

# ***Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program***



## **Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 July 2017**

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### **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)**

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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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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	<b>SUMMER Tanager</b>
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	<b>DICKCISSEL</b>
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	