

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 8 January 2009

Birding continues to be slow, although there have been some bird movements during the past two weeks.

Heavy snowfall in late December seems to have contributed to the departure of some raptors and other birds that had been seen regularly. Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks continue to occur throughout the western training areas, but in roughly half the numbers that were present during the first half of December. The Antwerp Road Snowy Owl hasn't been observed since early December, but this or a different owl appears to have taken up a territory in the interior of TA 13A.

Half-hardy species such as Northern Flicker, American Robin, and Eastern Bluebird were observed prior to Christmas but haven't been seen yet in 2009.

The most interesting development of the early winter has been an influx of finches, with White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins continuing to move, and the season's first Common Redpolls appearing during the first week of January. The crossbill and siskin irruption this winter is among the largest in recent years, and there is some speculation that these species may nest in New York. Pine Siskins typically begin nesting in March, with the initiation of courtship behavior commencing as early as February or even late January. The crossbill nesting season is tied to food crops rather than time of year—both crossbill species wander throughout a large swath of the continent, settling down to breed when they find a particularly good supply of conifer cones. Nesting can occur during any month of the year, even during mid-winter in northern latitudes, and it is possible that some crossbills are nesting even now. Based on bird observations throughout northern New York, it seems likely that Common Redpolls will continue to increase during the coming weeks, and Pine Grosbeaks and Bohemian Waxwings may appear as well.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 January 2009

Birding has been generally slow with one notable exception, that being the continued invasion of finches. White-winged Crossbills have been present on Fort Drum since early fall, and continue to be seen and heard daily, usually as they fly overhead singly or in small flocks. Prior to early January Common Redpolls had been seen only a couple of times this winter, but on 12 January five flocks totaling nearly 500 individuals were observed in birch woodlands in TAs 7, 12, and 14. One of these flocks included at least 225 birds, and so far appears to be largest redpoll flock reported in New York this winter. More than 250 redpolls were seen on 22 January, and one flock in TA 14C included an apparent Hoary Redpoll. This latter bird was only seen briefly from below before it flew off with the 35 Common Redpolls it was with, but the lack of any dark markings on the pure white undertail coverts and the presence of just a couple of very narrow gray streaks on the flanks suggest Hoary. Despite the presence of large numbers elsewhere in northern New York, Pine Siskins have been scarce on Fort Drum over the past two weeks, and American Goldfinches have not been seen at all.



Common Redpoll in Training Area 14D on 12 January 2008.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 January 2009

Except for finches, birds have been tough to find recently. Raptor numbers remain low, with a few Rough-legged Hawks scattered throughout the open portions of the western Training Areas, Red-tailed Hawks occurring in small numbers throughout Fort Drum, and one immature Northern Goshawk in TA 4E. On 22 January 2 Common Ravens were observed chasing a Red-tailed Hawk for an extended period of time over TA 12A, suggesting that the ravens are already defending a territory and preparing to nest. Half-hardies have been scarce since mid-December, but one exception was a Winter Wren in TA 14E on 12 January, representing the first winter record for this species on Fort Drum.

Species seen on Fort Drum since 12 January:

American Black Duck
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Northern Goshawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Mourning Dove
Rock Pigeon
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Shrike
Blue Jay
American Crow

Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Winter Wren
European Starling
American Tree Sparrow
Snow Bunting
White-winged Crossbill
Common Redpoll
Hoary Redpoll
Pine Siskin

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 February 2009

Irruptive finches remain the highlight of the winter as far as birds are concerned. White-winged Crossbills continue throughout the Training Areas, although numbers seem to have declined during the past 2-3 weeks, and flyovers are no longer daily occurrences. Redpolls remain relatively easy to find in birch woodlands, but flock size appears to be declining. Redpolls were first seen in numbers this winter on 12 January, when a flock of at least 225 was found in Training Area 14D, and for the next two weeks multiple flocks of 60-120 were observed regularly, with daily tallies of 225 to 500 individuals. By 4 February most redpoll observations were of single individuals or groups of no more than 10, although larger flocks were occasionally seen. On 27 January a flock of about 85 Common Redpolls on Reedville Road included one Hoary Redpoll—identified by its overall very pale appearance, pure white undertail coverts, the presence of just 1-2 faint, wispy gray flank streaks, and a small bill with a distinctive pushed-in appearance. Another possible Hoary was seen on Lake School Road 4 February, but this observation was too brief to definitely rule out a very pale Common Redpoll.

On 30 January at least 19 Bohemian Waxwings were feeding in trees along U.S. Military Highway in Training Area 13A. These were the first waxwings observed on Fort Drum in many weeks, and the first Bohemians seen on Fort Drum this winter. Other irruptive species that are being seen elsewhere in northern New York, particularly Pine Siskin and Pine Grosbeak, have been largely absent from Fort Drum. In fact no Pine Grosbeaks have been reported on the installation this winter, despite numerous reports less than 50 miles to the north.

Other than finches and resident species such as Blue Jay, American Crow, and Black-capped Chickadee, birds have been tough to find. As the snow piled up in January many wintering species moved elsewhere, and most ground-feeding birds are virtually absent. For instance no American Tree Sparrows have been seen in weeks. It was therefore quite a surprise when a Song Sparrow turned up along Pleasant Creek below the dam at Remington Pond. On the very small patch of open water nearby were two each American Black Duck and Mallard.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 February 2009

Most birds of prey also apparently moved out as the snow depth increased, but a few remain. Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks continue in TA 12 and other open areas, although in low numbers. On 27 January an adult Bald Eagle flew over TA 14C. Northern Shrikes seem to have evacuated entirely. During late December and early January 2-4 shrikes were seen daily, but repeated efforts to relocate some of these individuals since 22 January have turned up no shrikes.

Species seen on Fort Drum since 24 January:

American Black Duck
Mallard
Wild Turkey
Ruffed Grouse
Bald Eagle
Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-breasted Nuthatch
European Starling
Bohemian Waxwing
Song Sparrow
White-winged Crossbill
Common Redpoll
Hoary Redpoll
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 February 2009

A mid-winter thaw in early and mid February partly opened up some previously frozen over ponds and stretches of river, and a few ducks and geese soon appeared. On 9 February 3 Canada Geese, 14 Common Goldeneye, and 1 Bufflehead were on the Black River adjacent to TA 6A. On 18 February 3 Canada Geese and 12 American Black Ducks were in a small patch of open water on Remington Pond. Several of the black ducks were engaged in courtship behavior.

A bright full moon on 9 February provided ideal conditions for a few hours of owling, the results of which were fairly good. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls responded to imitated calls in a large white cedar swamp in TA 14C. Nearby, in a TA 14D red pine plantation, an apparent Long-eared Owl called briefly. Great Horned and Barred Owls and four different packs of coyotes were also heard during the evening. On 17 February, a Snowy Owl was perched on a sign along Antwerp Road. This was the first time a Snowy Owl had been seen in this location since December, but this individual or another Snowy has been seen sporadically all winter from the center of TA13A.



Snowy Owl in Training Area 12B on 17 February 2009.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 February 2009

The mild weather in the middle of February may have contributed to the detection of three species that had not been seen or heard in many weeks. These species were a Golden-crowned Kinglet heard calling along Pleasant Road in TA 3A, a Horned Lark heard calling as it flew overhead nearby, and a flock of Cedar Waxwings that flew over Rt. 26 into the Cantonment Area. This latter flock was part of a general movement of waxwings into the region beginning in late January, but numbers have been lower on Fort Drum than in some nearby areas. Despite the warm up and the dwindling snowpack, many other typical wintering species remained elusive, including two species of normally regular winter birds, Northern Shrike and American Tree Sparrow, that were not seen at all.

Finches continue throughout the Training Areas but are becoming less conspicuous. Most redpoll sightings have been of small groups, generally about 5-25 individuals, although a flock of approximately 60 was in TA 6A on 16 February. On that same date two Pine Grosbeaks flew over the north end of Antwerp Road. This was the first Pine Grosbeak sighting of the winter on Fort Drum, but was not unexpected given the presence of numerous grosbeaks about 50 miles to the north. White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins continue to fly over all parts of the installation in apparently dwindling numbers.

Species seen or heard on Fort Drum since 5 February:

Canada Goose	Mourning Dove	White-winged Crossbill
American Black Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Pine Grosbeak
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Common Redpoll
Bufflehead	Pileated Woodpecker	Pine Siskin
Common Goldeneye	Blue Jay	American Goldfinch
Wild Turkey	American Crow	House Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Common Raven	
Red-tailed Hawk	Horned Lark	
Rough-legged Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	
Snowy Owl	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Great Horned Owl	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Long-eared Owl (probably)	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Barred Owl	European Starling	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Cedar Waxwing	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 March 2009

Spring migration has begun! Along with temperatures in the 40s and southwest winds, a frontal system 25-26 February brought a few birds to Fort Drum that likely had spent the winter a short distance to our south. On the 26th the first Ring-billed Gull of the year was seen flying over the Cantonment Area, a male Wood Duck was in a tiny pool of open water along Pleasant Creek in TA 4, and an American Kestrel flew over the Cantonment Area. A more substantial warm front 6-7 March brought the first large waves of geese to northern New York, with flocks of Canada and Snow Geese widely reported from throughout the region. Although only Canada Geese were reported from Fort Drum, it is highly probable that both species passed over the installation. Other species that arrived on these southwest winds included American Robin and Red-winged Blackbird. On 10 March a pair of Wood Ducks was on a small stretch of open water on the Indian River near Indian Pond.

After weeks with no Northern Shrike sightings, several shrikes were observed in TAs 12 and 13 in late February and early March. One of these birds was in an area of TA 13A where a shrike had been seen regularly until early January, and perhaps simply avoided detection during the past month. The others were in places where no shrikes had been seen this winter and may have been early migrants or wandering individuals. Other than these shrikes few birds have been noted in the grasslands recently, as the few raptors that had been present seem to have moved elsewhere, although 1-2 Rough-legged Hawks continue to be seen along the western boundary of the installation.



Northern Shrike in Training Area 13A.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 March 2009

Visits to a white cedar swamp in TA 14D on 24 February and 4 March turned up Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pine Siskin, and White-winged Crossbills. Common Redpolls were also in the area as well as elsewhere, but redpoll numbers continue to decline following the large mid-winter pulse that peaked in January. Also on 4 March, a flock of approximately 600 Snow Buntings was observed primarily in off-post farm fields but also in the grasslands in TA 12C. At least 25 Horned Larks were in an adjacent field the previous week.

Notable among other sightings were 4 immature and 2 adult Bald Eagles feeding on a deer carcass in TA 19 on 26 February. Two adult Bald Eagles were in TA 18A on 24 February. Also on 24 February were 24 Bohemian Waxwings along Antwerp Road. Another group of Bohemian Waxwings was heard flying over Range 17A on 9 March, but the flock wasn't seen so flock size could not be determined.

Birds seen on Fort Drum since 23 February:

Canada Goose
Wood Duck
American Black Duck
Mallard
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Bald Eagle
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
American Kestrel
Ring-billed Gull
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Shrike

Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Horned Lark
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Robin
Cedar Waxwing
Bohemian Waxwing
Snow Bunting
Red-winged Blackbird
White-winged Crossbill
Common Redpoll
Pine Siskin
House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 March 2009

The early spring migration continues, with several new arrivals showing up during the past two weeks. These arrivals include Turkey Vulture on 11 March, Killdeer on the 16th, Song Sparrow on the 17th, American Woodcock on the 18th, Eastern Bluebird on the 19th, Great Blue Heron on the 24th, and Red-shouldered Hawk on March 26. This period also saw dramatic increases in the abundance of several species that had first arrived in late February or early March, including American Robin, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Common Grackle, all of which passed over Fort Drum in large numbers on several days with southerly winds.

Clear skies and south winds contributed to large waterfowl movements 15-17 March, with 4 species of geese observed flying over Fort Drum. On 16 March numerous small flocks of Canada Geese passed over the western Training Areas, and a flock of about 60 geese included one Cackling Goose, a recently acknowledged species that is only illustrated in the most recent field guides. Cackling Goose basically refers to several of the smallest races of white-cheeked geese, and the goose seen on the 17th was of the “Richardson’s” race, which is the subspecies most likely to occur in the east. A one-hour count of geese passing over TA 14 on 17 March yielded the following results: 3300 Snow Geese, 2 Ross’s Geese, and 565 Canada Geese. Much like the Cackling Goose, the Ross’s Geese looked like miniature, short-necked versions of the geese they were flying with, which in this case was a flock of more than 600 Snow Geese. Good numbers of Snow and Canada Geese continued to move throughout the period on days with south winds.

In addition to migration, another sign of spring is the appearance of singing and displaying males of several species. Male Wild Turkeys were first seen displaying on 13 March. By 26 March large numbers of American Woodcock could be heard “peenting” and performing aerial displays throughout the western Training Areas. Singing Brown Creepers and Song Sparrows have been heard daily for at least the last week.



American Woodcock on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 March 2009

Wintering birds generally are becoming scarce, although several species can still be found. The few Rough-legged Hawks that wintered on Fort Drum departed by 10 March, but a small movement of Rough-legs passed through on 19 March. After a flurry of Northern Shrike sightings in late February and early March, this species has once again become scarce, with no sightings after 16 March. Bohemian Waxwings were much less common on Fort Drum than they were 50 miles to the north this winter, so 14 flying over Pleasant Road on 16 March was noteworthy. American Tree Sparrows remain largely absent, with the only report of a single individual on 17 March.

Winter finches continue to be observed throughout the installation, although no White-winged Crossbills have been seen or heard since 13 March, when a single calling bird was heard over TA 14D. A Pine Grosbeak was also heard over TA 14D on this date. Redpoll numbers declined steadily from a peak in mid-January, but flocks of 125+ in TA 12C on 16 March and 400+ in TA 12A on 24 March suggest a pulse of northward migrants. Pine Siskins continue to occur widely, with some indication of local breeding, although nesting has not yet been confirmed.

Birds seen on Fort Drum since 10 March:

Snow Goose	Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch
Ross's Goose	Rough-legged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Eastern Bluebird
Cackling Goose	Killdeer	American Robin
Wood Duck	American Woodcock	Bohemian Waxwing
American Black Duck	Ring-billed Gull	European Starling
Mallard	Mourning Dove	American Tree Sparrow
Common Merganser	Rock Pigeon	Song Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Downy Woodpecker	Snow Bunting
Ruffed Grouse	Hairy Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Wild Turkey	Pileated Woodpecker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Great Blue Heron	Northern Shrike	Common Grackle
Turkey Vulture	Blue Jay	Pine Grosbeak
Bald Eagle	American Crow	White-winged Crossbill
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Common Redpoll
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Horned Lark	Pine Siskin
Cooper's Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	American Goldfinch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Brown Creeper	House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 13 April 2009

Migration has proceeded fitfully since late March, as prolonged periods of north winds, sometimes accompanied by rain and even snow, have provided less than ideal conditions for migrating birds. Migrants have continued to trickle northward throughout this period despite the weather, but the only substantive passage of birds came 1-2 April, when a brief warm spell and southerly winds gave us the first true spring-like day of the year.

New arrivals to Fort Drum on 2 April included Wilson's Snipe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Fox Sparrow. Other arrivals noted since 26 March include Northern Flicker on 30 March, Pied-billed Grebe on 31 March, Eastern Phoebe on 1 April, Field Sparrow on 6 April, Winter Wren and Swamp Sparrow on 9 April, and Vesper Sparrow on 13 April. It should be noted that the abundance of cold, windy days has made it difficult to determine precise arrival dates, as many species may have shown up earlier than their first dates of detection but were hunkered down out of the weather and consequently not observed by field biologists. This seems particularly true for Winter Wren and Vesper Sparrow, as the dates they were first seen are somewhat later than these species normally arrive.



Vesper Sparrow in Training Area 5D in 2008.

No large movements of geese have been noted since 26 March, but a variety of waterfowl have been seen in installation ponds and lakes. On 31 March the year's first Pied-billed Grebes were on Matoon Marsh in TA 17B, and ducks in the area included Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Duck. Ring-necked Ducks have been particularly conspicuous on several ponds along FUSA Boulevard, mostly in groups of 5 to 25. Other ducks noted during the period include Greater Scaup in TA 14A on 16 April, and numerous Hooded and Common Mergansers throughout the installation.

There have been several notable raptor observations during the past two weeks. An immature Bald Eagle was at Matoon Marsh on 31 March, and at least one adult Bald Eagle was seen on several dates in late March and early April in the Indian Lake area. On 2 April an adult Northern Goshawk passed over TA 14C, apparently migrating. A Sharp-shinned Hawk seen in a hemlock stand in TA 5 on multiple dates indicates probable nesting.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 13 April 2009

A walk through TA 14C pine plantations on 2 April turned up good numbers of finches, including at least 11 Red Crossbills, some of which were singing and chasing, suggesting the possibility of local nesting. The only other Red Crossbill sighting on Fort Drum in 2009 was of a single bird that flew over TA 14 in February, but Red Crossbills have been noted elsewhere in northern New York so their appearance on the installation was not a surprise. Also probably nesting in the area were several Pine Siskins observed singing and chasing, but the few White-winged Crossbills that remain in the area showed no indications of breeding.

Several wintering species continue to be seen on Fort Drum, although in dwindling numbers. A Northern Shrike was in TA 17B on 31 March, and several American Tree Sparrows were nearby on this date and on 1 April. Common Redpolls have been heard flying overhead on several dates, and were still moving as of 13 April. Several Rough-legged Hawks have been seen migrating in the vicinity of Fort Drum, but none have been seen on the installation since early March.

Finally, the glorious weather on 2 April brought with it a number of signs of spring in addition to migrating birds. Butterflies were conspicuous along Fort Drum's roads, including numerous Compton Tortoiseshells, Eastern Commas, and Mourning Cloaks, and at least one Question Mark. This was also the date that spring peepers were first heard calling on the installation. This burst of life was all too brief, but gave a taste of what will come later in the spring.



Mourning Cloak in Training Area 7D in 2008.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 13 April 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum since 26 March:

Canada Goose	Blue Jay
Wood Duck	American Crow
American Black Duck	Common Raven
Mallard	Horned Lark
Green-winged Teal	Black-capped Chickadee
Ring-necked Duck	Brown Creeper
Common Merganser	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Hooded Merganser	White-breasted Nuthatch
Ruffed Grouse	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey	Winter Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Bluebird
Great Blue Heron	American Robin
Turkey Vulture	European Starling
Bald Eagle	Cedar Waxwing
Northern Harrier	American Tree Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Field Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Vesper Sparrow
Northern Goshawk	Fox Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Swamp Sparrow
American Kestrel	Song Sparrow
Killdeer	Dark-eyed Junco
Wilson's Snipe	Red-winged Blackbird
American Woodcock	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ring-billed Gull	Common Grackle
Mourning Dove	Purple Finch
Rock Pigeon	Red Crossbill
Belted Kingfisher	White-winged Crossbill
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Common Redpoll
Downy Woodpecker	Pine Siskin
Hairy Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Northern Flicker	House Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	
Eastern Phoebe	
Northern Shrike	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 April 2009

The bulk of the goose migration is over, but small numbers of Canada Geese continue to pass over Fort Drum most days. On 14 April a flock of 9 Snow Geese flew over Matoon Marsh in TA 17B for the only observation of this species over the past 10 days. Scattered Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead, and Common Mergansers have been seen throughout the installation, generally in groups of 2-6. Pairs of the regular breeding species of ducks—Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser—have been noted in good numbers.

At least two pairs each of Common Loon and Osprey were present in TA 19 on 21 April. One pair of Osprey had been seen at a nest on 16 April, but the 19th was the first date that loons were seen. The loon pairs were on Indian Lake and Indian Pond, two bodies of water where loons have nested in past years.

Raptor numbers continue to increase, and all of Fort Drum's regular breeding species have now been seen except for Merlin, a species for which nesting is suspected but has not yet been confirmed. The most recent arrival was Broad-winged Hawk, which was first seen on 22 April, although at least a few were likely present for several days prior to this date. Also on 22 April, a drive down Antwerp Road produced at least 4 Northern Harriers, 2 Rough-legged Hawks, and 2 Red-tailed Hawks. Rough-legged Hawks normally leave northern New York in late April or early May, although during some years one or two immature birds linger into the late spring or even summer.

The passerine migration started to pick up during the past week, as is typical for the latter half of April. Some arrival dates include Pine Warbler on 16 April, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, and Eastern Towhee on 17 April, Yellow-rumped Warbler on 20 April, and Chipping Sparrow on 21 April. Other songbirds noted in increasing numbers included Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, and Field, Swamp and Song Sparrows.

Irruptive finches continue on Fort Drum. Pine Siskin numbers appear to have increased since early April, as flocks of obviously migrating siskins have been seen flying over the installation on several dates. Breeding has not yet been confirmed this year, but siskins engaging in territorial and courtship behaviors have been observed several times in TA 14C. Red Crossbill numbers have increased in this same area, but it is not yet clear whether these birds are nesting locally. White-winged Crossbill reports have declined substantially since mid-winter, but small numbers of calling birds have been heard in TA 19 as recently as 16 April. Redpolls have also largely left northern New York, although stragglers were heard calling overhead daily through at least 16 April. During this same period Purple Finches suddenly became ubiquitous, with singing males heard in virtually every wooded or semi-wooded area on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 April 2009

Bats have also been seen on Fort Drum indicating they have left their hibernacula. Unfortunately, these were daytime sightings which are not normal for these nocturnal animals. Whether these bats are afflicted with white nose syndrome is unknown. Bats will be surveyed and monitored throughout the coming season.

Finally, two other notable mammal sightings were made on 20 April. Early in the morning a black bear was seen running across Simonet Road from off-post into TA 3B. About two hours later a fisher was observed foraging in TA 6A. Both species are relatively common but infrequently seen on Fort Drum.

Birds seen on Fort Drum since 13 April:

Snow Goose	Wilson's Snipe	Winter Wren
Canada Goose	Hermit Thrush	Eastern Bluebird
Wood Duck	American Robin	Cedar Waxwing
American Black Duck	Brown Thrasher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Mallard	European Starling	Pine Warbler
Green-winged Teal	American Woodcock	Eastern Towhee
Ring-necked Duck	Ring-billed Gull	American Tree Sparrow
Bufflehead	Herring Gull	Chipping Sparrow
Common Merganser	Mourning Dove	Field Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Rock Pigeon	Vesper Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Belted Kingfisher	Savannah Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Fox Sparrow
Common Loon	Downy Woodpecker	Swamp Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Hairy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
American Bittern	Northern Flicker	Dark-eyed Junco
Great Blue Heron	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Phoebe	Red-winged Blackbird
Osprey	Blue Jay	Brown-headed Cowbird
Bald Eagle	American Crow	Common Grackle
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Rusty Blackbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Horned Lark	Purple Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow	House Finch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Red Crossbill
Broad-winged Hawk	Brown Creeper	White-winged Crossbill
Rough-legged Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Redpoll
Red-tailed Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Pine Siskin
American Kestrel	White-breasted Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Killdeer	Red-breasted Nuthatch	House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 1 May 2009

Unusually warm weather and southerly winds brought large numbers of migrant birds to Fort Drum during the last week of April, with many species arriving several days to a week or more before their average dates of arrival. Bird movements were particularly noticeable 27 and 28 April, when 12 species each of warbler and sparrow were observed, exceptional totals for so early in the season. Many of Fort Drum's most sought after species showed up during this period, including Upland Sandpiper, Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Henslow's and Clay-colored Sparrows.

Fort Drum biologists conducted surveys for American Woodcock on several nights between 24 and 29 April. Each survey route consisted of 10 stops located 0.4 mile apart, and at each stop all peenting woodcock were counted during a two minute period. On the eight survey routes completed so far a total of 155 American Woodcock were counted, with an impressive tally of 37 individuals on one route. Also heard on these routes were two Barred Owls, one Great Horned Owl, and 30 Whip-poor-wills, including 14 "Whips" on one route on FUSA Boulevard on 29 April. The earliest date a Whip-poor-will was heard on Fort Drum this year was 24 April.



American Woodcock

A steady stream of Broad-winged Hawks passed over TA 7 on 27 April, when at least a few individuals and occasionally groups of 8-15 were seen or heard overhead continuously for more than an hour. Otherwise the raptor migration was not particularly conspicuous during the period, although a single Rough-legged Hawk flew over TA3 on 29 April. Several pairs of Northern Harriers have been noted throughout the western side of the installation.

Three Red-headed Woodpeckers were found in TA 5D on 30 April, but these birds were remarkably inconspicuous given their flashy plumage. Two biologists had spent an hour searching the area for them before finally encountering the first individual. Similar efforts to locate Red-headed Woodpeckers had been made on several previous days, but given how quiet these birds were on the 30th it is not clear when the first individual arrived. Still, most individuals likely have not yet returned from their wintering grounds. While searching for the woodpeckers a single Upland Sandpiper "wolf whistle" was heard from within the Wheeler Sack Army Airfield fence to the west.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 1 May 2009

After months of silence, Fort Drum's forests were suddenly full of bird song this week. A walk through TA 9A on 27 April turned up numerous Blue-headed Vireos, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, Nashville, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Green Warblers, and Northern Waterthrushes. This same area seemed relatively birdless only a week earlier. The most impressive push of migrants so far came the next day, as indicated by the following list of arrivals: Green Heron, Sora, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Clay-colored Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Also heard were birds singing Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warbler songs, but neither individual was seen, and since these two species and their hybrids can all sing each other's songs, the precise identity of the singers isn't clear. New arrivals on 29 April included Ovenbird and Baltimore Oriole.



Baltimore Oriole

Although Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows usually arrive on Fort Drum in early May, both have been found during the last week of April in past years, but the Clay-colored Sparrow was a surprise. Historically Clay-colored Sparrows usually appear on Fort Drum between 9 and 12 May, so the singing male that showed up on the west side of Wheeler Sack Army Airfield was nearly two weeks early. At least five Grasshopper Sparrows were also heard singing around the perimeter of the airfield on 29 April, and a thorough search likely would have turned up more. Similarly, a relatively limited effort to find Henslow's Sparrows along Antwerp Road resulted in the detection of three singing males, all in TA 13A within about ¼-mile north and south of Poagland Road.

Typical of the season, most of our winter birds have departed, but a few finches linger. On 27 April one each Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill were heard calling over TA 14C. White-winged Crossbills have been found in the area consistently since last fall, although no evidence of nesting has been observed. Red Crossbills appeared in this area more recently and showed some indication that they might nest, but this too has not been confirmed. Pine Siskins, on the other hand, are almost certainly breeding in this TA and perhaps elsewhere on Fort Drum. Numerous Pine Siskins continue to pass through the area as well, and this species was heard daily everywhere field work was performed.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 1 May 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 23 April - 1 May:

Canada Goose	Blue Jay	Field Sparrow
Wood Duck	American Crow	Vesper Sparrow
Mallard	Common Raven	Savannah Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Horned Lark	Grasshopper Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Tree Swallow	Henslow's Sparrow
American Bittern	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Fox Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Barn Swallow	Song Sparrow
Green Heron	Black-capped Chickadee	Swamp Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Red-breasted Nuthatch	White-throated Sparrow
Northern Harrier	White-breasted Nuthatch	Dark-eyed Junco
Broad-winged Hawk	Brown Creeper	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	House Wren	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rough-legged Hawk	Winter Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
American Kestrel	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Eastern Meadowlark
Virginia Rail	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Rusty Blackbird
Sora	Eastern Bluebird	Common Grackle
Killdeer	Hermit Thrush	Brown-headed Cowbird
Greater Yellowlegs	Wood Thrush	Baltimore Oriole
Upland Sandpiper	American Robin	Purple Finch
Wilson's Snipe	Gray Catbird	House Finch
American Woodcock	Brown Thrasher	Red Crossbill
Ring-billed Gull	European Starling	White-winged Crossbill
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing	Pine Siskin
Mourning Dove	Golden-winged/Blue-winged Warbler	American Goldfinch
Great Horned Owl	Nashville Warbler	House Sparrow
Barred Owl	Yellow Warbler	
Whip-poor-will	Chestnut-sided Warbler	
Belted Kingfisher	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-throated Green Warbler	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Pine Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker	Palm Warbler	
Hairy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	
Northern Flicker	Ovenbird	
Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	
Least Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat	
Eastern Phoebe	Eastern Towhee	
Great Crested Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow	
Blue-headed Vireo	Clay-colored Sparrow	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 14 May 2009

Waterfowl migration is generally winding down, with just a few species moving in significant numbers. Brant are typically among the latest waterfowl to migrate, but are seen only infrequently on Fort Drum, so a flock of 25-30 flying over the installation at sunrise on 12 May was noteworthy. A waterfowl survey conducted along the Indian River and nearby areas of TA 19D on 11 May turned up only 3 Wood Ducks. Other species encountered during the survey included a Red-shouldered Hawk and 13 species of warbler. Farther south, at least 17 Bank Swallows were at a colony along FUSA Boulevard near the southern end of this road.

Biologists monitoring Red-headed Woodpeckers in TA 5D on 13 May easily found 7 individuals, including two apparent pairs, near the western edge of the Training Area. One of the pairs was observed alternately engaging in courtship behavior and chases with a neighboring individual. During the surveys an Upland Sandpiper flew low over TA 5D. Other non-passerine sightings of note include an early Common Nighthawk on 6 May (the only one seen or heard so far), Solitary Sandpipers in TAs 9 and 12 on 12 May, and an immature Bald Eagle that flew over TA 3B on 13 May.



Red-headed Woodpecker in Training Area 5.

Large numbers of songbirds continue to arrive on Fort Drum, as spring migration is nearing its peak. The first half of May brought many vireos, thrushes, warblers, orioles, and other songbirds to the installation, and the majority of breeding species are now present. A few species have yet to arrive, but the appearance of Alder Flycatcher in TA 3C on 13 May, about a week earlier than average, reflects the overall pattern of early arrivals seen this season, and if this pattern continues virtually all of Fort Drum's breeders may be back within another week or so.

Twenty-two species of warbler were observed during the period, as most breeding species are now common, and more northern breeders have begun to pass through. Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers have been observed in many areas, including along Pleasant Road north of Elm Road; Antwerp Road between TAs 12A and 11B; and in TA 14D along Figert Road and Russell Turnpike. Near the intersection of these roads two Prairie Warblers were heard singing on 7 May; in recent years this has been the most reliable location on Fort Drum for this species.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 14 May 2009

Among typically late arriving warblers, the first Canada Warbler was seen on 11 May, but no Mourning Warblers have been found yet. No Cerulean Warbler has been located, either, although this is the rarest of Fort Drum's regular breeding warblers, and during some years none are found until May. Highlights among migrant warblers include the first Tennessee on 13 May, and the first Bay-breasted on 14 May.



Clay-colored Sparrow in Training Area 12.

All of Fort Drum's breeding species of sparrows now appear to be present in good numbers. On 12 May at least 6 Henslow's Sparrows were heard singing east of Antwerp Road within 0.5 mile of Poagland Road. Several of these birds were visible from the road and would likely provide excellent views to a birder equipped with a spotting scope. Several Clay-colored Sparrows were singing from the shrubby fields to the west of Antwerp Road along this same stretch. Additional Clay-colored Sparrows were found the previous day in the shrubby areas along the Main Tank Trail immediately east of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. Several Grasshopper Sparrows and numerous Vesper Sparrows were in the more open areas along this same road.

Species list for 4 – 14 May on Page 3.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 14 May 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 4-14 May:

Brant	Yellow-throated Vireo	Black-throated Green Warbler
Canada Goose	Blue-headed Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Wood Duck	Warbling Vireo	Pine Warbler
Mallard	Red-eyed Vireo	Prairie Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Blue Jay	Palm Warbler
Wild Turkey	American Crow	Bay-breasted Warbler
American Bittern	Common Raven	Black-and-white Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Tree Swallow	American Redstart
Green Heron	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Ovenbird
Turkey Vulture	Bank Swallow	Northern Waterthrush
Bald Eagle	Barn Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Northern Harrier	Black-capped Chickadee	Canada Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Scarlet Tanager
Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
American Kestrel	Brown Creeper	Chipping Sparrow
Virginia Rail	House Wren	Clay-colored Sparrow
Sora	Winter Wren	Field Sparrow
Killdeer	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Vesper Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Savannah Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	Grasshopper Sparrow
Upland Sandpiper	Veery	Henslow's Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Swainson's Thrush	Song Sparrow
American Woodcock	Hermit Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Wood Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	American Robin	White-crowned Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Gray Catbird	Northern Cardinal
Common Nighthawk	Brown Thrasher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Whip-poor-will	European Starling	Bobolink
Belted Kingfisher	American Pipit	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Eastern Meadowlark
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blue-winged Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Downy Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Common Grackle
Hairy Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Flicker	Nashville Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Parula	Purple Finch
Alder Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler	Pine Siskin
Least Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler	American Goldfinch
Eastern Phoebe	Magnolia Warbler	House Sparrow
Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Eastern Kingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 May 2009

During the last two weeks most late spring migrants have arrived on Fort Drum and spring migration is now winding down, although a few species are still passing through. All of Fort Drum's regular breeding species have now been seen this year except for Cerulean Warbler and Sedge Wren. Cerulean Warbler is among the rarest breeding species on Fort Drum and often none are seen in locations that are easily accessible to birders. No Sedge Wrens were found on targeted searches for this species on 26 and 27 May, and it is likely that none have arrived yet. During some years Sedge Wrens show up in May, but during other years none are found until mid or late June or even July.

Among the most interesting migrants seen during the past two weeks are several species that don't breed on the installation but just pass through each spring and fall. Observations of such species from this season include a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in TA 5B on 26 May; an Olive-sided Flycatcher in TA 15C on 28 May; Northern Parulas and Tennessee Warblers in TA 3 on 15 and 18 May; 1-2 Wilson's Warblers per day in TA 3B between 12 and 15 May; 5-10+ Blackpoll Warblers per day throughout the last week and a half of May, and up to three White-crowned Sparrows per day in TA 3 during the middle of the month.

Except for Sedge Wrens, all of Fort Drum's regular nesting grassland birds have been found on territory. Unfortunately, the only Upland Sandpiper that has been observed is within the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield fence, an area that is inaccessible to birders. Occasionally a bird suspected to be from this territory has been seen flying over TA 5B or 5D near the intersection of the Main Tank Tail and Rt. 29. At least 7 Henslow's Sparrows continue to sing from TA 13B east of Antwerp Road. Perhaps the most accessible of these birds is occupying a territory about 100 yards south of Poagland Road. Several Clay-colored Sparrows are in this general area as well. Another good place for Clay-colored Sparrows is along the Main Tank Trail immediately west of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, in regenerating clearcuts. Grasshopper Sparrows can easily be found in the more open, grassy places along this road.

The last woodcock survey route of the season was conducted along Reedville and Antwerp Roads on the evening of 15 May. Immediately prior to the survey, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was heard near the intersection of these two roads, and a Golden-winged Warbler was seen just west of the intersection. During the survey 26 American Woodcock and nine Whip-poor-wills were heard, along with several Wilson's Snipe. These results brought the season's total to over 200 woodcock on 13 routes.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 May 2009

On 16 May 10 birders participated in a field tour of Fort Drum in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day. Unfortunately, high wind, thunderstorms, and even hail made birding difficult, and the day's total of 65 species was well below the 85-90 that are usually tallied on this trip. Most trip participants were hoping to see a Henslow's Sparrow, but the winds were especially strong in the grassland areas, and the birds sang poorly and seemed to be hunkered down out of sight. Highlights of the trip included excellent looks at two Red-headed Woodpeckers in TA 5D and a Golden-winged Warbler along Figert Road in TA 14. Figert Road is a particularly good place to see warblers, with as many as 17 breeding species along a road that is about two miles long. In addition to some of the breeders, Northern Parula, Tennessee Warbler, and Bay-breasted Warbler were heard on the 16th. Several Prairie Warbler territories are in the fields at the north end of Figert Road, but a thunderstorm moved in as the field trip party reached this location, preventing any chance of locating the birds.

Golden-winged Warblers continue to sing well, but must be seen for a correct identification, as Blue-winged Warblers are now nearly as common on Fort Drum, and the two species frequently sing each other's songs. As has been the trend for the past several years, Blue-winged Warblers have been found in several locations this year where only Golden-wings have been found in past years. In addition to Figert Road, locations where Golden-winged Warblers have been seen this year include Antwerp Road in TA 12A just north of the railroad tracks, multiple locations along Reedville Road, and several locations along Carr Road. Another warbler species that visiting birders often ask about is Mourning Warbler. This species is locally common in forested areas that have been thinned in recent years. Good places to look for Mourning Warblers include FUSA Boulevard east of Indian Lake, U.S. Military Highway between Russell Turnpike and South Tank Trail, or the patch clearcuts in TA 14E that were created to ensure the presence on Fort Drum of early successional habitats for birds.

Red-headed Woodpeckers have generally been inconspicuous during the past week, suggesting that nesting is underway. The best places to see Red-headed Woodpeckers are in TAs 5B and 5D east of County Rt. 29. Patience is necessary, as these flashy birds can be remarkably difficult to find when they are not calling. For instance, two biologists walked around 4 territories on the morning of 29 May and had only fleeting glimpses of birds on two territories, and saw none on the other two. At least one Common Nighthawk was heard calling over TA 5B during this visit, and a decent fallout of warbles also was noted here, including 20+ Blackpoll Warblers, three each Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Magnolia Warblers, and one Black-throated Blue Warbler.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 May 2009

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Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 May 2009

Also on 29 May, a visit to the Matoon Creek Marsh in TA 17B turned up the season's first Least Bittern and a rare sighting of a Black Tern. At least two Least Bitterns were present, with one calling from the west end of the marsh and another individual (perhaps more than one) seen several times flying over the cattails on the north side of the marsh. The Black Tern flew over the marsh from east to west and continued on, so may have simply been passing through. Additional visits will be made to determine whether Black Terns might nest here this year, as they have been suspected of doing only once or twice before during the last 15 years. Other species at the marsh included Pied-billed Grebe and Marsh Wren.

Birds seen on Fort Drum 15-28 May:

Canada Goose	Ring-billed Gull
Wood Duck	Black Tern
Mallard	Rock Pigeon
Ruffed Grouse	Mourning Dove
Wild Turkey	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Pied-billed Grebe	Black-billed Cuckoo
American Bittern	Great Horned Owl
Least Bittern	Whip-poor-will
Great Blue Heron	Belted Kingfisher
Green Heron	Red-headed Woodpecker
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Northern Harrier	Downy Woodpecker
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker
Broad-winged Hawk	Northern Flicker
Red-tailed Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker
American Kestrel	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Virginia Rail	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Sora	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Killdeer	Alder Flycatcher
Spotted Sandpiper	Willow Flycatcher
Solitary Sandpiper	Least Flycatcher
Upland Sandpiper	Eastern Phoebe
Least Sandpiper	Great Crested Flycatcher
Wilson's Snipe	Eastern Kingbird
American Woodcock	

Species list continued on Page 4.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 May 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 15-28 May (continued):

Yellow-throated Vireo	Black-throated Green Warbler
Blue-headed Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Warbling Vireo	Pine Warbler
Red-eyed Vireo	Prairie Warbler
Blue Jay	Bay-breasted Warbler
American Crow	Blackpoll Warbler
Common Raven	Black-and-white Warbler
Tree Swallow	American Redstart
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Ovenbird
Bank Swallow	Northern Waterthrush
Cliff Swallow	Mourning Warbler
Barn Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Black-capped Chickadee	Wilson's Warbler
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Canada Warbler
White-breasted Nuthatch	Scarlet Tanager
Brown Creeper	Eastern Towhee
House Wren	Chipping Sparrow
Winter Wren	Clay-colored Sparrow
Marsh Wren	Field Sparrow
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Vesper Sparrow
Eastern Bluebird	Savannah Sparrow
Veery	Grasshopper Sparrow
Hermit Thrush	Henslow's Sparrow
Wood Thrush	Song Sparrow
American Robin	Swamp Sparrow
Gray Catbird	White-throated Sparrow
Brown Thrasher	White-crowned Sparrow
European Starling	Northern Cardinal
Cedar Waxwing	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue-winged Warbler	Bobolink
Golden-winged Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
"Brewster's" Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Tennessee Warbler	Common Grackle
Nashville Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Parula	Baltimore Oriole
Yellow Warbler	Purple Finch
Chestnut-sided Warbler	White-winged Crossbill
Magnolia Warbler	American Goldfinch
Black-throated Blue Warbler	House Sparrow
Yellow-rumped Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 17 June 2009

Bird surveys conducted during the first half of June have turned up most of the breeding species usually found on Fort Drum, many of them in good numbers. Cerulean Warbler has yet to be found on the installation, but some areas where this species has historically occurred have been inaccessible and surveys are planned for the following weeks.

Highlights of grassland bird surveys conducted in TAs 12 and 13 during the second week of June included 12+ American Bitterns, 1 Short-eared Owl, 2 Sedge Wrens, 9 Henslow's Sparrows, 25+ Clay-colored Sparrows, and scores of Savannah Sparrows and Bobolinks. The Short-eared Owl is likely nesting in TA 13A in an area that has been closed to recreation all spring and summer, and represents the first suspected nesting of this species on Fort Drum since 2002 (nesting was confirmed in 2001). All but one of the Henslow's Sparrows were also in TA 13A in an area east of Antwerp Road roughly between Poagland and Dogwood Roads. Henslow's Sparrows often sing from exposed perches for extended periods of time, but do not typically allow close approach, so perhaps the best way to spot one is to listen for singing males from Antwerp Road and then scan the top of the vegetation with binoculars or preferably a spotting scope until the singer is spotted. Birders are requested to not walk into the fields after Henslow's Sparrows (or Short-eared Owls) to try to get close looks to avoid undue disturbance of these rare birds.



***Henslow's Sparrow in
Training Area 12D.***

In addition to Henslow's Sparrows, many visiting birders are interested in seeing Vesper, Grasshopper, and Clay-colored Sparrows, all three of which can be found fairly easily. Vesper Sparrows are abundant in open areas on sandy soil, and it is not unusual to see 10 or more on a drive around Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. Grasshopper Sparrows are more local, but usually can be seen along the airfield fence line in the larger grassy areas, especially at the north end of the airfield near the intersection of the Main Tank Trail and old County Route 29 (a Northern Mockingbird is here as well). A few Clay-colored Sparrows breed in the regenerating clearcuts along the Main Tank Trail near the airfield, but far larger numbers occur in the shrubbier portions of TAs 12 and 13. Usually a few Clay-colored Sparrows can be heard in the area listed above for Henslow's Sparrow.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 17 June 2009

Cuckoos were conspicuous on several dates in early June, with maximum counts of 16 Black-billed and 6 Yellow-billed Cuckoos in TAs 10 and 15 on 4 June. Fort Drum's central training areas often produce good counts of cuckoos, especially during early June, although the tally of Yellow-billed Cuckoos from the sixth was surprisingly high. Prior to a major tent caterpillar outbreak that occurred approximately 2003-2005, Yellow-billed Cuckoos were scarce on Fort Drum, but numbers exploded during the outbreak, and although they have declined since the outbreak ended, this species remains more abundant than it was before about 2002.



Black-billed Cuckoo in Training Area 3A.

Two observers conducted a nightjar survey along FUSA Boulevard on the night of 5 June, yielding at least 24 Whip-poor-wills and 2 Common Nighthawks. An Eastern Screech Owl was also heard calling along FUSA less than one-half mile north of the north end of Indian Lake. The roads around Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield are also excellent for both nightjar species and will be surveyed later in June.

At least 6 pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers are nesting in TAs 5B and 5D. Most if not all of these pairs currently have young in the nest and are calling very infrequently; in fact during four hours of survey effort on 17 June calls were heard for a total of less than 5 minutes. The largest numbers of woodpeckers are in the open oak woodlands immediately east of old County Route 29, and these birds will likely become more conspicuous once the young are out of the nest in late June or July.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 17 June 2009

Biologists from Fort Drum and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation conducted Golden-winged Warbler Surveys on Fort Drum for the past month. The data have not yet been summarized, but the identities of well over 100 singing male “winged warblers” have been visually confirmed, with Golden-winged Warblers accounting for approximately 50%, Blue-winged Warblers about 35%, and hybrids about 15%. Most hybrids have shown the general characteristics of Brewster’s Warbler, and the only Lawrence’s Warblers seen were a male on Figert Road and a female along Russell Turnpike a few hundred meters to the north, both in TA 14D on 12 June. This general area is a good location to see the full range of variation exhibited by winged warblers, including typical looking Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers as well as hybrids of various appearances. Unfortunately, winged warblers are becoming less vocal and likely will virtually stop singing by about 20 June or shortly thereafter.

As mentioned above, no Cerulean Warblers have been found on Fort Drum this year, but the remaining 19 species of regularly breeding species have been documented. Aside from Cerulean, the rarest of these species are Prairie and Magnolia Warblers. By far the easiest place to find Prairie Warblers is in the open shrubby woodlands and fields in TA 14D, for instance near the intersection of Figert Road and Russell Turnpike. Figert Road is generally a good place for warblers, with as many as 17 species of breeders found most years. Magnolia Warblers are most regular in spruce and fir stands on Fort Drum, forest types that are scarce on the installation. The best location is a large fir stand in the center of 14C, but this spot requires a little work to get into, with a large mosquito population waiting. Visiting birders sometimes ask about Mourning Warbler, several of which can be found along Figert Road. Other good places include the patch clearcuts in TA 14E, the large expanse of thinned forest along FUSA Boulevard near Indian Lake, and the shrubbier areas along Reedville Road. Good location for forest warblers such as Blackburnian and Black-throated Blue include the mixed forest along Lale School and Gormely Roads and along FUSA Boulevard north of Indian Lake. Canada Warblers are locally common throughout Fort Drum in wet wooded areas with shrubby understory, including at least a few birds along each of the roads mentioned here for other warbler species.

Species list on Page 4.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 17 June 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 1 – 15 June:

Canada Goose	Alder Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Wood Duck	Willow Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler
Mallard	Least Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Phoebe	Magnolia Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Wild Turkey	Eastern Kingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Yellow-throated Vireo	Black-throated Green Warbler
American Bittern	Blue-headed Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Least Bittern	Warbling Vireo	Pine Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	Prairie Warbler
Green Heron	Blue Jay	Blackpoll Warbler
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	Black-and-white Warbler
Osprey	Common Raven	American Redstart
Northern Harrier	Tree Swallow	Ovenbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Northern Waterthrush
Cooper's Hawk	Bank Swallow	Mourning Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Broad-winged Hawk	Barn Swallow	Canada Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Scarlet Tanager
American Kestrel	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
Virginia Rail	White-breasted Nuthatch	Chipping Sparrow
Sora	Brown Creeper	Clay-colored Sparrow
Killdeer	House Wren	Field Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Winter Wren	Vesper Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Sedge Wren	Savannah Sparrow
American Woodcock	Marsh Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Henslow's Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Veery	Swamp Sparrow
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Black-billed Cuckoo	Wood Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Great Horned Owl	American Robin	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Common Nighthawk	Gray Catbird	Indigo Bunting
Whip-poor-will	Northern Mockingbird	Bobolink
Belted Kingfisher	Brown Thrasher	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	European Starling	Eastern Meadowlark
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing	Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Hairy Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Northern Flicker	"Brewster's" Warbler	Purple Finch
Pileated Woodpecker	"Lawrence's" Warbler	American Goldfinch
Eastern Wood-Pewee		House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 July 2009

A round of grassland bird surveys conducted during the third week of June turned up all the same species that were present during early June surveys, some in increased numbers. The Short-eared Owl was seen again in TA 13A, although nesting has not been confirmed. Thirteen singing male Henslow's Sparrows were found, up from 9 earlier in June. The best location to see Henslow's Sparrows from the road remains the field in TA 13A a few hundred yards north of the intersection between Antwerp and Poagland Roads; one male often sings near a set of bleachers on the east side of Antwerp Road. The Sedge Wren tally was also up, from two in early June to seven by 30 June. The best locations for seeing Sedge Wrens from the road are along the south side of Poagland Road about one-quarter mile east of the western boundary of Fort Drum, and in TA 13A 200 yards south of the intersection between Antwerp and Poagland Roads. As mentioned previously, birders are requested to view these birds from the road so as to avoid undue disturbance to these rare nesting species.

Although most visiting birders search for Clay-colored Sparrows along the boundary of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, the largest number of individuals are found in the shrubby grasslands in TAs 12 and 13, often very close to more open patches of grassland where Henslow's Sparrows occur. More than 50 singing male Clay-colored Sparrows have been found in TAs 12 and 13 so far, with a particularly large cluster of territories occurring on both sides of Antwerp Road south of Poagland Road. In this location it is possible to hear Sedge Wren, Henslow's Sparrow, and Clay-colored Sparrow all from the same spot.



***Clay-colored Sparrow in
Training Area 12C.***

A note on access to the grasslands: the west end of Reedville Road is closed, which means that the route many people have taken to get from Rt. 26 to the grasslands areas in TAs 12 and 13 is not passable. If driving from the southern training areas, your best bet is to follow the Main Tank Trail west from County Route 29 to the first gravel road on the right (north). Turn right and follow this road northward; this is Antwerp Road and goes straight (actually it meanders a bit) to the TA 12 and 13 grasslands. Alternatively, follow the western boundary of Fort Drum to Poagland Road (across Pleasant Road from the east end of Garden of Eden Road in Philadelphia), and drive east on Poagland Road into the grassland Training Areas.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 July 2009

Raptor and owl highlights from recent weeks include a Merlin reported by visiting birders from TA 17B; Red-shouldered Hawks on several dates in TAs 7 and 8; a Barred Owl and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo heard simultaneously in TA 9B on 25 June; and an Eastern Screech Owl heard calling early from TA 3B early on the morning of 30 June.

Matoon Marsh has not been recently surveyed, but earlier this year Least Bittern and Black Tern were observed at this location, and this is generally the best location on Fort Drum to see marsh birds. Matoon Marsh can be reached by driving north on Carr Road over the Indian River to the second gravel road on the left. Turn left and drive down a hill through several curves until the road levels out. The road then crosses a flat stretch of land for several hundred yards before curving to the left. Immediately before this curve there is a grassy trail that heads off to the northeast from the gravel road. Park on the side of the road here and walk out the trail about 150 yards. Least Bitterns have been seen on both side of the trail here, although they are most frequently seen on the north side. Other breeding species here include Pied-billed Grebe, Green Heron, Sora, Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen (rare in recent years), and Marsh Wren.

On 1 July Red-headed Woodpeckers were observed in two locations on the west side of TA 5D where none had been seen previously, bringing the total number of territories found so far to eight. These apparent new arrivals were engaged in lengthy territorial skirmishes with their neighbors, with much calling, drumming, and chasing, with the result that Red-headed Woodpeckers were more conspicuous than they had been earlier in the season. Red-headed Woodpeckers are most easily found just west of old County Route 29 about one-quarter mile south of the Main Tank Trail. Other birds in this general area include numerous Vesper Sparrows and several Grasshopper Sparrows, both in the larger grassy fields between oak stands as well as along the margins of Rt. 29 and the Main Tank Trail.

Nightjars continue to be found throughout Fort Drum, although Common Nighthawks primarily occur in the southern one-third of the installation. Locations where nighthawks have been observed booming include several spots along the Main Tank Trail west of Wheeler Sack Army Airfield, along the western boundary of TA 7D just north of State Route 3A, and in TA 5D near the Red-headed Woodpecker nesting area. Whip-poor-wills are common in all of these areas and throughout much of the installation, with particularly high numbers around the perimeter of the airfield.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 July 2009

Cerulean Warblers were finally found in two locations during late June. The first singing male was found in TA 5B at the edge of a wooded ravine near the oak woodlands where the Red-headed Woodpeckers nest. This is the first time a Cerulean Warbler has been found in this location. More typically, two singing males were found on 26 June in a mature maple stand along Canfield Road in TA 15B. During most years small numbers of Cerulean Warblers are found in maple stands in TA 15, although not necessarily in the same stands from one year to the next.

Although few finches have been seen lately other than the ubiquitous Purple Finches and American Goldfinches, there have been a few scattered observations of other species. On 25 June a single Red Crossbill was seen and heard flying over Conservation Pond in TA 8C. On 30 June one White-winged Crossbill was at a feeder in the Cantonment Area. Pine Siskins were heard calling as they flew over Training Area 7A on 25 June and 8B on 1 July.

Most of Fort Drum's breeding warbler species are still singing well, although Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers have virtually stopped singing during daytime. Both species, and hybrids, continue to be seen occasionally, and can still be heard singing their dawn song prior to sunrise. Probably the best chance for seeing a Golden-winged Warbler is to find an adult feeding young; good places to look include the western and central portions of Reedville Road, the stretch of U.S. Military Highway that passes between Training Areas 10 and 15, and the fields near the intersection of Figert Road and Russell Turnpike. The latter location, along with the open woods extending eastward through TA 14D, is also the best area on Fort Drum for nesting Prairie Warblers, as indicated by the seven males heard singing on 29 June. On 1 July three Prairie Warblers were singing in the open woodlands just north of State Route 3A along the west side of TA 7D. This area was reliable for Prairie Warblers throughout the 1990s, but this species has been more erratic here since about 2002. Areas where Mourning Warblers have been found in good numbers recently include the brushy woodlands along Figert Road and Russell Turnpike, a stand of thinned forest on Lake School Road one-half to one mile south of Rt. 3A, and several locations along Reedville Road.



Blue-winged Warbler on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 July 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 16 June – 2 July:

Canada Goose	Alder Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Wood Duck	Willow Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler
Mallard	Least Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Phoebe	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-throated Green Warbler
Wild Turkey	Eastern Kingbird	Blackburnian Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Yellow-throated Vireo	Cerulean Warbler
American Bittern	Blue-headed Vireo	Pine Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Warbling Vireo	Prairie Warbler
Green Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	Black-and-white Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Blue Jay	American Redstart
Osprey	American Crow	Ovenbird
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Northern Waterthrush
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Purple Martin	Mourning Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Red-shouldered Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Canada Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Bank Swallow	Scarlet Tanager
Red-tailed Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Eastern Towhee
American Kestrel	Barn Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Merlin	Black-capped Chickadee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Sora	White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
Killdeer	Brown Creeper	Savannah Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	House Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Winter Wren	Henslow's Sparrow
American Woodcock	Sedge Wren	Song Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Marsh Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird	White-throated Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Veery	Northern Cardinal
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Hermit Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-billed Cuckoo	Wood Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Barred Owl	American Robin	Bobolink
Eastern Screech Owl	Gray Catbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Nighthawk	Northern Mockingbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Whip-poor-will	Brown Thrasher	Common Grackle
Belted Kingfisher	European Starling	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Baltimore Oriole
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blue-winged Warbler	Purple Finch
Downy Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	House Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	"Brewster's" Warbler	Red Crossbill
Northern Flicker	Nashville Warbler	White-winged Crossbill
Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow Warbler	Pine Siskin
Eastern Wood-Pewee		American Goldfinch
		House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 7 August 2009

During the past month birds have become progressively quieter and more difficult to find, as many species are finishing up their nesting season and preparing to migrate south. Some species are already on the move, for instance Bobolinks can be heard flying overhead almost anywhere on Fort Drum, and the shorebird migration is well underway. Still, some species remain relatively easy to find on their nesting territories, including some of Fort Drum's most sought after breeding species.

Another round of grassland bird surveys conducted during late July and early August found Sedge Wrens and Henslow's Sparrows in full voice. Sedge Wren numbers were the highest yet documented on Fort Drum, with 39 singing males found in TAs 10B, 11E, 12B, 12C, 12D, 13A, and 13B. This compares to 0 Sedge Wrens found on May surveys, 2 found in early June, 7 in late June, and 14 during early July surveys. The largest cluster of Sedge Wren territories is in TA 12B, especially in the large, open field south of Poagland Road about 300 yards east of Pleasant Road. Other clusters were in the center of TA 12D and near the north end of TA 13B, but these birds require more work to find than the wrens along Poagland Road. Henslow's Sparrows showed a more modest increase in numbers, from 13 in late June to 17-19 on early and late July surveys. The fields east of Antwerp Road, especially north of Poagland Road, continue to be the best place to find Henslow's Sparrows, and as of the first week of August they were singing very well through at least early to mid-morning. A few Sedge Wrens are also in this area.

Most other grassland birds have been singing poorly and have been difficult to track down, but Upland Sandpiper has actually been easier to find than during the peak nesting season. Upland Sandpipers often congregate in August on Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield just north of County Route 26, and on 25 July 10 "Uppies" were seen here from the highway, mostly close to the fence line. In past years groups of up to 27 Upland Sandpipers have been seen at this location in August. Other grassland birds, especially Grasshopper Sparrows, seem to have stopped singing for the year but are occasionally seen when they flush along roads and trails. The problem is picking out the more unusual species from the hoards of Savannah Sparrows that flush from the edges of the road as one drives down any of the roads through the grassland training areas.

Fort Drum is not particularly blessed with mudflats or other habitats attractive to migrating shorebirds, and consequently few species of migrant shorebirds are seen with any regularity on the installation. The most frequently encountered species are typically Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, and Least Sandpiper, and all of these species except Lesser Yellowlegs were seen during the first week of August. Most observations were of single individuals, often calling as they flew overhead, and the only species for which multiple individuals were encountered was, ironically, Solitary Sandpiper, in groups of 2-3.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 7 August 2009

A visit to the Matoon Marsh in TA 17B on 3 August turned up an impressive assortment of birds, including 22 Wood Ducks, 18 Mallards, 1 Green-winged Teal, 25 Pied-billed Grebes, 1 American Bittern, 2 Least Bitterns, 4 Green Herons, 1 Virginia Rail, 9 Common Moorhens, and 2 Marsh Wrens. At one time what appeared to be four broods of grebes totaling 13 individuals and 2 broods of moorhens totaling 7 individuals were visible. Perhaps the biggest surprise of the visit was a male Golden-winged Warbler that sang about 6-7 Type II songs near the edge of the marsh. This was the first Golden-winged Warbler we'd heard (and fortunately saw) sing on Fort Drum in several weeks, but we then heard 3 more winged warblers sing brief bouts of Type II song on 4 and 5 August, although we did not see these individuals. A silent Blue-winged Warbler was lurking in the brush about 100 yards from the singing Golden-winged Warbler on 3 August.

On 6 August 4 adult Common Loons were on Indian Lake. These birds were presumably non-breeders or failed breeders, as no young were with them. Earlier in July two adult loons were seen on Indian Pond with no sign of any young. Indian Pond has historically been the most reliable location for breeding loons on Fort Drum, although loons also nest on Mud Lake and sometimes other bodies of water in the northeastern corner of the installation. High water this year may have resulted in poor nesting success on the installation. Also on 6 August a Merlin flew over Indian Lake, and another Merlin was seen harassing a Northern Harrier in TA 13A on 4 August.

Common Nighthawks continue to be heard and seen daily, but Whip-poor-wills have essentially stopped calling. Nighthawks remain quite vocal at and just before sunrise, with many individuals heard booming daily; in fact it seemed that we heard more individuals booming on the mornings of 4-6 August than during any other time of the season. On 5 August a Whip-poor-will called briefly, perhaps 5 repetitions of its call total, right at sunrise, but otherwise none have been heard lately. On 6 August stops to listen for Whip-poor-wills at several prime locations along the Main Tank Trail between 4:30 and 5:00 am yielded none, despite seemingly ideal conditions including a bright full moon, cloudless sky, and no wind.

Good numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers continue to be seen in TA 5D, but the TA 5B birds (1-2 pairs) have been hard to find. Juvenile Red-headed Woodpeckers have been seen on at least six territories, and many of these young birds are now independent, although adults have been observed feeding young as recently as 4 August. At the height of the breeding season we estimated that there were pairs on 8-9 territories and what we believed to be 1-2 unmated males roaming around large, poorly defined territories, although the sex and mating status of the latter birds are nothing more than guesses based on the behavior of these birds.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 7 August 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 27 July – 7 August:

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler
Wood Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler
Mallard	Northern Flicker	Nashville Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Wild Turkey	Alder Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Common Loon	Willow Flycatcher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Least Flycatcher	Black-throated Green Warbler
American Bittern	Eastern Phoebe	Pine Warbler
Least Bittern	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-and-white Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Kingbird	American Redstart
Green Heron	Yellow-throated Vireo	Ovenbird
Turkey Vulture	Blue-headed Vireo	Common Yellowthroat
Osprey	Warbling Vireo	Canada Warbler
Northern Harrier	Red-eyed Vireo	Scarlet Tanager
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Blue Jay	Eastern Towhee
Cooper's Hawk	American Crow	Chipping Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Common Raven	Clay-colored Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Tree Swallow	Field Sparrow
American Kestrel	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Merlin	Bank Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Barn Swallow	Grasshopper Sparrow
Killdeer	Black-capped Chickadee	Henslow's Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Swamp Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Brown Creeper	White-throated Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	House Wren	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
American Woodcock	Winter Wren	Indigo Bunting
Ring-billed Gull	Sedge Wren	Bobolink
Rock Pigeon	Marsh Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Eastern Bluebird	Common Grackle
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Veery	Brown-headed Cowbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	Hermit Thrush	Baltimore Oriole
Great Horned Owl	Wood Thrush	Purple Finch
Common Nighthawk	American Robin	American Goldfinch
Whip-poor-will	Gray Catbird	House Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Brown Thrasher	
Red-headed Woodpecker	European Starling	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 September 2009

The fall songbird migration is well underway now, and Fort Drum bird biologists are monitoring the passage of migrants at a bird banding station. The first day of banding for the season was 17 August, and during that week every species that was captured is known to nest within a mile of the banding station. Several obvious migrants were captured during the second week of banding, including the season's first Tennessee Warbler on 24 August and the first Wilson's Warbler on 25 August. Also on 25 August a Semipalmated Plover was heard calling as it flew over the station, and on 27 August the season's first Philadelphia Vireo was observed near one of the nets but was not captured. Good numbers of *Empidonax* flycatchers have been captured, primarily "Traill's" Flycatcher (Alder and Willow Flycatchers, two species that are extremely difficult to distinguish in the hand), but so far only one Yellow-bellied Flycatcher has been caught, on 31 August. Other species captured in large numbers include Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Song Sparrow. These three species, as well as Alder and Willow Flycatchers, are common breeders locally, so it is not surprising to catch them in large numbers. The most abundant breeder at this location, however, is Yellow Warbler, but only a single individual of this species was captured on 17 August and none since, suggesting that this species has largely migrated out of the area.

Overall the songbird migration has been fairly slow so far, based both on captures at the banding station and observations of birds in the field. The largest movements seen so far were 24-26 August, when many Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles were seen and heard flying over the training areas, and a nice assortment of warblers were seen and captured. No really impressive mixed flocks of warblers have been noted yet, however, and migration seemed to come to a near standstill during the last few days of August and first two days of September.



Fort Drum's most sought after grassland bird species have essentially stopped singing and are much harder to find than earlier in the summer. Henslow's Sparrows have been especially difficult to find as most males stopped singing in early August. On 12 and 19 August one male was observed singing a strange cricket-like song that was unlike any Henslow's Sparrow song that the Fort Drum biologists had heard before. On the 12th this male was one of four singing males that were found in TA 13A, but by the 19th he was the only vocalizing Henslow's Sparrow in the area, and even this bird had shut up by the end of the month.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 September 2009

Similarly, Sedge Wrens have stopped singing for the most part, although calling individuals—both adults and juveniles—continue to be seen in many locations throughout the large fields in TAs 12 and 13. Bobolinks continue to fly over the installation in good numbers daily, with flocks of up to 50-60 occurring in TAs 12 and 13, where large flocks of Savannah Sparrows also are present.

The Matoon Marsh in TA 17B continues to host a nice assortment of marsh birds. Up to 25 Pied-billed Grebes and 14 Common Moorhens have been seen here, along with several American Bitterns and Northern Harriers. So far the only ducks found here in any numbers have been Wood Ducks and Mallards, but in late August single Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal and American Wigeon were observed. No Least Bitterns have been seen here since early August, although some individuals may yet be present.



Good numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers remain in TA 5D. Adults remain on several nesting territories, and groups of up to 8 immatures have been seen on several occasions in the eastern and central portion of the training area. On 20 August a group of at least 12 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 22 Blue Jays, and 14 Northern Flickers was observed moving through a large swath of oak woodland in TA 5D. These three species have been found associating with each other several times on Fort Drum, usually during August and September.

Red-headed Woodpecker in Training Area 5.

Species list on Page 3.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 2 September 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 17 August – 1 September:

Canada Goose	Red-headed Woodpecker	European Starling
Wood Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing
American Wigeon	Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler
American Black Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler
Mallard	Northern Flicker	Tennessee Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Pileated Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Yellow Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Alder Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Willow Flycatcher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Wild Turkey	Least Flycatcher	Black-throated Green Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Pine Warbler
American Bittern	Eastern Phoebe	Blackpoll Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-and-white Warbler
Green Heron	Eastern Kingbird	American Redstart
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-throated Vireo	Ovenbird
Northern Harrier	Warbling Vireo	Common Yellowthroat
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Red-eyed Vireo	Wilson's Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Philadelphia Vireo	Canada Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Blue Jay	Scarlet Tanager
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow	Eastern Towhee
American Kestrel	Common Raven	Chipping Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Tree Swallow	Field Sparrow
Semipalmated Plover	Barn Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Killdeer	Black-capped Chickadee	Savannah Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Henslow's Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Brown Creeper	Swamp Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	House Wren	White-throated Sparrow
American Woodcock	Sedge Wren	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wilson's Snipe	Marsh Wren	Indigo Bunting
Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird	Bobolink
Rock Pigeon	Veery	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Wood Thrush	Common Grackle
Great Horned Owl	American Robin	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Nighthawk	Gray Catbird	Baltimore Oriole
Belted Kingfisher	Brown Thrasher	Purple Finch
		American Goldfinch
		House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 October 2009

The fall songbird migration has been quite slow, although decent movements have been noted a few days. The largest movement of migrants during the first half of September was on the fourteenth, when a three hour visit to TA 6A yielded 15 species of warblers and a nice assortment of other species, a subset of which included:

Philadelphia Vireo: 2	Black-throated Green Warbler: 9
Winter Wren: 1	Blackburnian Warbler: 1
American Pipit: 1	Blackpoll Warbler: 4
Tennessee Warbler: 2	Bay-breasted Warbler: 1
Nashville Warbler: 7	American Redstart: 3
Northern Parula: 2	Ovenbird: 2
Chestnut-sided Warbler: 2	Wilson's Warbler: 3
Magnolia Warbler: 4	Common Yellowthroat: 14
Yellow-rumped ("Myrtle") Warbler: 2	Lincoln's Sparrow: 1
Pine Warbler: 1	

Easily the largest passage of migrants noted so far this fall was on 24 September, when large numbers of Blue-headed Vireos, Swainson's Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-throated Sparrows and other songbirds passed through the installation. A Dickcissel was heard calling as it flew over TA 3B; this species has only been documented on the installation four times previously. Other birds seen in TA 3B that morning included Philadelphia Vireo; Tennessee, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers; and Lincoln's Sparrow.

On 30 September a large flock of birds along the Main Tank Trail in TA 4B contained an impressive diversity of species, many present in good numbers. Among the highlights at this location was a Black-bellied Plover that flew over the airfield; this species surely occurs on the airfield grasslands with some regularity, but has been documented very few times. The migrant landbird flock in TA 4B included:

Downy Woodpecker: 2	Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1
Least Flycatcher: 2	Black-throated Green Warbler: 2
Eastern Phoebe: 1	Palm Warbler: 5
Blue-headed Vireo: 1	Blackpoll Warbler: 3
Blue Jay: 16	Wilson's Warbler: 2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 16	Eastern Towhee: 4
Eastern Bluebird: 3	Chipping Sparrow: 50
Nashville Warbler: 11	Field Sparrow: 15
Tennessee Warbler: 6	White-throated Sparrow: 3
Northern Parula: 1	White-crowned Sparrow: 2
Magnolia Warbler: 1	Vesper Sparrow: 6
Yellow-rumped Warbler: 35	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 October 2009

October 1 was another good day for migrants, with large numbers of Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers seen in several willow clumps within the grassland portions of Training Areas 12 and 13, including at the intersection of Poagland and Antwerp Roads and where Antwerp Road crosses Hunter Creek. These willows often host good numbers of migrating songbirds, and groups of 10-20 Palm Warblers have been seen here several times. Lincoln Sparrows often occur in these locations as well, and one was seen on October 1; additional Lincoln Sparrows were seen elsewhere in TA 12B and in TA 17B near the Matoon Marsh. The highlight of the day was a Peregrine Falcon engaged in a spectacular pursuit of a shorebird (probably a Solitary Sandpiper) over TA 12B. A Merlin was in this same area on 5 October.



***Yellow-rumped warbler on
Fort Drum in October.***

The Matoon Marsh in TA 17B continues to host a nice mix of waterfowl and marsh birds. Good numbers of Pied-billed Grebes and Common Moorhens continue here, and on some visits a good variety of ducks have been noted, including Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, and Hooded Merganser. Up to four Northern Harriers have also been seen at once over the marsh. No American Bitterns have been noted here recently, but one was seen flying over TA 13A on 5 October.

Red-headed Woodpeckers apparently left Fort Drum by the middle of September, based on several failed attempts to find this species during the last two weeks of the month. In fact the mobs of Blue Jays and Northern Flickers that were noted in TA5D associating with the Red-headed Woodpeckers in late August and early September also appear to have moved on or dispersed, although Blue Jays have generally become more conspicuous during the past three weeks as many are now migrating. On 16 September a visit to TA5D to search for Red-headed Woodpeckers turned up a flock of at least 25 Pine Warblers that also included a few Black-throated Green Warblers, numerous Eastern Bluebirds and Chipping Sparrows, and at least one Ruby-crowned Kinglet, the latter being the season's first.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 October 2009

Efforts to find others of the “Fort Drum specialties” have also failed. Several visits in September and early October to areas where good numbers of Sedge Wrens and Clay-colored Sparrows nested earlier in the year failed to turn up either of these species. This is in contrast to 2009, when both species were regularly seen through late September (Clay-colored Sparrow) and mid-October (Sedge Wren). The last Henslow’s Sparrow was seen in TA13A on 9 September, and Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows have also departed.

The bulk of the fall survey effort was conducted at a bird-banding station, where the capture rates were relatively modest for most of the season. Highlights included a Philadelphia Vireo on 21 September; Swainson’s Thrushes on 8, 10, 15, and 24 September, and Lincoln’s Sparrows captured on 9, 15, 21, and 24 September. A total of 19 species of warbler were banded, but warbler captures rates were much lower than expected, and some of the most common species seen or heard near the banding station were rarely captured. *Empidonax* flycatcher captures were relatively high during early September, with the last Traill’s Flycatcher (probably an Alder Flycatcher) capture coming on 8 September and the last Least Flycatcher on 15 September. Notable among the species that were heard but not captured was at least one Sedge Wren on several dates during the first week of September.



Eastern Towhee (left) and American Goldfinch (right) at banding station on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 5 October 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 2 September – 5 October:

Canada Goose	Alder Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler
Wood Duck	Willow Flycatcher	Black-throated Blue Warbler
American Wigeon	Least Flycatcher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Black Duck	Eastern Phoebe	Black-throated Green Warbler
Mallard	Eastern Kingbird	Blackburnian Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Blue-headed Vireo	Pine Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Warbling Vireo	Palm Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Red-eyed Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Philadelphia Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
Wild Turkey	Blue Jay	American Redstart
Pied-billed Grebe	American Crow	Ovenbird
American Bittern	Common Raven	Northern Waterthrush
Great Blue Heron	Tree Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Green Heron	Barn Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Black-capped Chickadee	Scarlet Tanager
Northern Harrier	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
Sharp-shinned Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Chipping Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Brown Creeper	Field Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	House Wren	Vesper Sparrow
American Kestrel	Sedge Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Merlin	Winter Wren	Henslow's Sparrow
Peregrine Falcon	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Song Sparrow
Common Moorhen	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Lincoln's Sparrow
Killdeer	Eastern Bluebird	Swamp Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	Veery	White-throated Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs	Swainson's Thrush	White-crowned Sparrow
Lesser Yellowlegs	Hermit Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Solitary Sandpiper	Wood Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Ring-billed Gull	American Robin	Dickcissel
Rock Pigeon	Gray Catbird	Bobolink
Mourning Dove	Brown Thrasher	Red-winged Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	European Starling	Common Grackle
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Brown-headed Cowbird
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blue-winged Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Downy Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	Purple Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler	American Goldfinch
Northern Flicker	Northern Parula	House Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow Warbler	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chestnut-sided Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 October 2009

The first few days of October saw the passage through Fort Drum of the last individuals of many species of warblers, vireos, and other songbirds, and the focus of migration is now on waterfowl, sparrows, blackbirds, and a few other late season migrants. Species that have been particularly numerous since early October include Canada Goose, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets; American Pipits; Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers; Swamp, Song, Fox, White-crowned, and White-throated Sparrows; Dark-eyed Juncos; and Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds. American Robins have been numerous throughout the last two weeks, but numbers increased dramatically after about 15 October, with flocks of 75 to 100+ occurring widely. Species moving in smaller numbers throughout the last two weeks have included Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Aside from the nearly ubiquitous Canada Geese, waterfowl have been moving in modest numbers, although a variety of species have been observed. The most unusual sighting was of a tiny white goose—likely a Ross's Goose based on size and proportions—in a flock of Canada Geese that flew over TA 7D on 15 October. So far Snow Geese have only been seen on Fort Drum once this season—nine individuals, including two blue phase Snow Geese in a flock of nearly 1000 Canada Geese on Belvedere Pond in TA 12C (visible from Antwerp Road). A Greater Scaup, another infrequently observed species on Fort Drum, was at the large pond on the road into Quarry Pond on 8 October. On that same date an early Bufflehead was on the Indian River in TA 14. A flock of about 150 ducks that appeared to be scaup flew over TA 12 on 21 October, but were too distant to definitively identify. Notable waterbirds included one each Pied-billed Grebe and Common Moorhen at the Matoon Marsh in TA 17B on 19 October, a date that is particularly late for the latter species on Fort Drum.

Raptors passed over the installation in good numbers on 14 October, with particularly good numbers of Turkey Vultures. The highlight of the day was an adult Golden Eagle seen soaring over TA 12D. Other species migrating that day included Bald Eagle (one each adult and immature), Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk.



Turkey Vulture on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 October 2009

Shorebirds have been seen in characteristically low numbers, so an American Golden-Plover seen and heard flying over TA 12C on 15 October was noteworthy. Among shorebirds that migrate through Fort Drum but do not breed locally, Greater Yellowlegs is among the most regularly seen, and the high count so far this season was four in a pond along Alexandria Road on 21 October. American Woodcock have been seen flying over Route 26 near the western boundary of the installation just before sunrise on a couple of mornings in mid-October.

Notable among the few warbler species seen since 5 October were two Orange-crowned Warblers on 8 October, one along Figert Road in TA 14 and the other along the North Tank Trail in TA 18A. Also seen that day were one Nashville Warbler and several Blackpoll Warblers. On 22 October a Tufted Titmouse was in TA 6A—this species is regular in parts of Jefferson County, especially around human habitation where bird feeders are maintained, but has been seen on Fort Drum just a few times, most frequently during the months of October and November. Otherwise, the most noteworthy passerine sighting of the period was the season's first Lapland Longspur, heard calling as it flew over TA12C on 21 October. No Snow Buntings have been observed yet this season, but this species and many other typical wintering species should be arriving soon.



Lapland Longspur in breeding plumage (Image: USFWS).

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 22 October 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 5 October – 22 October:

Canada Goose	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Chipping Sparrow
Snow Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Field Sparrow
Ross's Goose (probable)	Hairy Woodpecker	Vesper Sparrow
Wood Duck	Northern Flicker	Savannah Sparrow
American Black Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Fox Sparrow
Mallard	Eastern Phoebe	Song Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Blue-headed Vireo	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Blue Jay	Swamp Sparrow
Greater Scaup	American Crow	White-throated Sparrow
Bufflehead	Common Raven	White-crowned Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Black-capped Chickadee	Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco
Ruffed Grouse	Tufted Titmouse	Northern Cardinal
Wild Turkey	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Pied-billed Grebe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rusty Blackbird
Great Blue Heron	Brown Creeper	Common Grackle
Turkey Vulture	Winter Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Harrier	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Purple Finch
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	American Goldfinch
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Bluebird	House Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Swainson's Thrush	
Golden Eagle	Hermit Thrush	
American Kestrel	American Robin	
Common Moorhen	Gray Catbird	
Killdeer	European Starling	
American Golden-Plover	Cedar Waxwing	
Greater Yellowlegs	Orange-crowned Warbler	
American Woodcock	Nashville Warbler	
Ring-billed Gull	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Rock Pigeon	Pine Warbler	
Mourning Dove	Blackpoll Warbler	
Barred Owl	Common Yellowthroat	
Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Towhee	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 November 2009

Southerly winds have predominated during the past two weeks, with the result that waterfowl migration has been very slow. The number of geese passing over the installation has been very low compared to the same period during many other years, and ducks have been similarly scarce. Small flocks of Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, and Hooded Merganser have been seen at many installation ponds in relatively low numbers. A pair of American Wigeon spent about a week at the Matoon Marsh in TA 17B, and a Lesser Scaup was on Belvedere Pond in TA 12C for several days. On 3 November two Common Mergansers were on Indian Lake, and groups of 5-12 Bufflehead were found on several ponds throughout the installation.



Male Bufflehead (Image: USFWS).

Raptors numbers have also been much lower than is often the case for this time of year. Only one Rough-legged Hawk has been found on Fort Drum so far this season, a light-phase immature seen hunting over TA 12C on 2 November. During some years Rough-legged Hawks are quite common in the Fort Drum grasslands, but this species has been scarce during the past two winters. Among the weeks highlights was an immature Golden Eagle migrating over TA 17B with an immature Bald Eagle and a Common Raven. The Golden Eagle was rather aggressive, diving at and chasing first the raven and then the Bald Eagle before drifting off to the south.

The passerine migration is nearly over, with the majority of species long gone. Most species that typically linger into the late fall have been impossible to find, and it seems like fewer birds have been present than is usual for late October and early November. Many typical wintering passerines arrived during the last week of October and first week of November, including Northern Shrike, Horned Lark, Snow Bunting, and American Tree Sparrow. The latter species was especially abundant on 29 October, when flocks of 8 to 25 plus were found in many locations, often accompanied by Fox and White-throated Sparrows and American Robins. Other species seen or heard migrating in numbers during this period included American Pipit, Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 November 2009

Birds seen on Fort Drum 23 October – 6 November:

Canada Goose	Horned Lark
Wood Duck	Black-capped Chickadee
American Wigeon	White-breasted Nuthatch
American Black Duck	Brown Creeper
Mallard	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Green-winged Teal	Eastern Bluebird
Lesser Scaup	American Robin
Bufflehead	European Starling
Hooded Merganser	American Pipit
Common Merganser	Cedar Waxwing
Ruffed Grouse	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler
Wild Turkey	American Tree Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Savannah Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Fox Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Song Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Swamp Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	White-throated Sparrow
Rough-legged Hawk	White-crowned Sparrow
Golden Eagle	Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco
Ring-billed Gull	Lapland Longspur
Rock Pigeon	Snow Bunting
Mourning Dove	Red-winged Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	Rusty Blackbird
Downy Woodpecker	Common Grackle
Hairy Woodpecker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Flicker	Purple Finch
Pileated Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Northern Shrike	
Blue Jay	
American Crow	
Common Raven	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 3 December 2009

Bird activity has been remarkably slow throughout November and into early December. Waterfowl numbers have generally been low, raptors virtually nonexistent, typical wintering migrants present in low numbers, and very few late lingering songbirds remain. It still seems like some northern birds have yet to migrate—particularly geese—so perhaps the birding will pick up some before we settle into winter.

Virtually no goose migration was observed during the month of November, suggesting that we may have another late push of Canada and Snow Geese similar to that seen in 2008, when the fall's heaviest movement of Snows came about a week into December. Small numbers of ducks have been noted in various places, with Mallard, American Black Duck, and Hooded Merganser occurring widely although generally in small numbers. Other duck observations include a group of about 6 Bufflehead and 5 Lesser Scaup that persisted on a small settling pond near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield for several weeks, and a group of about 25 Ring-necked Ducks on Indian Lake during late November.

Other water-associated birds were seen in small numbers. A Common Loon was on Indian Lake on 10 November. The last Pied-billed Grebe present in the Matoon Marsh in TA 17B was seen on 9 November, several weeks later than usual. Great Blue Herons lingered to at least 24 November. The last Belted Kingfisher found on Fort Drum was along the Black River in TA 6A on 16 November.

Open country raptors are exceedingly scarce this fall. In fact raptor surveys conducted along Antwerp Road failed to find any Red-tailed or Rough-legged Hawks or Northern Harriers during several consecutive weeks in November and early December. Usually there are at least a few hawks along this road even during poor raptor years. On 2 December the only raptor seen during five hours of field work on Fort Drum was a Northern Goshawk along Reedville Road near the railroad tracks west of Antwerp Road. On 23 November, a Barred Owl was seen perched near Alexandria Road in TA 8C.

Very few lingering breeding or migrant songbirds remain on Fort Drum, and many species seem to have departed earlier or migrated through faster than usual. Some of the few lingering species seen include an Eastern Bluebird flying over Weaver Road on 10 November, a Fox Sparrow in TA 17B on 9 November, and a Red-winged Blackbird in the same location on 10 November.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 3 December 2009

Most northern songbirds that winter in our area can now be found in decent numbers. Territorial Northern Shrikes have been noted in several places recently, including on the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield fence line at the sharp curve north of the water tower on the Main Tank Trail, along Antwerp Tank Trail north of the railroad tracks in TA 12A, the large timber sale along FUSA Boulevard west of Indian Lake, and along U.S. Military Highway between TAs 13B and 16C. Horned Larks and Snow Buntings have been present in relatively low numbers recently, but can usually be found along the western boundary of the installation, although they seem to spend more time in the plowed fields located just off-post. American Tree Sparrows seem to be present in about average numbers in brushy areas throughout the installation.

Aside from a couple of crossbill observations, there has been little indication that irruptive wintering species are going to appear this winter. One White-winged Crossbill was heard calling as it flew over Indian Lake on 10 November, and two Red Crossbills were heard over Alexandria Road on 23 November, but these observations do not seem to indicate any larger movements. There have been no sightings of Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll, or Evening Grosbeak on Fort Drum so far this fall, and it is looking like this may be the first winter in several years without a significant push of irruptive finches and waxwings, although one still might develop.

Birds seen on Fort Drum 7 November – 3 December:

Canada Goose	Rock Pigeon	Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Black Duck	Mourning Dove	Eastern Bluebird
Mallard	Barred Owl	American Robin
Ring-necked Duck	Belted Kingfisher	European Starling
Lesser Scaup	Downy Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Bufflehead	Hairy Woodpecker	Fox Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Pileated Woodpecker	Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco
Hooded Merganser	Northern Shrike	Snow Bunting
Ruffed Grouse	Blue Jay	Red-winged Blackbird
Wild Turkey	American Crow	Purple Finch
Common Loon	Common Raven	White-winged Crossbill
Pied-billed Grebe	Horned Lark	American Goldfinch
Great Blue Heron	Black-capped	House Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Chickadee	
Northern Goshawk	White-breasted	
Northern Harrier	Nuthatch	
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Ring-billed Gull	Brown Creeper	