

# ***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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## **Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2017 (continued)**

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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 28<sup>th</sup> 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.***

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## Wildlife Viewing Report – 31 August 2017 (continued)

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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