

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.

(continued)



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

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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)

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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