

# Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



## Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 April 2017

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### 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)**

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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.



***Tunda Swan in TA12C on 10 April 2017.***

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## **Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 April 2017 (continued)**

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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	