were able to hear it, with the last report coming on 11 July. Never before have so many birds rare to Fort Drum been found in such a short period of time.



Philadelphia Vireo at a banding station in TA 3 on Fort Drum in 2011.

As is often the case, more Sedge Wrens were documented on Fort Drum in late July and August than during May and June, with several males clearly arriving after mid-July. Four male Sedge Wrens were found in May and early June; this number increased to eight by early July and 13 by early August. Sedge Wrens presumed to be females based on behavior were seen on several territories, and on 26 July a Sedge Wren was observed feeding a juvenile. Henslow's Sparrow numbers did not increase much during the late summer: six males were known to occupy territories in May and June and seven in July.

Red-headed Woodpecker numbers seem to be down slightly from the last few years, but most individuals occupying territories in Training Areas 5 and 6 were unusually quiet all season and often difficult to locate. By the end of July seven territories had been identified and one or two more were suspected based on observations of adults far from any known territories, although these latter birds were never found in the same place twice. By the end of August juveniles had been found on five of the seven known territories, and a family group was found in an area where no territory had previously been identified, perhaps representing one of the unknown but suspected pairs.

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Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2017 (continued)

Matoon Marsh, at the northwest corner of Matoon Creek Road in Training Area 17B, has been very productive. The only Least Bittern seen on Fort Drum this year was here on 28 July; presumably one or more was here all season although none were detected on any other visit to this site in 2017. At least five Pied-billed Grebe broods and several Common Gallinule broods were raised at Matoon this year. Other species seen regularly include American Bittern, Virginia Rail, and Marsh Wren.

The fall songbird migration through Fort Drum was very slow the past two years, but so far has been quite active this season. Aside from a few local breeders that start migrating in July, such as Yellow Warbler and Bobolink, the first obvious southbound passerines seen this year were two Cape May Warblers in Training Area 8A on 11 August. By 22 August migrating warblers and other songbirds were being seen on a daily basis, and several large movements were observed during the last week of August.

Often the oak woodlands in Training Area 5 host a large mixed species flock of birds including many Chipping Sparrows, Eastern Bluebirds, Pine Warblers, and Eastern Phoebes that are joined by a constantly changing mix of other migrants. Such a flock found in the southwestern corner of Training Area 5B on 28 August included nine warbler species, and on 29 August at least 26 Bay-breasted Warblers were with this flock. Also on the 28th an early American Pipit was heard flying over Training Area 5B.

On 30 August a two-hour walk through Training Area 6A netted 17 species of warbler, with 20+ Magnolia Warblers, seven Wilson's Warblers, and one each Olive-sided Flycatcher and Philadelphia Vireo. On 31 August a walk through successional woodland in Training Area 8C south of Fishing Site 10 turned up 22 species of warbler, including at least 22 Magnolia Warblers, 21 Cape May Warblers, 15 Tennessee Warblers and 10 Bay-breasted Warblers, as well as another Philadelphia Vireo. Also present were two Golden-winged Warblers and one Blue-winged Warbler, both males and not acting like active migrants, not that surprising since they were in locations where males occupied territories this nesting season.

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Bay-breasted Warbler in TA7D in 2015.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2017 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum in July & August 2017:

Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Blue-winged Teal
Mallard
American Black Duck
Hooded Merganser
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Green Heron
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Virginia Rail
Common Gallinule
Killdeer
Upland Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Wilson's Snipe
American Woodcock
Ring-billed Gull
Common Tern
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Black-billed Cuckoo
Barred Owl
Common Nighthawk
CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW
Eastern Whip-poor-will
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker

Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Merlin
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Alder Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Yellow-throated Vireo
Blue-headed Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Horned Lark
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Barn Swallow
Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
House Wren
Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
American Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush

Golden-winged Warbler
Blue-winged Warbler
"Brewster's" Warbler
"Lawrence's" Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
American Redstart
Cape May Warbler
Northern Parula
Magnolia Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Palm Warbler
Pine Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Canada Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
DICKCISSEL
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Baltimore Oriole
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 05 October 2017

Birds

September represent the peak month for the fall songbird migration, and most survey effort this month was devoted to passerines. Compared to the very sluggish southbound migration in 2015 and 2016, this year's movements were very active. The excellent warbler migration described in our August wildlife viewing report continued into September, with high diversity and large numbers of migrating warblers observed on many days. Warbler abundance and diversity was highest during the first week of September, but good numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers with a smattering of other species were still moving during the first week of October.

The warbler migration was especially impressive 6-8 September, with 20-22 warbler species and many large flocks seen each day. Cape May Warblers were unusually abundant during this period, with high counts of 50+ in a huge warbler flock in Training Area (TA) 7G on the 6th and 70+ in an even larger flock in the same area on the 8th. Other notable counts from this three-day period include 37 Tennessee Warblers, 21 Black-throated Green Warblers, 16 Chestnut-sided Warblers, and 12 Blackburnian Warblers on 6 September; and 24 Magnolia Warblers and 23 Bay-breasted Warblers on 8 September. Also noteworthy were 3 Golden-winged Warblers in TA6A on 7 September, as this species tends to be scarce on Fort Drum after August.

Good warbler diversity continued until late in this period, as illustrated by the 14 species seen on 28 September and 12 species on 2 October. Orange-crowned Warblers were in TA6A on both of these dates and in TA13A on 4 October, and species such as Northern Parula, Tennessee Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler were observed almost daily during the first week of October. Perhaps the most impressive assemblage of warblers seen late this period was a gathering of Pine Warblers accompanied by Eastern Bluebirds and Chipping Sparrows in Training Areas 5B and 5D. These three species frequently associate with each other during the non-breeding season, and large flocks have been noted in TA5 in past years, but this year's flocks are more numerous and larger. At least one flock has been consistently found in TA5B since late August and what appear to be two separate flocks have formed in TA5D. On 3 October these flocks combined included at least 60 Pine Warblers, 32 Eastern Bluebirds, and 160 Chipping Sparrows. These flocks are in the same area where most of Fort Drum's Red-headed Woodpeckers nest, this species having mostly departed Fort Drum for the year by mid-September but with at least two remaining in TA5D as of 3 October.

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***Northern Parula on Figert Road
in October 2017.***

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 05 October 2017 (continued)

The biggest surprise of the fall so far was a **White-eyed Vireo** at Quarry Pond in TA14B on 5 October, only the second record for Fort Drum. This vireo appeared to be moving with a large group of Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-throated Sparrows, kinglets, and other songbirds. A few other passerine species are worth noting. Between 5 and 22 September 12 Philadelphia Vireos were seen on Fort Drum, with a high of three on 12 September. For most of September up to 5 Sedge Wrens were in a TA12C field where several males held territories in 2017, the last observation coming on 25 September. Large numbers of thrushes—mostly Swainson's Thrushes but with a few Gray-cheeked Thrushes—were heard flying overhead very early several mornings in late September, but as usual only a few could be found most days. The only Gray-cheeked Thrush seen on Fort Drum this fall was on Borland Road 27 September.



White-eyed Vireo in TA8C in 2015.

Of course songbirds aren't the only species that migrate through Fort Drum, although some groups of birds are poorly represented because of a lack of appropriate habitat. For instance migrant shorebirds are scarce on Fort Drum, although a few are heard and sometimes seen migrating over the installation. American Golden-Plover is a good example, as this species is rarely seen using habitat on Fort Drum but occasionally is heard overhead, including two observations this fall: one over TA7G on 8 September and two over TA13A on 25 September. Waterfowl habitat is more widely available, but so far this fall few duck species have been observed, and just about the only ducks seen this fall so far are Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, and Hooded Merganser, all of which occur widely on the installation. The only real exceptions were a lone Green-winged Teal at Matoon Marsh on 4 October and one Lesser Scaup and two Ring-necked Ducks on the large marshy pond along Quarry Pond Road on 5 October. (continued)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 05 October 2017

Species observed on Fort Drum from September 5 – October 5, 2017:

Canada Goose	"Traill's" Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler
Wood Duck	Least Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Mallard	Eastern Phoebe	Mourning Warbler
American Black Duck	Great Crested Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Green-winged Teal	Eastern Kingbird	American Redstart
Ring-necked Duck	WHITE-EYED VIREO	Cape May Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Yellow-throated Vireo	Northern Parula
Hooded Merganser	Blue-headed Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
Wild Turkey	Warbling Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Philadelphia Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue Jay	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Great Blue Heron	American Crow	Blackpoll Warbler
Green Heron	Common Raven	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Tree Swallow	Palm Warbler
Osprey	Black-capped Chickadee	Pine Warbler
Bald Eagle	Tufted Titmouse	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Harrier	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Prairie Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Black-throated Green Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	House Wren	Canada Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Winter Wren	Wilson's Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Sedge Wren	Eastern Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	Marsh Wren	Chipping Sparrow
Common Gallinule	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Field Sparrow
American Golden-Plover	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Vesper Sparrow
Killdeer	Eastern Bluebird	Savannah Sparrow
Lesser Yellowlegs	Veery	Song Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Swainson's Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
American Woodcock	Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Wood Thrush	White-crowned Sparrow
Mourning Dove	American Robin	Dark-eyed Junco
Black-billed Cuckoo	Gray Catbird	Scarlet Tanager
Belted Kingfisher	Brown Thrasher	Northern Cardinal
Red-headed Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling	Bobolink
Downy Woodpecker	American Pipit	Red-winged Blackbird
Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Eastern Meadowlark
Northern Flicker	Ovenbird	Rusty Blackbird
Pileated Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Common Grackle
American Kestrel	Blue-winged Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Merlin	Black-and-white Warbler	Purple Finch
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Tennessee Warbler	American Goldfinch

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 02 November 2017

Birds

Despite heavy training use that limited access to most of Fort Drum for much of October, a number of interesting birds were seen, including many species at later than usual dates. Unusually warm weather for much of the month contributed to the presence of a variety of species that normally migrate south earlier in the season. Some examples include a Brown Thrasher in TA5D on 10 October, a Broad-winged Hawk and two Blue-headed Vireos in TA6A on 19 October, a Gray Catbird in the same area on 26 October, and Eastern Towhees and Vesper Sparrows that were still present on Fort Drum on 1 November.

This fall's excellent warbler migration continued well into October, and the 16 warbler species seen during the month is an unusually high tally, 10-12 species being more typical. Ten species were in TA6A on 6 October, the latest date on which double-digit warbler species have been documented on Fort Drum. Among these were two each Orange-crowned Warbler and Cape May Warbler. As usual Yellow-rumped Warbler was the dominant warbler species seen during October, far out numbering all other warblers combined virtually every day in the month, although the 24 Pine Warblers seen in TA5D on 10 October was very high for the date. At least five Pine Warblers were still in TA5D on 16 October, the last date any warbler other than Yellow-rumped was seen this fall, but access was limited the rest of the month and it seems likely that one or more Pine Warblers persisted somewhat later into the fall.



***Pine Warbler in Training Area 5B
in September 2017.***

Other than Canada Geese passing over Fort Drum daily, waterfowl have been relatively scarce this season. Perhaps had more of Fort Drum been accessible more ducks would have been seen, but during the periods when many ponds and wetlands could be checked nothing other than Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, and Hooded Merganser were found. Teal were conspicuously absent, including from several sites where Green-winged Teal are usually present in fall. The only noteworthy waterfowl observations were flocks of Brant seen over TA6A on 11 October and 1 November. (continued)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 02 November 2017 (continued)

At least two adult Red-headed Woodpeckers appear to be settling in for the winter in TA5D, taking advantage of a very large acorn crop. Prior to 2012 this species had never been documented on Fort Drum during winter, but since then it has become clear that small numbers of individuals overwinter when acorns are abundant. If the adults present now actually remain for the winter, this will be the fourth winter out of the last six that Red-headed Woodpeckers overwintered on Fort Drum, all during winters with large acorn crops. The last two winters without overwintering Red-headed Woodpeckers also were years when acorns were scarce.

On 12 October a grassland survey turned up two **Nelson's Sparrows** in TA 12C, only the third record of this species on Fort Drum and about the fourth or fifth for Jefferson County. Nelson's Sparrows are probably rare but regular migrants through Jefferson County, but the abundance of habitat and secretive habits of the species make them very difficult to locate. Also seen in the immediate vicinity of the Nelson's Sparrows on 12 October was a Sedge Wren, one day shy of the record late date for Fort Drum. Unfortunately, this area was closed for training exercises the rest of the month so it was not possible to determine how long these birds remained in the area.
(continued)



Nelson's Sparrow in Training Area 12C in October 2017.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 02 November 2017

Species observed on Fort Drum from October 6 – November 2, 2017:

Brant	Blue Jay	Pine Warbler
Canada Goose	American Crow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Wood Duck	Common Raven	Black-throated Green Warbler
Mallard	Horned Lark	Eastern Towhee
American Black Duck	Black-capped Chickadee	Chipping Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Tufted Titmouse	Field Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	White-breasted Nuthatch	Savannah Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Brown Creeper	NELSON'S SPARROW
Turkey Vulture	House Wren	Fox Sparrow
Osprey	Winter Wren	Song Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Sedge Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Swamp Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Bluebird	White-crowned Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Swainson's Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Red-tailed Hawk	Hermit Thrush	Northern Cardinal
American Woodcock	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	Gray Catbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Mourning Dove	Brown Thrasher	Rusty Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	European Starling	Common Grackle
Red-bellied Woodpecker	American Pipit	Brown-headed Cowbird
Downy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Purple Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	House Finch
Northern Flicker	Orange-crowned Warbler	Pine Siskin
Pileated Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler	American Goldfinch
American Kestrel	Common Yellowthroat	
Merlin	Cape May Warbler	
Eastern Phoebe	Magnolia Warbler	
Blue-headed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Red-eyed Vireo	Palm Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2017

Birds

November is typically a big month for waterfowl migration, and a few interesting waterfowl were seen on Fort Drum this month, but overall geese and ducks were unusually scarce. Very few Canada Goose flocks and no Snow Goose flocks were seen all month, which would have been shocking just a few years ago when November was the peak month for goose migration through northern New York. Many geese now pass through Jefferson County in December or even early January, and it looks like this year is likely going to fit with the recent trend towards ever-later goose migration. The only unusual goose observations were of two flocks of Brant flying over Fort Drum on 1 and 3 November—Brant are regularly seen over Fort Drum in May but rarely observed in the fall.

Ducks were modestly better represented this month, although the species that are usually most common in November—Mallard, American Black Duck, and Hooded Merganser—were rather scarce. On the other hand, 280 Ring-necked Ducks in Training Area 14B on 7 November was a good tally for Fort Drum, and a Black Scoter on Indian Pond that same date was only the fourth record for this species on the installation. All three scoter species, including White-winged Scoter and Surf



Ring-necked Ducks on Fort Drum in 2014.

Scoter—probably drop onto the lakes and ponds in the northeast corner of Fort Drum at least occasionally during the fall, but such occurrences are rarely detected. As usual, a handful of Bufflehead and at least one Common Goldeneye were observed on Fort Drum this month.

Often by early November winter raptors, especially Rough-legged Hawks, are present in the large complex of fields in Training Areas 12 and 13, sometimes in large numbers. Last winter was among the worst ever recorded for winter hawks on Fort Drum, and although it is early and hawks could still show up, this year is looking like a repeat of last winter. Also as happened last year, Northern Harriers seem to have all left the installation despite an absence of snow cover—during most winters they stick around until the snow piles up—and the only hawks seen on four raptor surveys this month were one Bald Eagle and one Red-tailed Hawk. About the only noteworthy raptor reports this month were of Golden Eagles: a juvenile over the Cantonment on 7 November and an adult over Training Area 14B on 21 November.

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Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2017 (continued)

A number of migrant songbirds were found on Fort Drum at later than usual dates, thanks most likely to the mild fall. Songbirds observed during the first week of the month included Eastern Towhee, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow, all species occasionally seen in November but that most years are not found after October. Except for two or three mid-winter records Winter Wrens are almost never seen on Fort Drum after the first week of November, so the three observed on 21 November in Training Areas 6A, 14A, and 19D were a surprise. A Hermit Thrush on that same date was the latest ever documented on Fort Drum, and a Fox Sparrow in Training Area 14E on 29 November represented another record late date for the installation. At least three and possibly four Red-headed Woodpeckers remained in Training Area 5D oak woodlands at the end of November, but these birds are almost certainly overwintering, given that at least two have been observed storing acorns.

Irruptive finches are among the species that birders get most excited about during winter, especially in places like northern New York where relatively few birds occur at this time of year. A handful of finch sightings on Fort Drum hint at the potential for an incursion, but numbers were small. Perhaps the most noteworthy sightings were of single Pine Grosbeaks calling from the tops of trees in Training Area 19A on 3 November and Training Area 6A on 7 November, among only a very few Pine Grosbeaks reported in the northeastern United States so far this fall. This is an irruption year for both species of crossbill in the northeast, but the only Fort Drum observation all fall was of a single Red Crossbill flying over Training Area 6A on 29 November. Purple Finches have been fairly common all fall, and there has been a very modest Pine Siskin flight over Fort Drum. So far no redpolls have been detected on the installation, although redpolls are expected to come south this winter and it seems likely some will eventually turn up here.

Species observed on Fort Drum in November 2017:

Brant	Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Snow Bunting
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Black Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Blue Jay	Vesper Sparrow
Black Scoter	American Crow	Fox Sparrow
Bufflehead	Common Raven	Lincoln's Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Horned Lark	Song Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Black-capped Chickadee	White-throated Sparrow
Common Merganser	Tufted Titmouse	Dark-eyed Junco
Ruffed Grouse	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
Pied-billed Grebe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
Turkey Vulture	Brown Creeper	Red-winged Blackbird
Bald Eagle	Winter Wren	Rusty Blackbird
Cooper's Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
Red-tailed Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Brown-headed Cowbird
Rough-legged Hawk	Eastern Bluebird	Pine Grosbeak
Golden Eagle	Hermit Thrush	Purple Finch
American Woodcock	American Robin	Red Crossbill
Rock Pigeon	American Pipit	Pine Siskin
Mourning Dove	European Starling	American Goldfinch