

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.

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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	