

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 May 2008

Cool wet weather and north winds resulted in just a trickle of migrants over the past week, including scattered Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers. The first Alder Flycatchers were found on 16 May, but so far we haven't heard a Willow Flycatcher yet. Southerly winds are forecast for late in the Memorial Day Weekend, which should bring many new migrants.

On 16 May a Willet was observed flying over TA 17B near the Matoon Creek Marsh. Willets are rarely reported in northern New York and this was the first record for Fort Drum. Other birds seen that day in the marsh were at least 1 and probably 2 Least Bitterns, a Pied-billed Grebe on a nest, one Virginia Rail, and several Marsh Wrens.

Red-headed Woodpeckers were relatively late arrivals this year, arriving on territory in the open oak woodlands near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield during early to mid-May. Currently 3-4 pairs can be found north and east of the airfield, but so far none have been found in traditional sites west of the airfield. The most accessible site where Red-headed Woodpeckers have been found so far this year is in the open oak woodlands immediately northeast of the intersection of the Main Tank Trail and Rt. 29 in TA 5B. Other species in the airfield area include 3-4 Upland Sandpipers within the airfield fence (unfortunately not accessible to birders), many Whip-poor-wills in the open woodlands west and north of the airfield, numerous Grasshopper Sparrows in fields all along the Main Tank Trail, and at least 6 Clay-colored Sparrows in regenerating clearcuts along the Main Tank Trail south of Elm Road.

Golden-winged Warblers are in full voice now, but the number of Blue-winged Warblers has increased dramatically, and hybrids of the two species are now common on Fort Drum. Lawrence's Warbler, the rarer of the two typical hybrid forms, has been found in two locations on the installation this year: one in TA 6A at the second intersection on the main road into the TA from Rt. 3, and one just south of the intersection between Figert Road and Russell Turnpike in TA 14D. Particularly good locations to look for Golden-winged Warblers include the southern end of Borland Road (TAs 3A and 3B), the entire length of Reedville Road, TAs 10 and 15 along U.S. Military Highway, and the shrubby fields and swamps in TA 14D along Figert Road and Russell Turnpike.

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On 22 May at least 5 Henslow's Sparrows were heard singing in TAs 12 and 13. The best locations for observing Henslow's Sparrows are east of Antwerp Road from Poagland Road north for about one mile (east and northeast of the helicopters), and south of Poagland Road. The season's first Sedge Wren was also singing just south of Poagland Road. Other species observed in the Fort Drum grasslands on this date included at least 5 American Bitterns, 2 pairs of Northern Harriers, 2 Clay-colored Sparrows, 2 Eastern Meadowlarks, and numerous Savannah Sparrows and Bobolinks.

Species seen during the past week on Fort Drum:

Canada Goose
Mallard
Wood Duck
Wild Turkey
Ruffed Grouse
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Turkey Vulture
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's hawk
Northern Harrier
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Killdeer
Willet
Spotted Sandpiper
American Woodcock
Wilson's Snipe
Ring-billed Gull
Mourning Dove
Black-billed Cuckoo

Whip-poor-will
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Alder Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Blue-headed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Barn Swallow
Tree Swallow

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 May 2008

Species seen during the past week on Fort Drum (continued):

Black-capped Chickadee	American Redstart
Brown Creeper	Common Yellowthroat
White-breasted Nuthatch	Mourning Warbler
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Waterthrush
Marsh Wren	Ovenbird
Sedge Wren	Canada Warbler
House Wren	Wilson's Warbler
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Scarlet Tanager
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Eastern Bluebird	Indigo Bunting
Veery	Northern Cardinal
Hermit Thrush	Eastern Towhee
Wood Thrush	Chipping Sparrow
American Robin	Clay-colored Sparrow
Gray Catbird	Field Sparrow
Brown Thrasher	Vesper Sparrow
American Pipit	Grasshopper Sparrow
Cedar Waxwing	Henslow's Sparrow
Tennessee Warbler	Savannah Sparrow
Nashville Warbler	Song Sparrow
Blue-winged Warbler	Swamp Sparrow
Golden-winged Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow
"Brewster's" Warbler	White-throated Sparrow
"Lawrence's" Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Yellow Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Bobolink
Magnolia Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Common Grackle
Black-throated Green Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Purple Finch
Pine Warbler	American Goldfinch
Prairie Warbler	
Blackpoll Warbler	
Bay-breasted Warbler	
Black-and-white Warbler	

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 June 2008

Spring migration is winding down, but a few migrants continue to pass through Fort Drum. During the first week of June 1-3 Blackpoll Warblers have been heard daily, with the most recent this morning (June 6). Highlights of the late migration include 3 Olive-sided Flycatchers on May 29 and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher June 4. Cedar Waxwings, relatively scarce through mid-May, have appeared in large numbers during the last two weeks. Immature Bald Eagles have been seen passing over the installation on 29 May and 5 June.

As many as 12-13 Henslow's Sparrows have been found in Training Areas 12 and 13 this season. The best locations to see this species continues to be immediately south of Poagland Road and east of Antwerp Road between Poagland Road and Hunter Creek. In both areas patient observers should be able to see singing male Henslow's Sparrows without leaving the road. Other birds observed in the TA 12 and 13 grasslands during the past week include many American Bitterns, 3 Sedge Wrens (the only accessible one is often audible and sometimes visible from Poagland Road), many Clay-colored Sparrows (one day maximum count of 23 singing males), and 4 Grasshopper Sparrows (unusual in this area). On June 5 a Yellow-billed Cuckoo sang from the woods adjacent to the grasslands near the intersection of Antwerp and Birch Roads.

During the past week many Golden-winged Warblers have been singing poorly, but can still be found in many parts of the installation. Blue-winged Warblers seem to be equally common this year, with relatively numerous hybrids as well. Areas where Golden-winged Warblers are relatively more numerous than Blue-winged Warblers include most of Reedville Road (except the portion east of Lake School Road, where Blue-winged Warblers predominate) and Antwerp Road between Reedville Road and Birch Road.

At least 4 Red-headed Woodpecker territories have been found east and north of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, and on June 5 two adults were observed at a nest hole. Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows continue in large numbers throughout the airfield area, with up to 7 Clay-colored Sparrows and a Prairie Warbler in the regenerating clearcuts along the Main Tank Trail west of the airfield.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 June 2008

The best place to find Prairie Warblers on Fort Drum is in TA 14D, where this species is fairly common in the more open portions of the training area. This is also a good area for winged warblers (Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Brewster's, and Lawrence's have all been seen), as well as Nashville and Mourning Warblers. On May 29 a Red-bellied Woodpecker was also found here; this species has been found in 3 locations on Fort Drum this year, more than in past years.

Species seen during the past week on Fort Drum (continued):

Canada Goose	Belted Kingfisher
Wood Duck	Red-headed Woodpecker
Mallard	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Hooded Merganser	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Ruffed Grouse	Downy Woodpecker
Wild Turkey	Hairy Woodpecker
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Flicker
American Bittern	Pileated Woodpecker
Least Bittern	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Great Blue Heron	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Green Heron	Alder Flycatcher
Turkey Vulture	Willow Flycatcher
Bald Eagle	Least Flycatcher
Northern Harrier	Eastern Phoebe
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Great Crested Flycatcher
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Kingbird
Broad-winged Hawk	Yellow-throated Vireo
Red-tailed Hawk	Blue-headed Vireo
American Kestrel	Warbling Vireo
Killdeer	Red-eyed Vireo
Mourning Dove	Blue Jay
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	American Crow
Black-billed Cuckoo	Common Raven
Common Nighthawk	Tree Swallow
Whip-poor-will	Bank Swallow
Chimney Swift	Barn Swallow
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Black-capped Chickadee

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Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Waterthrush
White-breasted Nuthatch	Mourning Warbler
House Wren	Common Yellowthroat
Winter Wren	Canada Warbler
Sedge Wren	Scarlet Tanager
Marsh Wren	Eastern Towhee
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Eastern Bluebird	Clay-colored Sparrow
Veery	Field Sparrow
Swainson's Thrush	Vesper Sparrow
Hermit Thrush	Savannah Sparrow
Wood Thrush	Grasshopper Sparrow
American Robin	Henslow's Sparrow
Gray Catbird	Song Sparrow
Brown Thrasher	Swamp Sparrow
Cedar Waxwing	White-throated Sparrow
Blue-winged Warbler	Northern Cardinal
Golden-winged Warbler	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
"Brewster's" Warbler	Indigo Bunting
"Lawrence's" Warbler	Bobolink
Tennessee Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Nashville Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Yellow Warbler	Common Grackle
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Magnolia Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Purple Finch
Yellow-rumped Warbler	American Goldfinch
Black-throated Green Warbler	
Blackburnian Warbler	
Pine Warbler	
Prairie Warbler	
Blackpoll Warbler	
Black-and-white Warbler	
American Redstart	
Ovenbird	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 June 2008

The nesting season is well underway and observations of birds feeding young or carrying food are increasing daily. The last obvious migrant observed on Fort Drum was an Olive-sided Flycatcher seen and heard in TA 4B on 13 June.

Least Bitterns have been found in two locations on Fort Drum. Up to three individuals have been seen in the Matoon Creek marsh in TA 17B. Other birds found here include Pied-billed Grebe, Virginia Rail, and Marsh Wren. The other Least Bittern site is along the southern end of FUSA boulevard where the road overlooks the Indian River, which at this point is a large shrub wetland with patches of cattails. On 12 June 1 Least Bittern, 2 American Bitterns, and 2 Virginia Rails were heard here.

Good numbers of cuckoos have been heard singing throughout the installation. Black-billed Cuckoos are fairly common throughout the western two-thirds of Fort Drum, especially where patches of successional woodland occur. At least 15 Yellow-billed Cuckoos have been heard since the beginning of June, with the largest number occurring along the western edge of TA 7D. At least two individuals have also been found in TA 12B near Antwerp Road.

Three nightjar surveys were conducted on the nights of June 11 and 12, yielding a total of 62 Whip-poor-wills and 10 Common Nighthawks. Whip-poor-wills are widespread on Fort Drum, but the highest densities seem to be from the airfield east to TA 14 on sandy soil, and in rocky wooded areas along FUSA Boulevard. Common Nighthawks seem to occur anywhere with open sandy areas, with the airfield being a particularly good location.

At least 14 Henslow's Sparrows and 8 Sedge Wrens have been found in TAs 12 and 13 during June. The best locations to observe Henslow's Sparrows are along the east side of Antwerp Road between Poagland Road and Hunter Creek (especially just east and north of the helicopters near Antwerp Road), and immediately south of Poagland Road. At least 2 Sedge Wrens are also along the south side of Poagland Road, which is the only easily accessible location where this species has been found so far this year. Numerous Clay-colored Sparrows have been found within the interiors of TAs 12B, 12C, 13A, and 13B (40+ singing males total), with the most accessible birds occurring along the west side of Antwerp Road between Gray and Poagland Roads. Numerous American Bitterns and at least 3 pairs of Northern Harriers are also nesting in the TA 12 and 13 fields.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 June 2008

The roads surrounding Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield remain the best location to observe Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows. Grasshopper Sparrows occur in nearly every patch of grass on sandy soil here, and Vesper Sparrows are abundant in all open locations around the airfield. At least 6 Clay-colored Sparrows continue to be found in the regenerating clearcuts along the Main Tank Trail south of Elm Lane, but these birds have not been singing well on many days. Red-headed Woodpeckers have also been difficult to observe lately; we have found 5 territories east and northeast of the airfield in TAs 5B and 5D, but these birds have been mostly silent in recent weeks.

Most Golden-winged Warblers have virtually stopped singing except for a brief period at dawn. We continue to find a few Golden-wings as well as Blue-winged Warblers and hybrids, but not without a lot of effort. Probably the best chance of seeing a winged warbler at this point is to go to an area where this species is nesting and listen for begging calls, which will alert you to the presence of this species. Areas where relatively large numbers of Golden-winged Warblers have been found include along Reedville Road between Rt. 29 and Lake School Road and Antwerp Road between Reedville Road and Gray Road.

Mourning Warblers can be found throughout Fort Drum. One good locations is along the gravel road into TA 8C just west of the north end of Lake School Road; Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Nashville, and Canada Warblers also nest here. Additional Mourning Warbler territories occur in scattered locations along the length of Reedville Road and the north end of Lake School Road. Perhaps the largest number of Mourning Warblers currently occur in the thinned forest along FUSA Boulevard, but this road is often closed for training. The best location for Prairie Warblers continues to be in TA 14D, accessible via several sandy trails off Russell Turnpike.

Species seen during the past week on Fort Drum:

Canada Goose
Mallard
Wood Duck
Hooded Merganser
Wild Turkey
Ruffed Grouse

Pied-billed Grebe
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Green Heron
Turkey Vulture

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 June 2008

Sharp-shinned Hawk	American Crow
Northern Harrier	Common Raven
Broad-winged Hawk	Purple Martin
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
American Kestrel	Bank Swallow
Killdeer	Barn Swallow
Spotted Sandpiper	Tree Swallow
American Woodcock	Black-capped Chickadee
Wilson's Snipe	Brown Creeper
Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch
Mourning Dove	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Marsh Wren
Black-billed Cuckoo	Sedge Wren
Whip-poor-will	House Wren
Common Nighthawk	Winter Wren
Chimney Swift	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Eastern Bluebird
Belted Kingfisher	Veery
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Hermit Thrush
Red-headed Woodpecker	Wood Thrush
Downy Woodpecker	American Robin
Hairy Woodpecker	Gray Catbird
Northern Flicker	Brown Thrasher
Pileated Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Nashville Warbler
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Blue-winged Warbler
Alder Flycatcher	Golden-winged Warbler
Least Flycatcher	"Brewster's" Warbler
Eastern Phoebe	"Lawrence's" Warbler
Great Crested Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler
Eastern Kingbird	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Warbling Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
Red-eyed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-throated Vireo	Black-throated Green Warbler
Blue-headed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Blue Jay	Pine Warbler

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 June 2008

**Prairie Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Common Yellowthroat
Mourning Warbler
Northern Waterthrush
Ovenbird
Canada Warbler
Scarlet Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Northern Cardinal
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Baltimore Oriole
Eastern Meadowlark
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch**

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 September 2008

The nesting season for most bird species is over and fall migration is well underway, as insectivorous songbirds stream southward before cold weather arrives. Flocks of migrating birds have become increasingly conspicuous over the past two weeks, with flycatchers, warblers, and vireos predominating.

On August 25 an adult Ruffed Grouse with 3 fairly small young was in TA 6A; this was a relatively late date to see such young grouse. Several broods of young Wild Turkey were also seen on this and subsequent dates. Also on August 25, a loose group of at least 16 Northern Flickers and 4 Red-headed Woodpeckers was apparently migrating south, as these birds flew up out of the local oak woodlands and well to the south. Nearby was a flock of at least 60 mostly immature Chipping, Field, and Vesper Sparrows. In TA13A a Sedge Wren was observed feeding a fledgling.

Although apparently migrating warblers had been observed on Fort Drum since at least 15 August, the first large flock was seen on 26 August. On this date in Training Area 14D a large group of migrants included several each Warbling Vireo, Eastern Towhee, Field, Song, and White-throated Sparrows, and the following warblers (numbers are our best estimates):

Blue-winged Warbler: 2

Golden-winged Warbler: 1

Nashville Warbler: 12

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 2

Black-throated Green Warbler: 5

Blackburnian Warbler: 1

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1

Cerulean Warbler: 1 (rarely observed on Fort Drum in fall migration)

Prairie Warbler: 2 (rarely observed on Fort Drum in fall migration—local birds?)

Magnolia Warbler: 3

American Redstart: 2

Black-and-white Warbler: 3

Common Yellowthroat: > 25

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 September 2008

Despite the apparent departure the previous week of at least some Red-headed Woodpeckers, this species was still conspicuous in TA 5D on September 2. At least 4 adults and 5 fledglings were seen in a loose group foraging in the open oak woodlands near the southwestern corner of this training area. Other species in the area included numerous Eastern Wood-Pewees and a Yellow-throated Vireo. On the same date several migrating shorebirds were observed in a wetlands mitigation project that is underway at the corner of Reedville Road and Rt. 29. Shorebirds present included 35 Killdeer, 5 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Solitary Sandpiper, and 3 Least Sandpipers.

Several large flocks of migrating warblers were observed in TAs 3 and 4 on September 3. A Golden-winged Warbler was in a small flock of Chestnut-sided and Magnolia Warblers in TA 3E, and several singing Black-and-white Warblers were elsewhere in TA 3. A larger flock in TA 4E included many White-throated Sparrows and Eastern Towhees along with the following warblers:

Nashville Warbler: 6

Tennessee Warbler: 2

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 5

Magnolia Warbler: 5

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1

Cape May Warbler: 1

Black-throated Green Warbler: 2

Blackburnian Warbler: 4

Blackpoll Warbler: 5

Bay-breasted Warbler: 3

American Redstart: 3

Ovenbird: 1

Wilson's Warbler: 3

Common Yellowthroat: 12

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 11 September 2008

On 8 September, surveyors checking up on locations where males held territories earlier in the season found 6 Sedge Wrens in TA 12D and 2 Henslow's Sparrows in TA 12C. The Sedge Wrens were mostly immature birds that appeared to still be on their natal territories. At least one of the Henslow's Sparrows was a molting adult. Other birds seen in the area included a Lincoln's Sparrow along Dogwood Lane and 4 Palm Warblers near the latrine in TA 12C. A large movement of Savannah Sparrows was noted in the TA 12 grasslands on this date.

Also on 8 September, two adult Red-headed Woodpeckers were observed feeding a fledgling in TA 5D on the same territory where a recently fledged bird was found in July. The presence of dependent young in the same location two months apart suggests that this territorial pair successfully nested twice this season. Red-headed Woodpeckers often raise two broods, but successful double-clutching has never before been documented on Fort Drum.

A warbler flock observed in TA 3A during the afternoon of 8 September included the following:

Nashville Warbler: 2

Northern Parula: 1

Magnolia Warbler: 3

Black-throated Green Warbler: 5

Blackpoll Warbler: 1

Bay-breasted Warbler: 1

Black-and-white Warbler: 1

American Redstart: 1

A waterfowl survey conducted on 9 September found generally small numbers of ducks and geese, with no large concentrations anywhere. At Matoon Marsh in TA 17B were 2 Wood Duck, 12 Mallard, 2 American Black Duck, and 1 Gadwall. Other birds seen here included 10 Pied-billed Grebes, 1 American Bittern, and 1 Belted Kingfisher. Small numbers of Wood Ducks and Mallards were scattered throughout the training areas, with the only other duck species noted being a Green-winged Teal in TA 13A.

A survey of the grasslands near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on 10 September found dozens of Vesper Sparrows and smaller numbers of Grasshopper and Field Sparrows but no so-called "grasspipers" (shorebirds that use upland grasslands). Several flocks of Canada Geese were seen flying overhead—this was the first day of fall migration that migrating geese were conspicuous. Other species noted in the area were 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 2 flyover Horned Larks, and several flyover Bobolinks.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 11 September 2008

A waterfowl survey conducted on 9 September found generally small numbers of ducks and geese, with no large concentrations anywhere. At Matoon Marsh in TA 17B were 2 Wood Duck, 12 Mallard, 2 American Black Duck, and 1 Gadwall. Other birds seen here included 10 Pied-billed Grebes, 1 American Bittern, and 1 Belted Kingfisher. Small numbers of Wood Ducks and Mallards were scattered throughout the training areas, with the only other duck species noted being a Green-winged Teal in TA 13A.

A survey of the grasslands near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on 10 September found dozens of Vesper Sparrows and smaller numbers of Grasshopper and Field Sparrows but no so-called “grasspipers” (shorebirds that use upland grasslands). Several flocks of Canada Geese were seen flying overhead—this was the first day of fall migration that migrating geese were conspicuous. Other species noted in the area were 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 2 flyover Horned Larks, and several flyover Bobolinks.

Ducks seen on 10 September included 8 Green-winged Teal, 1 Northern Pintail, 1 Mallard, and 1 American Black Duck in a pond in TA 6A, and 2 Green-winged Teal at the intersection of Reedville Road and County Route 29. This last location is a wetlands mitigation site under development and has hosted a small group of shorebirds for several weeks. Seen here daily this week have been 15-30 Killdeer and 1-3 each Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, and Least Sandpiper. Other species using the site include Great Blue Heron and Mourning Dove, and beginning on 10 September American Pipit.

Southerly winds on 11 September made migrant birds very difficult to find, although a small flock of warblers in TA 3D included 2 Tennessee Warblers, 1 Black-throated Green Warbler, 1 Blackpoll Warbler, 2 Ovenbirds, 1 American Redstart, and 1 Canada Warbler, with at least 5 Common Yellowthroats in the area. In TA 3E, a Sedge Wren was observed near a location where 4 immatures were found in July, and a nearby Clay-colored Sparrow was one of five sparrow species in the area.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 September 2008

The highlight of the fall so far has been a moose seen by several people in Training Areas 4 and 5 on 24-25 September. The week prior, moose tracks were observed in Training Area 14—whether the tracks were from the same individual is unknown.

Early fall is the breeding season for moose in northern New York and is a peak time of moose activity. Moose are wandering to look for mates, leading them to areas where they are not typically seen. Moose are a rare occurrence on Fort Drum. Moose tracks were seen in Training Area 19 in October 2002 and a moose and other moose tracks were seen in Training Area 4 and 5 in September-October 2003.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) estimates that New York has a population of approximately 500 moose in the Adirondacks and surrounding areas. Over the past couple of decades the moose population has increased mainly by entering the state from Vermont and Canada. Now the increase in population is mainly due to the birth of moose calves here in New York. The moose is a protected species in New York and it is not legal to kill a moose.



Young bull moose in Training Area 5B on 24 Sep 2008.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 September 2008

During the week of 15 September Canada Geese began moving in decent numbers. There were also reports of Mallards, American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, and American Wigeon gathering in favored ponds and marshes at night, although few concentrations of ducks were seen during daytime. Small numbers of shorebirds continued at the wetlands mitigation site at the west end of Reedville Road, with 10-25 Killdeer and 1-3 each Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, and Least Sandpiper occurring daily. On 16 September a Merlin, probably an immature bird, repeatedly chased the shorebirds around the mitigation site, but seemed hesitant about trying to take a shorebird as large as a Killdeer and Yellowlegs.

Modest flights of songbirds were noted on several dates. A large movement of thrushes in TA 6A on 16 September included many Swainson's Thrushes, several Veerys, and one Gray-cheeked Thrush. On 17 September a flock of about 25 migrating warblers in TA 14D included one Wilson's Warbler. That date also saw the arrival of the first Ruby-crowned Kinglets of the season as well as the first sizeable wave of Yellow-rumped Warblers. A large flock of migrants in TA 3A on 18 September included 3 species of vireo, including 3 Philadelphia Vireos, which is a large number of "Philly Vs" to see at once. This flock also included several Swainson's Thrushes, six species of warbler including Tennessee and Blackpoll, and numerous Northern Flickers. Several Northern Parulas and a Canada Warbler were nearby. Also on the 18th a Red-headed Woodpecker was heard calling east of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield.

Migrant songbirds were present in good variety on 22 September. In addition to the usual shorebirds at the Reedville wetlands mitigation site were at least 10 American Pipits. In TA 12D along Dogwood Road were a Sedge Wren and a Lincoln's Sparrow. Three Clay-colored Sparrows, probably breeders or their offspring, were found in the north end of TA 13A. A large flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers along Hunter Creek in TA 12C included one bright Cape May Warbler and at least 8 Palm Warblers. Winds shifted to the south on 23 September, slowing migration down substantially, and relatively few migrants were noted during the next few days. On 25 September the highlight was a Merlin observed flying over TA 12C.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 4 October 2008

This week saw the arrival and increase of a number of typically late-migrating species, including Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbird. Canada Goose migration also picked up substantially, with numerous flocks passing overhead daily. By week's end no Snow Geese had been seen on Fort Drum yet, but small numbers were observed near the installation. Birding was generally slow on 29 September, but an American Golden-Plover at the Reedville Road wetlands mitigation site was the first documented sighting of this species on the installation. Golden-Plovers probably pass through the Fort Drum area in very small numbers most years, and an observation of one was overdue. Also seen at the mitigation site were 2 Greater Yellowlegs and several American Pipits.

North winds on the night of 29/30 September resulted in much better birding on 30 September. A total of 11 species of warblers were seen in TA 12, with the largest flock along Antwerp Road where it crosses Hunter Creek (boundary of TA 12C and 13A). At this location were 1 Nashville Warbler, 1 Tennessee Warbler, at least 60 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 12 Palm Warblers (including both the "Yellow" and "Western" subspecies), 1 Blackpoll Warbler, 1 Lincoln's Sparrow, and 2 White-crowned Sparrows. Warblers seen elsewhere in TA 12 included Northern Parula; Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Black-throated Blue Warblers; Ovenbird; and Common Yellowthroat.

The birding was even better on 1 October, with 13 species of warbler and many other songbirds. A particularly impressive flock of migrants was along Reedville Road east of Antwerp Road. Among the 10 species of warbler found at this location were one each Orange-crowned and Connecticut Warbler. These two species are generally the most difficult to find warblers that regularly occur in the northeastern United States, with the Connecticut being particularly elusive. Here is a complete list of birds seen at this spot during about 45 minutes Wednesday afternoon:

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 4 October 2008

Hairy Woodpecker: 2	Northern Parula: 1
Downy Woodpecker: 1	Magnolia Warbler: 1
Northern Flicker: 18	Black-throated Green Warbler: 17
Red-eyed Vireo: 1	Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2
Blue-headed Vireo: 1	Blackpoll Warbler: 2
Blue Jay: 7	American Redstart: 1
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 2	Common Yellowthroat: 3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: about 50	CONNECTICUT WARBLER: 1
American Robin: 45	Eastern Towhee: 3
Gray Catbird: 4	White-throated Sparrow: about 60
Cedar Waxwing: 2	Rusty Blackbird: 7
Orange-crowned Warbler: 1	Purple Finch: 1
Nashville Warbler: 4	Black-capped Chickadee: 7

Also on 1 October, a large mixed flock in TA 8C included numerous Red-breasted Nuthatches, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Brown Creeper, and Tennessee, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. On a nearby beaver pond were approximately 80 Green-winged Teal and 5 Solitary Sandpipers, with numerous Hermit Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, and White-throated Sparrows in the woods adjacent to the pond. Warbler numbers seemed a little lower on 2 October, but plenty of birds were around still. During a 15 minute period in TA 13B 2 Merlins and 1 Peregrine Falcon passed overhead, all following the same path heading from north to south. A Sedge Wren was in a small dogwood clump along the southern boundary of this sub-training area, very near a location where an adult Sedge Wren was seen feeding young in August. Other birds in this area included Tennessee and Nashville Warblers, Lincoln's and White-crowned Sparrows, and several Rusty Blackbirds.

A large flock of migrants in TA 5B on 3 October included dozens each of Northern Flickers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Robins, Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green Warblers, and White-throated Sparrows. Along Antwerp Road in TA 13A was another Orange-crowned Warbler feeding in brush along the edge of a large field. Nearby were 5 Palm Warblers, 1 Lincoln's Sparrow, and 1 Clay-colored Sparrow, the latter probably a lingering breeder rather than a migrant.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 October 2008

On 6 October, large numbers of Canada Geese passed over the installation, and Yellow-rumped Warblers were ubiquitous, but otherwise birding was relatively slow. One flock of about 200 Canada Geese had a Common Merganser leading it as it passed over TA 8A. On a nearby pond along Alexandria Road were 24 Green-winged Teal and 1 Solitary Sandpiper. One Greater Yellowlegs continued at the Reedville wetlands mitigation site. Among the numerous Yellow-rumped Warbler flocks individuals of only 4 other warbler species were found: Northern Parula, and Nashville, Palm, and Blackpoll Warblers. A dispersed flock of more than 50 sparrows in TA 5D grassy fields included Chipping, Field, Savannah, Vesper, White-crowned Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Junco. The nearby oak woodlands were mostly quiet, but one Winter Wren was very active and a Gray-cheeked Thrush and several American Pipits called as they flew over. In TA 7B two Red-shouldered Hawks were quite vocal as they soared overhead.

Southerly winds over the next three days resulted in even slower birding. On 7 October a large sparrow flock in TA 7D included the same mix of species as the flock seen the previous day, but no sizable flocks of passerines were seen the rest of the week. In addition to Yellow-rumped Warbler and the sparrows mentioned above, several species were seen widely in small numbers throughout the week, including Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, and Rusty Blackbird. Among the few highlights were 5 Solitary Sandpipers in TA 8A on 8 October, and a Sedge Wren on 9 October that betrayed its presence by uttering two call notes but otherwise was silent and hidden in the vegetation.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 October 2008

Bird diversity has declined substantially since early October, as most flycatchers, warblers, vireos, and many other neotropical migratory species have departed for their wintering grounds. Species moving in modest to good numbers since 14 October include Canada Goose; Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets; Hermit Thrush; American Robin; Yellow-rumped Warbler; Song, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows; Dark-eyed Junco; Rusty and Red-winged Blackbirds; Common Grackle, Purple Finch; and American Goldfinch.

A nice movement of migrants was noted in TA 7D on 15 October following a calm, clear, and brightly moon-lit night. A dispersed flock of birds in the area's woodlands included at least 100 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 175 Dark-eyed Juncos, with smaller numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets and White-throated Sparrows, and one Red-eyed Vireo, a species that is generally finished migrating through Fort Drum by this date. Nearby fields held modest numbers of Chipping, Savannah, Field, Vesper, and White-crowned Sparrows. Flying over these fields were several flocks each of Eastern Bluebird, Rusty and Red-winged Blackbirds, and at least 21 Pine Siskins, the latter a high count for the fall so far.

The season's first Rough-legged Hawk was observed over TA 13A on 16 October. Other raptors seen migrating over this TA included 5 Turkey Vultures, 1 Northern Harrier, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, and 1 Merlin. A mixed flock of 60 Snow Geese and 55 Canada Geese was observed nearby. Birding was very slow 20-22 October, although there were some new arrivals for the fall. The first Fox Sparrows seen on Fort Drum this season were in TA 14D on 20 October. Nearby a flock of 6 White-winged Crossbills flew overhead, representing the fall's daily high count on the installation. Two Northern Shrikes in TA 13A on 22 October were the first seen this season. Other birds of note on that date include a Greater Yellowlegs in TA 17B, 26 Hooded Mergansers on a pond in TA 12C, and another flyover White-winged Crossbill over TA 12A.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 October 2008

A substantial movement of birds occurred on 23 October, with crows and blackbirds passing through in especially large numbers. Among the birds noted migrating over TA 5D during a one-hour count were 3 American Pipits, 4 Eastern Bluebirds, approximately 1400 Red-winged Blackbirds accompanied by small numbers of Rusty Blackbirds and Common Grackles, and 18 Purple Finches. Surprisingly, a Red-throated Loon also was seen flying over this training area—a new and unexpected species for the installation. A Red-bellied Woodpecker was in the nearby oak woods. Later in the morning, about 250 American Crows were observed migrating south over TA 13A in several dispersed flocks each containing 30-80 individuals. Other migrants seen here included 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2 Fox Sparrows, and 6 Pine Siskins.



Red-throated Loon (Photo: US Fish & Wildlife Service)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 November 2008

Birding has slowed substantially since late October, as most summer residents and fall migrants have entirely left northern New York, although most wintering species have arrived in numbers. Any migrants that lingered to the end of October were given a good reason to leave when heavy wet snowfall on the night of 28/29 October left 6-12 inches of accumulation. With all the snow on the ground an American Woodcock seen flying over Rt. 26 into the Cantonment Area on 30 October was an unexpected sight.

Aside from an occasional flock of migrating Canada Geese, waterfowl have been difficult to locate in recent weeks. As has been the case for several months, Mallard numbers seem especially low, with just a few sightings of groups ranging in size from 4 to 21. American Black Ducks have also been scarce. The only duck present in good numbers through the first half of November was Hooded Merganser, with flocks of up to 50 present on several ponds in the northeastern corner of the installation. Among the few other waterfowl sightings were 5 Ring-necked Ducks on Indian Lake on 3 November and 3 Bufflehead in TA 4 on several dates beginning 31 October. Other recent waterbird sightings include a Common Loon on Indian Lake on 3 November, and a Pied-billed Grebe at Remington Pond on 19 November. By 20 November most ponds and small marshes on Fort Drum had frozen over, so that the few ducks present were limited to streams and the largest ponds.

So far winter raptor numbers have been fairly low, although diversity has been pretty good. The extensive fields in TAs 11 and 12 sometimes host dozens of raptors in the late fall and winter, but so far this season numbers have been unimpressive, with daily counts of 1-3 Rough-legged Hawks, 1-2 Red-tailed Hawks, and no Northern Harriers. Scattered harrier sightings have come from elsewhere on the installation, but these birds may have been migrating. On 12 November an immature Bald Eagle was seen soaring over TA 19A, and on 19 November a Golden Eagle, an adult or sub-adult, was seen flying over TA 17B. Beginning 14 November a Snowy Owl has been seen daily along Antwerp Road in TAs 11E, 12C, and 13A, generating some excitement.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 November 2008



Snowy owl in Training Area 11E on 19 November 2008.

In addition to the woodcock mentioned above, a few lingering waders or shorebirds have been spotted. Great Blue Herons were seen most days through 14 Nov but have largely left with the recent freeze-up. Greater Yellowlegs often occurs into November, but this year's latest sighting came on 28 October. Two Wilson's Snipe on the same day were nothing unusual, but two snipe seen in TA 17B 12 November seemed out of place given the snow that had fallen earlier.

Many passerines that typically remain into November or later seem unusually scarce this year. American Robin, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco generally can be found regularly well into November, but have been present in low numbers this year or difficult to find at all. The sparrow migration was poor this year, with many fewer birds passing through than is sometimes the case, so perhaps part of the explanation for the scarcity of lingerers is that fewer individuals were present to begin with. The following are the latest dates for which several more species have been seen on Fort Drum: Winter Wren (6 Nov), Yellow-rumped Warbler (3 Nov), Chipping Sparrow (31 Oct), Fox Sparrow (7 Nov), and Rusty Blackbird (6 Nov).

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 November 2008

Most of the regular wintering songbirds can now be found in the training areas. Northern Shrikes have been noted in several locations, including TA 4E near the intersection of Pleasant and Sycamore Roads; TA 7D near the railroad crossing on Rt. 3A; TA 13A near the north end of Antwerp Road; and TA 14B near Quarry Pond. American Tree Sparrows are present in good numbers in shrubby areas throughout the installation. Snow Buntings have been found in open areas throughout the installation since late October, but numbers so far have been low, and a flock of 40 in TA12D on 19 November was the only group of more than 10 observed so far. To date there have been no Lapland Longspurs and very few Horned Larks seen this fall.

Among the highlights of the fall has been the finch migration, especially the large numbers of White-winged Crossbills that have been moving. This species has largely been absent from Fort Drum since the irruption of 2001, but for much of this fall White-winged Crossbills were heard flying overhead almost every day. The peak came between the dates of 27 October and 7 November, when one-hour counts on three different days exceeded 40 individuals. Other finches observed daily for much of the fall include Purple Finch (max 22 on 27 Oct; scarce after 6 Nov), Pine Siskin (max 21 on 15 October with stragglers continuing), and American Goldfinch (max 50 on 7 November). All of these species have been widely reported throughout the northeastern United States over the past month or two, but a Pine Grosbeak heard flying over TA 14C on 4 November was one of a very small number of reports from the northeast so far this season.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 19 December 2008

Birding has been slow for the past few weeks, as is typical for December. Although fall migration wound down long ago, some birds have continued to move throughout the month. The most obvious late season migrants were Canada and Snow Geese, which passed over Fort Drum by the thousands on 10 and 11 December. Not many years ago such movements of geese (especially of Snows) were unheard of after November, but in recent years such flights have become larger and later.



Snow geese in flight. (Photo: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

Winter raptors are present in modest numbers throughout the installation, particularly in open areas. At least one or two Rough-legged Hawks can be seen in the large fields along Antwerp Road, with additional “Roughies” perching on trees along the western and northern boundaries of the installation and hunting in nearby hayfields located off-post.

On 18 December two immature Bald Eagles were seen roosting near the Indian River, and one (perhaps one of the same individuals) was in a tree in TA 13A along Antwerp Road. Sharp-shinned, Cooper’s, and Red-tailed Hawks and Northern Goshawk are present throughout Fort Drum.

The Snowy Owl seen in TAs 11, 12, and 13 earlier in the season has not been observed for at least two weeks. It is unclear whether this owl continued migrating, moved a short distance, or is still in the same area but has simply been missed. At least two Snowy Owls have been seen near Fort Drum recently, so perhaps the Fort Drum bird moved to a nearby area.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 19 December 2008

So-called half-hardy species (those that generally migrate south but are capable of surviving the northern winter and sometimes remain in small numbers) have been scarce this month, but there have been a few observations. Small numbers of American Robins continue to be seen, but usually just one at a time, with numbers lower than during some years. On 18 December a Northern Flicker was in TA 16 along Carr Road, and two Eastern Bluebirds were at the intersection of Carr Road and North Tank Trail.

Numbers of the more traditional wintering songbirds seem about normal for this time of year, and for instance the mass exodus of some mast-eating species (e.g., Blue Jay) that occurred last winter seems not to have repeated this winter, or at least not to the same extent. Northern Shrike numbers are average to slightly above average; good places to see shrikes include along Pleasant Road (especially the stretch from the intersection of Sycamore Road south for about a mile), Antwerp Road (especially near the intersection with Gray Road and north of Dogwood Road), and along the western boundary of the installation. Numbers of American Tree Sparrows and Snow Buntings seem lower than average.

It is another interesting year for irruptive species, with an almost totally different set of species present than was the case last year. White-winged Crossbills continue to be heard flying over the installation daily, and likely are feeding on conifer seeds throughout the installation, although sightings of birds actually perched in trees have been hard to come by. Smaller numbers of Pine Siskins continue to occur on the installation as well, with most sightings consisting of just one or two birds flying overhead. Unlike last year, redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks, and Bohemian Waxwings have been extremely scarce or absent entirely.