

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 January 2012

Snow & Ice Conditions

As of January 23, there was a good layer of ice on Indian Lake—at least 9.5 inches in the one place tested on the north end of the lake. Ice fishing is allowed only on non-trout waters which include Indian and Narrow Lakes, Indian Pond, and Mud Lake. Mid-winter ice fishing is generally slower and harder than early or late winter ice fishing because now is when water temperatures are coldest. However, this year is atypical and at times, unseasonably warm. The temperature fluctuations have lead to extreme week-to-week variations in ice depth on Indian Lake. Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page: <http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/weather.aspx>



Remember, always test ice depths on each water body before ice fishing. Areas near islands and areas above water flow (i.e., where the Indian River flows through Indian and Narrow Lakes) tend to have thinner ice. If you'd like to share your ice fishing or other outdoor stories and photographs with us, please send an e-mail to fortdrum@isportsman.net.

Deer

In the Cantonment Area, deer can be seen regularly foraging at night in the short (but exposed) grass along Po Valley Road near the new Child Development Center and the 10th Sustainment HHC. In the early morning and late afternoon they have been foraging in the meadow by S-2509, the Natural Resources Permit Office. Typically during this time of the year, you will see deer browsing on branches or scratching at the snow's surface or digging through the snow, to expose vegetation. The lack of deep snow (or hardly any snow, for that matter) has been good for deer this winter.

Birds

This winter's bizarre weather has continued through January, with alternating periods of seasonal cold temperatures and very mild days, but very little snow. This weather has likely been responsible for large numbers of half-hardy birds persisting throughout much of northern New York, including some on Fort Drum through early January, but for the most part birds are relatively scarce on the installation.

Despite relatively mild conditions most water bodies on the installation have been ice-covered all month, and waterfowl numbers and diversity has been characteristically low. Up to 100 Canada Geese have been using West Creek in the Cantonment Area regularly, but otherwise geese have been scarce on Fort Drum since December.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 January 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Several dozen American Black Ducks and smaller numbers of Mallards continue to use whatever open water they can find, usually on West and Pleasant Creeks in the southern portion of Fort Drum, although some of these ducks appear to have moved on since a cold snap during the third week of January. The Black River in TA6 has been mostly open all month, and presumably ducks are using the river, but two visits to the river here have turned up a grand total of one Common Merganser and no other waterfowl.

Through mid-January moderate numbers of raptors were using the TA12 and 13 grasslands along Antwerp Road. Results from surveys along Antwerp Road during the first two weeks of January averaged 2 Northern Harriers, 1 Red-tailed Hawk, and 8 Rough-legged Hawks per day. On 9 January an immature Northern Goshawk flew over TA 13B and into the forested portion of TA12D. The ice and snow that blanketed the area 13-14 January appears to have pushed out many of the hawks, as a visit on 25 January turned up just 3 Rough-legged Hawks and no other raptors. Two Short-eared Owls were observed in TA3E on the evenings of 3 and 4 January, but no owls were observed at this location on several subsequent visits. During December 3 Short-eared Owls were observed along Antwerp Road, but surveys by 5 biologists on the evening of 11 January failed to find any Short-eared Owls in TA3E or in the Antwerp Road grasslands.



Rough-legged Hawk in Training Area 12.

Declining numbers of finches continue to be found in the conifer stands along Weaver Road. Finches found on 6 January included fewer than five each Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, and American Goldfinch; all of these species were substantially more abundant during December. Visits on 25 and 26 January turned up only one each Purple Finch and American Goldfinch in this area, with no Pine Siskins at all. Other areas of northern New York have seen a modest incursion of irruptive species such as Bohemian Waxwing and White-winged Crossbill in recent weeks, but these species have not been detected on Fort Drum this winter.

Only a few half-hardies have been observed on Fort Drum during January, mostly in the Cantonment Area, which generally is a little warmer than the Training Areas during winter. On 6 January a Great Blue Heron was on Steinhilber Road along the boundary of the Cantonment Area, and on 11 January a Song Sparrow was along West Creek, also near the edge of the Cantonment. On 26 January 10-12 American Robins were along the boundary of the Cantonment Area near West Creek, but the Song Sparrow that was present on 11 January could not be found. Several Song Sparrows and other half-hardies found in the Training Areas during December could not be relocated in January, perhaps because they moved, but many of these birds likely perished during some of the recent cold weather. The most common species in the Cantonment Area this winter is European Starling, and even this species is scarce throughout most of the Training Area.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 January 2012 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum January 2 through January 26:

Canada Goose
American Black Duck
Mallard
Common Merganser
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Great Blue Heron
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Northern Goshawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Short-eared Owl

Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Shrike
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Robin
European Starling
American Tree Sparrow

Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Purple Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 February 2012

Snow & Ice Conditions

Ice conditions are continually in flux on local rivers and lakes. Ice is thicker and in greater quantities in areas with little to no flow. Mud Lake continues to be ice-free near Alpina Dam. The Black River is still iced over in dammed areas and has had very low flows over the past week. The Indian River near angling site 24 is iced over upstream of Carr Road but is still partially open near FUSA Boulevard. For a second week, Indian Lake has fairly thick ice where water flow is minimal, with 14 and 19 inches measured this week and last week, respectively. Some areas of the lake, such as the channel between Indian and Narrow Lakes, likely have very thin ice. . Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page:



<http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/weather.aspx>.

Deer

Fort Drum's Fish & Wildlife Management Program conducted an aerial deer survey over the Cantonment Area on February 13 with the assistance of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment. Three Fort Drum biologists flew 200-300 feet above the Cantonment Area in a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. Biologists and flight crew counted 320 deer. Only the 8,255-acre, fenced-in portion of the Cantonment Area south of Route 26 was surveyed. Not all deer were seen, so factoring in a 15% error rate, there are approximately 370 deer in the Cantonment Area. The last survey was conducted in 2010.

Other Mammals

Skunks and opossums have been seen along roadsides, and woodchucks have already been seen in the Cantonment Area—obviously these signs of spring are due to the unseasonably mild weather this month.

Birds

Despite continued mild weather, bird numbers and diversity on Fort Drum is not much different from that seen in more typical winters. Throughout much of Fort Drum there really aren't many birds to see this winter except for permanent residents such as Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker, and Black-capped Chickadee. Several streams have remained open all winter, but the presence of open water has not resulted in the occurrence of unusually large numbers of waterfowl. A few half-hardies and irruptive finches are present on Fort Drum, but such birds are much less common than they are near Lake Ontario or in the Adirondacks, respectively. In other words, the birding has been pretty slow lately, with the main exception being in the TA12 and 13 grasslands, where a fair number of hawks can be found.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 February 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Waterfowl numbers and diversity are similar to that seen in the past few years. A few dozen Canada Geese continue to move between the Cantonment Area and the Black River off-post, and have even been seen feeding in cornfields near the Fort Drum boundary, an unusual sight for February. Several dozen American Black Ducks and smaller numbers of Mallards continue along West Creek and other ponds and streams in the Cantonment Area, moving around depending on ice conditions. Some of these ducks have been observed on Pleasant Creek in TAs 3 and 4 or on the Black River, but for the most part few ducks have been observed in the Training Areas. The Black River has remained mostly open all winter, but aside from black ducks the only species that has been seen here is Common Merganser, and then just the occasional lone male.

Throughout most of February typical hawk tallies in the TA12 and 13 grasslands were 5-8 Rough-legged Hawks and 1-2 Red-tailed Hawks per day, with no harriers or other raptor species. Two Northern Harriers in TA12C on 21 February were the first seen on Fort Drum since mid-January, and probably arrived as part of a small northward raptor movement associated with southerly winds and mild temperatures 19-20 February. The highest Rough-legged Hawk count of the season (10) also came on 21 February, as wintering individuals were likely joined by early migrants. Outside of the grasslands the main raptor story has been the continued presence of Bald Eagles throughout the training areas, especially TAs 17, 18, and 19. On 14 February four Bald Eagles were together along the North Tank Trail in TA18A, and on 21 February three were seen in TA17C, otherwise most sightings have been of lone adults.



Bald Eagle on the border of Fort Drum.

The passerine highlight of the period was the appearance of Bohemian Waxwings, a species that had been noted elsewhere in northern New York for several weeks before finally turning up on Fort Drum. On 1 February five Bohemian Waxwings were at a small wetland on Pleasant Road just south of Elm Road, a place where this species was observed throughout the previous winter. There were no more observations until 17 February, when five flocks containing approximately 325 individuals were observed at the following locations: one flock of about 60 in TA 13A, at least 56 in TA12D where Antwerp Road crosses a small stream, 80+ in TA13D, about 40 along the western edge of TA3E, and 90+ just north of State Route 26 in TA3B. No Cedar Waxwings have been seen on Fort Drum during the past month.

After seeming to decline numbers during the month of January, Pine Siskins along Weaver Road were again conspicuous this month. Pine Siskins have also been seen along FUSA Blvd. On 7 February a flock of 30+ was near the road in TA14D, and on 9 February at least a dozen siskins were seen chasing, singing, and apparently courting, suggesting that these birds are preparing to nest in this area. Other species that continue in good numbers at these locations include Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, and Golden-crowned Kinglet, but the only other finches that have been seen recently are Purple Finch and American Goldfinch, and crossbills do not seem to be present on Fort Drum this winter.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 February 2012 (continued)

A few other sightings are worth noting. A Snowy Owl at the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on about 30 January was the only report of this species so far this winter. Snow Buntings have been scarce all season, but a flock of 25-35 fed on a field near the Light Fighters School in the Cantonment Area on several days during the week of 6 February. It is unclear whether a Ring-necked Pheasant that crossed Antwerp Road on 6 February had been in the area all winter or was a recent escape from a game farm. Half-hardies have been scarce recently, with the only reports this month being a Red-winged Blackbird near the Rt. 11 gate on 2 February, a Belted Kingfisher perched above the Black River near the Fort Drum boundary on 7 February, and a handful of American Robins sightings from throughout the installation.

Species observed on Fort Drum 30 January through 23 February:

Canada Goose	Belted Kingfisher	European Starling
American Black Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Bohemian Waxwing
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Snow Bunting
Common Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Northern Shrike	Dark-eyed Junco
Wild Turkey	Blue Jay	Red-winged Blackbird
Ring-necked Pheasant	American Crow	Purple Finch
Bald Eagle	Common Raven	Pine Siskin
Northern Harrier	Black-capped Chickadee	American Goldfinch
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Rough-legged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Rock Pigeon	Brown Creeper	
Mourning Dove	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Snowy Owl	American Robin	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 March 2012

Snow & Ice Conditions

Indian Lake was free of ice beginning on Tuesday, March 20.

Invertebrates

Ticks have been observed in large numbers in both grassy and shrubby habitat. See the latest Fort Drum Outdoor Newsletter for more information on ticks and methods for prevention, detection, and treatment of Lyme disease.

Fish

Good-sized brown bullheads in large numbers were captured by Fort Drum biologists where the Indian River empties into Indian Lake. A few white suckers, likely migrating upriver to spawn, were also captured. Indian River temperatures rose through the gamut of normal walleye spawning water temperatures between March 15 and 19. Walleye will likely be spawning in above-average water temperatures in the Indian River system during the last week of March. Northern pike spawning should take place shortly after the walleye spawn.

Brook trout fry have emerged from gravel beds and are beginning to feed.

Reptiles & Amphibians

The unusually warm period through the middle of March roused many early breeding amphibians from winter hibernation. Typically these early breeders begin calling or moving into breeding areas around the second week of April. These early breeding amphibians include Boreal Chorus Frogs, Wood Frogs, American Toads, Spring Peepers, Spotted Salamanders, Jefferson Salamanders, Blue-spotted Salamanders, and Eastern Newt. These species take advantage of vernal (ephemeral) or seasonally-flooded wetlands (only flooded through Spring and typically dry before early-Summer) that contain no fish or other predators. These early breeding amphibians can take advantage of abundant aquatic resources and food supplies in the early spring and avoid predators, but must have the life history strategies that allow them to quickly complete development before the wetland becomes dry.

Turtles have also been seen basking in the sun.

Mammals

On 06 March, an otter was observed attempting to dive under the ice off of FUSA Boulevard along the Indian River. Other mammal species that hadn't been seen for months were also observed including opossums, raccoons, skunks, and woodchucks. Squirrels and chipmunks have also become more active.



Chorus Frog already calling on Fort Drum.



Spotted Salamander crawling on one of the Training Area roads.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 March 2012 (continued)

Birds

Hints of spring migration were apparent during the latter part of February, but migration really got going in early March, when the first large waves of waterfowl passed over Fort Drum. Strong southerly winds on 2 March brought the first substantial flocks of Canada and Snow Geese, with some observers saying that they could see geese from horizon to horizon at some points that day. In addition to geese, numerous Ring-billed Gulls and blackbirds were observed migrating on 2 March. All of these species continued to migrate through mid-March, with an especially impressive passage on 12 March. On that date 7500 Snow Geese and 3800 Canada Geese passed over the Matoon Marsh in TA17B during a 90-minute period, and single Ross's and Cackling Geese were identified in the flocks.

Later that morning another 5000 Snow Geese passed over Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield during a 10-minute period. The duck migration through Fort Drum has been less conspicuous; among the species noted were 6 Wood Ducks over TA3 on 8 March (the first of the season); 6 Common Mergansers flying with Snow Geese on 12 March; 2 Northern Pintails in the just-thawed Matoon Marsh on 14 March; 6 Green-winged Teal on U.S. Military Highway on 17 March; and a Bufflehead on Indian Lake on 18 March.



Snow geese (Image: USFWS).

The raptor migration has not been particularly evident on Fort Drum this month, although there have been a few interesting sightings. The raptor highlight of March was an adult or sub-adult Golden Eagle that flew over Rt. 26 near Pleasant Road on 12 March. Bald Eagles, mostly adults, have been observed in locations throughout Fort Drum, including Indian Lake, the Indian River near the Carr Road bridge, and the west end of Reedville Road. The first Turkey Vulture noted on Fort Drum was on 1 March, although observations from elsewhere in the region suggests that vultures may have been in the area for more than a week earlier. An American Kestrel in TA13A on 19 March was the first seen on Fort Drum in 2012. Small number of migrating Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, and Red-tailed Hawks have been noted on a few dates, but the only substantial raptor movements noted have been of Turkey Vultures, including a surprising number passing over on 26 March despite a stiff northeastern breeze.

The exceptionally warm weather during the second and third weeks of March brought with it a number of bird species at very early dates, many of them earlier than they had ever been seen before in northern New York. Some of these species, with the dates they were first observed on Fort Drum in parentheses, include Killdeer (8 March); American Woodcock and Song Sparrow (March 12); Eastern Bluebird (14 March); Wilson's Snipe, Eastern Phoebe, and Swamp and White-throated Sparrows (19 March); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Pipit, and Fox Sparrow (20 March); Eastern Towhee and Field Sparrow (21 March); and Winter Wren (22 March). Many of these species usually arrive in early to mid April, but the most surprising early arrival was noted during the course of frog surveys on the night of 19 March, when 5-7 Eastern Whip-poor-wills were heard calling near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. This date is a little more than a month earlier than average, and appears to set a new record early arrival date for New York State. Cooling weather beginning 23-24 March effectively stopped the flow of early migrants for a while.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 March 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Declining numbers of wintering species continued on Fort Drum through March. As many as Four Rough-legged Hawks were in grassland areas of TAs 12 and 13 through 19 March. On 21 March a Northern Shrike was observed chasing, or being chased by, a Common Grackle; it appeared that the birds alternated in being the aggressor. Bohemian Waxwings were only observed a few times on Fort Drum through the winter, with the most recent observation of about 25 in the Cantonment Area on 12 March. Single Snow Buntings were observed in two locations on 12 March and a Lapland Longspur flew over TA12 on 14 March. American Tree Sparrows were observed in many locations throughout the month, and a number were heard singing from mid-March on. The Pine Siskins present all winter appear to be nesting in hemlock stands throughout the installation, and have been joined by additional birds, although it is likely that many of the siskins observed during the month are passing through.

Although it is still early in the spring, several species can be seen conspicuously displaying throughout much of the installation now. A few male Wild Turkeys were observed displaying as early as mid-February, but now males can be seen in full display just about everywhere turkeys are found. Large numbers of American Woodcock have been heard “peenting” in open areas throughout the western Training Areas since mid-March. For instance, on 19 March more than 40 woodcock were heard displaying in a 5-mile drive around Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield and on roads to the east. Fewer Wilson’s snipe are present so far, but snipe have been heard “winnowing” over wet grassy areas along Antwerp Road since 19 March. All of these species should continue to display through April and into May.

Bird species observed on Fort Drum 2 March through 28 March:

Snow Goose	Ring-billed Gull	American Pipit
Ross's Goose	Herring Gull	Bohemian Waxwing
Cackling Goose	Rock Pigeon	Snow Bunting
Canada Goose	Mourning Dove	Lapland Longspur
American Black Duck	Eastern Whip-poor-will	Eastern Towhee
Mallard	Belted Kingfisher	American Tree Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Field Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Downy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Bufflehead	Hairy Woodpecker	Swamp Sparrow
Common Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Phoebe	Dark-eyed Junco
Ruffed Grouse	Northern Shrike	Red-winged Blackbird
Wild Turkey	Horned Lark	Eastern meadowlark
Bald Eagle	Blue Jay	Common Grackle
Northern Harrier	American Crow	Rusty Blackbird
Cooper's Hawk	Common Raven	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Purple Finch
Rough-legged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Pine Siskin
Golden Eagle	Brown Creeper	American Goldfinch
American Kestrel	Winter Wren	
Killdeer	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Wilson's Snipe	American Robin	
American Woodcock	European Starling	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 06 April 2012

Invertebrates

Ticks continue to be observed in large numbers in both grassy and shrubby habitat. See the latest *Fort Drum Outdoor* Newsletter for more information on ticks and methods for prevention, detection, and treatment of Lyme disease.

Fish

Walleye and white suckers have been trapped recently in the Indian River by Fort Drum Fisheries Biologists. The fish migrate up the river from the lake to spawn shortly after ice-out. Walleye are reported to spawn when water temperatures range between 40-50 degrees Fahrenheit. Unseasonably warm temperatures during the week of March 16-20 caused the Indian River water temperature to rise more quickly than usual from 32 degrees to above 50 degrees in four days. Though the water temperature was above that ideal for walleye spawning, walleye still needed time to stage for spawning and to react to the quick change in water temperature. Cold temperatures at night have brought water temperatures back down to appropriate walleye spawning temperatures. Each year from March 16 to early May, the state closes walleye, northern pike, and chain pickerel fishing seasons to protect the fish during their spawning runs. This year walleye, pike, and pickerel fishing seasons will reopen on May 5.



Fort Drum biologist with a northern pike from Indian Lake before being released.



Fort Drum biologist measuring a walleye from Indian Lake before being released.

Birds

Seasonally cool weather and persistent northerly winds during late March and early April have resulted in very light migration during this period. Small numbers of birds appear to be moving, but no significant movements have been noted since the end of the warm spell in mid-March. Despite the lack of any significant migratory movements a handful of species arrived to Fort Drum during the past week.

Turkey Vultures have been observed migrating over Fort Drum steadily all week, but otherwise the raptor migration has not been particularly noticeable. Numbers of Northern Harriers in grassland portions of Fort Drum have remained fairly constant since mid-February, with 3-5 birds seen daily. The same goes for Rough-legged Hawk, with three individuals observed as recently as 4 April. American Kestrels are gradually returning to open areas throughout Fort Drum, and on 29 March a Merlin was perched near Magrath Gym in the Cantonment Area.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 06 April 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Waterfowl and waterbird numbers have been low during the past week, but breeding species are widespread throughout Fort Drum, and a few migrants continue to be seen. Pairs of the most common breeding species of ducks on Fort Drum—Mallard, Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, and American Black Duck—have been widely reported this week, and the presence of scattered small groups of males suggests that some females are on eggs. The only obviously migrating ducks noted this period were Ring-necked Ducks and Bufflehead, both from ponds scattered throughout Fort Drum. The season's first Common Loon was on Indian Lake 4 April, and by this date pairs of Pied-billed Grebes were on ponds in TAs 9C and 15C. Also at the TA 9C pond were 8 active Great Blue Heron nests, and another 4 nests were at a pond in TA 8C. On 5 April the season's first Virginia Rail was calling in the Matoon Marsh in TA 17B.

The songbird migration has been especially slow during the past week with only a couple of new arrivals. The season's first Vesper Sparrow was at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on 3 April, and a Savannah Sparrow in TA 12 on the following day was another first for the year. Both of these species were reported elsewhere in upstate New York at substantially earlier dates, so it is possible that small numbers of both arrived on Fort Drum earlier, but it is also clear that these species arrived in numbers during the first few days of April. Other conspicuous migrants during the period include Fox Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco, with small numbers of Rusty Blackbirds also noted. Wintering birds on the move included a Snow Bunting flying north over TA 12 on 4 April, and a gathering of at least 24 American Tree Sparrows, many of them singing, at the Matoon Marsh in TA 17B on 5 April.

Bird species observed on Fort Drum 29 March through 5 April:

Canada Goose	Rock Pigeon	European Starling
Wood Duck	Mourning Dove	Snow Bunting
American Black Duck	Belted Kingfisher	American Tree Sparrow
Mallard	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Field Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Vesper Sparrow
Bufflehead	Hairy Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Northern Flicker	Fox Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Pileated Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Eastern Phoebe	Swamp Sparrow
Common Loon	Blue Jay	White-throated Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	American Crow	Dark-eyed Junco
Turkey Vulture	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Tree Swallow	Eastern meadowlark
Cooper's Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Common Grackle
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Rusty Blackbird
Rough-legged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Kestrel	Brown Creeper	Purple Finch
Merlin	Winter Wren	Pine Siskin
Virginia Rail	Golden-crowned Kinglet	American Goldfinch
Killdeer	Eastern Bluebird	
Ring-billed Gull	American Robin	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 April 2012

Birds

The mid-March warm spell brought many birds to northern New York at record or near-record early dates, but was followed by three weeks of northerly winds during which very few birds migrated. As a result, bird migration during the middle of April has been about typical for the time of year, with several species arriving slightly early but within historic arrival windows. As is often the case, the heaviest movements of the period coincided with warm temperatures and a strong southerly flow of air between 13 and 16 April.

The bulk of the waterfowl migration is over, and most recent observations have been of nesting species. Canada Geese are sitting on eggs in wetlands throughout Fort Drum and no goose migration has been observed over the past two weeks. Pairs of Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, and Hooded Merganser have been noted in wetlands throughout the Training Areas, with additional sightings of males—singly or in small groups—suggesting that many females are incubating. The only duck



species not known to nest on Fort Drum that have been observed during the past two weeks have been Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, and Common Merganser, all in small numbers. All three of these species, especially Ring-necked Duck and Common Merganser, nest in northern New York and might conceivably nest on Fort Drum, but are generally not seen on the installation after April and before September.

The first two weeks of April saw the arrival of Osprey and Broad-winged Hawk, and the continued arrival of other breeding raptors. At least 4 or 5 pairs of Northern Harriers and American Kestrels are now on territory in the TA 12 and 13 grasslands, and on 18 April a Merlin was along Antwerp Road just south of Gray Road. At least half a dozen kestrel territories and one Merlin territory are also located in the general Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield area. Pairs of Red-tailed Hawks are nesting in open areas throughout Fort Drum, but at least some wintering hawks remain, including three Rough-legged Hawks in TAs 12 and 13 still present as of 18 April.

On 9 April the season's first Pine Warbler was heard singing along FUSA Boulevard, but checks of numerous pine stands on this and the next few days turned up no others and few migrants in general. Finally, the warm spell that began 13 April brought the first large wave of migrants since mid-March, including the season's first Blue-headed Vireos, Barn Swallows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes, and Chipping Sparrows, as well as large numbers of many other species, especially Northern Flickers. Other arrivals noted during the subsequent week included a Palm Warbler on 17 April, Northern Rough-winged Swallow and Brown Thrasher on 18 April, and a House Wren on 19 April. By this latter date species such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Towhee, and Field and Vesper Sparrows were common in appropriate habitat.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 April 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Pine Siskin and White-winged Crossbill were the only species of irruptive finch that occurred in New York in numbers this past winter, and both species have been observed on Fort Drum this month. Pine Siskins remain common in hemlock stands throughout Fort Drum, and several behaviors have been noted that suggest many of these birds nested locally. White-winged Crossbills have been much scarcer this year on the installation, but on 11 April one was heard calling over TA 6A.

Bird species observed on Fort Drum 9 – 19 April:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 3 May 2012

Trees and shrubs are budding, but full leaf out has not quite taken place yet due to the cooler temperatures the last couple weeks.

Mammals

One of the most common species to see right now in the Cantonment Area are woodchucks. Woodchucks are usually seen in grassy areas foraging on herbaceous vegetation and invertebrates near their dens. Woodchuck young, or pups, are generally born around mid-April to May. They are helpless when born but will grow quickly, leaving their mother's den at 5-6 weeks of age to establish their own dens. Woodchucks are also called groundhogs or whistle-pig. They are one of the most solitary of all marmot species and the only one found in the eastern U.S.



Woodchuck in Cantonment Area.

Fish

Stocking of brook trout and brown trout in the West Branch of Black Creek and the Black Creek, respectively, took place on April 23. Fishing pressure increased following stocking and high trout catch rates have been reported. You will find a map of stocking locations with approximate numbers of fish stocked at each site at the following link:

<http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/fishing-boating.aspx> .



(Left) Brown trout stocked in Black Creek; (above) brook trout being stocked in West Branch of Black Creek.

Both walleye and northern pike spawning seasons have ended. Beginning this Saturday, May 5, both species and pickerel will be open to angling. As a reminder, the limit for each species is 5 fish per day and there are minimum length requirements for retained fish with a 15" minimum length for walleye and pickerel and an 18" minimum length for northern pike.

Black Bass season is closed in Jefferson County until June 16. Anglers may fish for bass in Lewis County (Indian Pond, Indian Lake, and Mud Lake on Fort Drum) but tackle is limited to artificial lures and it is a catch-and-release only fishery until June 16. The late fishing season opener for bass is set to protect bass while they are spawning and nesting.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 3 May 2012 (continued)

Birds

After weeks of northerly winds and very little bird migration, winds finally switched out of the south on May 1, and over the subsequent two days large numbers of songbirds flooded into the Fort Drum area. On the nights of 30April-1 May and 1-2 May the weather seemed good for a heavy migration, but the expected big wave of birds didn't quite reach us either day. Instead, a few new species were noted each day but all in very small numbers. Finally, on the night of 2-3 May a massive wave of birds arrived, including large numbers of warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and thrushes.

Many species that had been absent from Fort Drum just two days earlier were common by 3 May. The following list summarizes the arrival dates of species observed during the past two weeks:

24 April: Nashville Warbler, Northern Waterthrush and Henslow's Sparrow.

26 April: Black-and-white Warbler.

1 May: Upland Sandpiper, Great Crested Flycatcher, Chestnut-sided & Black-throated Green Warblers, and Baltimore Oriole.

2 May: Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Ovenbird, Blue-winged & Yellow Warblers, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

3 May: Least Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Gray Catbird, Veery, Wood Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, White-crowned Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

A few grassland bird arrivals are worth commenting on. One Henslow's Sparrow heard singing in TA12C on 24 April tied the record early arrival date documented for Fort Drum. So far this is the only Henslow's Sparrow that has been detected this year. Upland Sandpipers have been observed in three locations: one in TA 13A east of Belvedere Pond (by the helicopters in TA12C), one inside the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield fence near Rt. 26, and one in TA5D. Northern Harriers and American Bitterns are now widespread in grassland areas, and the only traditional nesting species that have not been detected yet are Sedge Wren and Bobolink.



Merlin in Training Area 12C.

An Eastern Whip-poor-will heard calling on Carr Road on 2 May was the first one detected on Fort Drum since several very early arrivals were noted in mid-March. Those early-arriving birds were not heard after they were first detected, but almost no effort was expended trying to find whip-poor-wills after the weather turned cold. Merlins apparently continue to increase on Fort Drum, and territorial birds have been observed in the Cantonment Area, near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, in TA11B, and at Indian Lake. A Merlin that flew over TA 8 on 26 April may have been migrating. A flock of 75+ Rusty Blackbirds was in a wet wooded area in the Cantonment on 25 April.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 3 May 2012 (continued)

Bird species observed on Fort Drum 23 April – 3 May:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 May 2012

Trees and shrubs are now completely leafed out.

Fish

Black bass are among several species of fish that begin spawning in late May, coinciding with longer days and higher water temperatures. Brown bullheads also begin spawning during this period. After spawning, both black bass and bullheads will guard their eggs and newly hatched young from predators. Males are the domestic sex of sunfish species as they are the builder and guarder of the nest which may contain eggs from multiple females. Brown bullhead eggs and young, however, may be guarded by one or both parents.

Recent voluntary creel survey forms from Indian and Narrow Lakes have shown a recent increase in catch rates of Northern pike, with boat-based anglers being more successful than shore-based anglers. Catches of walleye, yellow perch and black crappie have also been reported.

Just a reminder that stocking of brook trout and brown trout in the West Branch of Black Creek and the Black Creek, respectively, took place on April 23. You will find a map of stocking locations with approximate numbers of fish stocked at each site at the following link: <http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/fishing-boating.aspx>.

Fort Drum recently had its 16th Annual Fishing Derby on Remington Pond. The results of the fishing derby and more photos can also be found on the web site at: www.fortdrum.isportsman.net.



A largemouth bass, the overall largest fish caught at Fort Drum's 16th Annual Fishing Derby at Remington Pond on May 19.

Amphibians

After a stretch of cold weather and hard frosts in the evenings, amphibian communities on Fort Drum have begun their respective breeding seasons. With the onset of warm weather, even late-spring/early summer breeders have begun in earnest. Spring Peepers and Northern Leopard frogs continue to call though in greatly reduced numbers. Northern Pickerel frogs seem finished with only a few adamant individuals still calling. Wood frogs and Boreal Chorus frogs are finished with their breeding season. Wood frog tadpoles can be seen now with near-fully developed hind legs and will leave their respective wetlands soon. Within the past two weeks at Ft. Drum, Green and Bull Frogs have begun calling and have been heard in full choruses in several areas.

Fort Drum biologists conduct annual Anuran Calling Surveys in accordance with North American Amphibian Monitoring Protocols (NAAMP) to monitor the distribution and vigor of calling frog populations. These surveys are conducted 4 times per year beginning just after ice-off of vernal wetlands and continue approximately once a month ending in late-June or early-July.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 May 2012 (continued)

Reptiles

On 17 May 2012, Fort Drum wildlife biologists documented Spotted Turtles (*Clemmys guttata*) for the first time on the installation. While quietly drifting down a edge of a wetland in Training Area 19C on a cool morning (48 degrees F), a single spotted turtle was observed basking in the warm morning sun and a second individual was observed a few meters away. Spotted turtles are small (adult carapace length of 3.5 to 4.5 inches) and have yellow or orange spots on it carapace and a deep satin black head with spots as well. Its plastron is typically yellow or orange and males have grayish chins while females have a bright yellow chin. The Spotted turtle is a New York State species of special concern.

This is the fourth species of turtle documented on Fort Drum. A pamphlet about the turtles on Fort Drum can be found on the web site: www.fortdrum.isportsman.net.

In a concerted effort with the New York State Natural Heritage Program, Fort Drum wildlife biologists have begun a comprehensive search for Blanding's turtles. The Blanding's turtle has been previously recorded on the installation in 1996, however, it was only one individual and it may have been a released pet. The current survey efforts are attempting to determine if there is a population of Blanding's Turtles on Fort Drum.



Spotted Turtle in Training Area 19C.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 May 2012 (continued)

Birds

The spring migration is winding down and the breeding season for most bird species is well underway. Every species that regularly breeds on Fort Drum has been observed this season except for Least Bittern and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, both of which occur in very small numbers and are easily overlooked. Several typically late-arriving species such as Willow and Alder Flycatcher are present but not in typical breeding numbers yet, and other migrants continue to move through, especially Blackpoll and Tennessee Warblers.

Small numbers of Sedge Wrens and Henslow's Sparrows have been observed in the TA12 and 13 grasslands so far this season, but unfortunately none in areas easily accessible to birders. At least two Upland Sandpipers were in this area during late April and early May, but these birds may have been migrating, as neither bird had been relocated. Among the species that are currently conspicuous in this grassland area are at least 4-5 pairs of Northern Harriers, many American Bitterns, large numbers of Bobolinks and Savannah Sparrows, and 10+ Clay-colored Sparrows. Good places to see the latter species include the shrubby fields northeast of the intersection of Antwerp and Gray Roads, and south of Poagland Road about 0.25 miles east of the western boundary of Fort Drum. On 10 May an adult male Orchard Oriole sang from the trees near the pond on Dogwood Road, and on 17 May two flocks of Brant totaling about 900 individuals flew over TA 12.

Upland Sandpipers and Clay-colored Sparrows can also be found in the sandy grasslands near Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, but the most abundant grassland bird species here are Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows. Both of the latter sparrow species are easily found in open grassy patches all around the airfield and in adjacent Training Areas, especially TA 5D. The Upland Sandpipers in TAs 5 were quite conspicuous in late April and early May, but have been difficult to find lately, and it is not clear that all of them are still present. The open oak woodlands in TAs 5D (primarily) and 5B currently host at least 5 pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers, with several more pairs in nearby areas. As usual, Eastern Whip-poor-wills and Common Nighthawks are present in especially high numbers in the woodlands surrounding Wheeler-Sack Army airfield.

The Merlin population continues to boom in northern New York, including Fort Drum, with several pairs occurring near the airfield, in TAs 11 and 12, near Indian Lake, and probably in other areas not yet documented.

All 20 of Fort Drum's nesting warbler species have been reported this year. Winged Warbler surveys so far have picked up Golden-winged Warblers on Borland Road just north of Rt. 26, along Antwerp Road in TA12A just north of the railroad crossing, and in the center of TA12D. Blue-winged Warblers and hybrids also occur in these same areas, including a Lawrence's Warbler in TA 12D. So far these surveys have documented more Blue-winged than Golden-winged Warblers, but the surveys have just begun.

On 21 May 2-3 singing male Cerulean Warblers were in a mature maple stand in TA15C, across Canfield Road from OP5A (note that this road and TA are often closed to recreation). One each Golden-winged and Mourning Warbler were along the road near this stand. Four Mourning Warblers were in TA6A on 23 May, along the main road in the TA that parallels Rt. 3. Also in this area were 5 Prairie Warblers, 9 Blue-winged Warblers but no Golden-winged Warblers, and large numbers of Chestnut-sided Warblers.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 May 2012 (continued)

Bird species observed on Fort Drum 7 May – 24 May:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 June 2012

Trees and shrubs are now completely leafed out.

Fish

Rainbow trout were stocked in Quarry Pond on Thursday, May 31. Brook and brown trout were stocked in West Branch of Black Creek and the Black Creek, respectively, on April 23. You will find a map of all stocking locations with approximate numbers of fish stocked at each site at the following link:

<http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/fishing-boating.aspx> .



A rainbow trout stocked in Quarry Pond.

Mammals

Young animals are making their debut including woodchucks, foxes, Canada geese and numerous other bird species.

Everyone is reminded to keep their distance and not disturb wildlife. Many people assume that young wildlife alone are abandoned, helpless and in need of assistance. However, many adult animals will intentionally stay away from their young to avoid attracting predators, but will return to their babies at regular intervals to feed them. When baby animals are picked up by humans, usually more harm than good comes to the situation.

Birds

Two birding tours of Fort Drum were conducted over the Memorial Day Weekend, on 26 and 27 May. The Saturday trip was in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day and attended by 14 participants, most from northern New York but some travelling from Rochester, NY and New Jersey. The trip on Sunday was for the New York Young Birders Group, which consists of teenagers from all over the state.

Both trips followed a standard route that has proven successful in past years. Starting from the permit office, where a cooperative Merlin was seen by all, the groups followed the perimeter of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, where birds typical of open sandy areas were the target. Numerous Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows were observed along this section of the route, and both groups had excellent looks at a Clay-colored Sparrow just north of the latrine in TA 4B. At least four Northern Mockingbirds were along the northern and western boundary of the airfield, along with many Brown Thrashers, Eastern Towhees, and Field Sparrows.

The next stop on the tour was the oak woodland in TA5D, where Red-headed Woodpecker was the target species. On both days the woodpeckers were difficult to find, but after some searching everybody had excellent looks at several individuals. Other birds in this area included another Northern Mockingbird, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, and more Vesper Sparrows.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 June 2012 (continued)

After seeing the woodpeckers the tours headed north into the training areas. Saturday's group stopped at the south end of Plank Road to look for forest birds in the mixed hemlock-northern hardwoods just near the intersection with Bagram Road. A nice mix of species sang from the woods here, including Yellow-throated Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Waterthrush, and Canada Warbler. After spending several minutes looking at birds one birder noticed a bear walking away from us down Plank Road; the bear seemed unconcerned by our presence and everybody was able to see it well.

The first target species north of the airfield was Golden-winged Warbler, and excellent looks at this species were had by all participants on both days of the trip. Saturday's group saw one on Antwerp Road just south of Reedville Road and north of the bridge over Black Creek. Sunday's Golden-winged Warbler was on Reedville Road about 0.5 mile east of Antwerp Road. On Sunday a Brewster's Warbler (hybrid between Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warbler) was observed along the west side of Antwerp Road just south of the railroad crossing a short distance north of Reedville Road. As we looked for the warbler several birders noted a Double-crested Cormorant, an Osprey, and several Broad-winged Hawks flying over Fort Drum.



Brewster's Warbler—not a true species, but a hybrid between the Golden-winged Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler.

Grasslands birds are always one of the big attractions to birders visiting Fort Drum, but unfortunately the species most people want to see are not present in any accessible location on Fort Drum this year.

Both groups spent some time in the grasslands anyway, where many Savannah Sparrows, Bobolinks, Alder and Willow Flycatchers, Common Yellowthroats, and Yellow Warblers were seen. The only big surprise of the weekend was a Short-eared Owl seen in TA 12 on the Sunday trip. Short-eared Owls nest erratically on Fort Drum, but none were known to be present this year until Sunday's observation.

The two tours went different ways from the grasslands. Saturday's group tried for Cerulean Warbler in TA15C but had no success. From there a stop in a hemlock stand at the north end of Doolins Road turned up Blue-headed Vireo and Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, and Canada Warblers. The last stop of the day was in TA 6A, where a Prairie Warbler was seen and a Mourning Warbler heard, but the latter bird remained buried in the shrubs and was seen by nobody. Also seen here were several molting juvenile Broad-winged Hawks migrating over Fort Drum.

Sunday's group returned to the permit office by way of Pleasant Road, where a number of birds were seen and heard, including another heard-only Mourning Warbler. The highlight for many here was a porcupine initially seen crossing the road and then climbing a tree, giving great looks. The young birders on this group were hoping to see a Henslow's Sparrow at Perch River after the Fort Drum trip so called an early end to the tour (but unfortunately had no luck with the sparrow).

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 01 June 2012 (continued)

Few migrants were observed on either trip other than the hawks mentioned previously. A handful of Blackpoll Warblers were heard both days, but in typical fashion few people saw one. On Saturday a Northern Parula was in TA12B, certainly a migrant. Overall both groups seemed very happy with their trips despite not seeing a couple of species that were hoped for.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum May 26 & 27:

Canada Goose	Tree Swallow	Field Sparrow
Wood Duck	Barn Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Mallard	Black-capped Chickadee	Savannah Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Grasshopper Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	White-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	House Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Green Heron	Eastern Bluebird	White-throated Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Veery	Scarlet Tanager
Osprey	Hermit Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Northern Harrier	Wood Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Broad-winged Hawk	American Robin	Indigo Bunting
Red-tailed Hawk	Gray Catbird	Bobolink
American Kestrel	Northern Mockingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Merlin	Brown Thrasher	Eastern Meadowlark
Killdeer	European Starling	Common Grackle
Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing	Brown-headed Cowbird
Rock Pigeon	Ovenbird	Baltimore Oriole
Mourning Dove	Northern Waterthrush	Purple Finch
Short-eared Owl	Golden-winged Warbler	House Finch
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Blue-winged Warbler	American Goldfinch
Belted Kingfisher	"Brewster's" Warbler	
Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Nashville Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker	Mourning Warbler	
Hairy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat	
Northern Flicker	American Redstart	
Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Parula	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Blackburnian Warbler	
Alder Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler	
Willow Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler	
Least Flycatcher	Blackpoll Warbler	
Eastern Phoebe	Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Great Crested Flycatcher	Pine Warbler	
Eastern Kingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Yellow-throated Vireo	Prairie Warbler	
Blue-headed Vireo	Black-throated Green Warbler	
Warbling Vireo	Mourning Warbler	
Red-eyed Vireo	Canada Warbler	
Blue Jay	Eastern Towhee	
American Crow	Chipping Sparrow	
Common Raven	Clay-colored Sparrow	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 18 June 2012

Insects

Notable insects observed included a Giant Swallowtail (butterfly) in TA13A during the first week of June. A Harlequin Darner (dragonfly) was documented for the first time on Fort Drum.

Fish

Bass are mostly done with spawning and fishing season for largemouth bass and smallmouth bass is now open as of June 16. (Fishing season for muskellunge is also open.)

Amphibians

Typical “summer” frogs such as green frogs and bullfrogs can be heard.

Mammals

Young animals are a common sight including woodchucks, foxes, Canada geese and numerous other bird species.

Everyone is reminded to keep their distance and not disturb wildlife. Many people assume that young wildlife alone are abandoned, helpless and in need of assistance. However, many adult animals will intentionally stay away from their young to avoid attracting predators, but will return to their babies at regular intervals to feed them. When baby animals are picked up by humans, usually more harm than good comes to the situation.

Bears have been regularly seen throughout the Training Area. On June 14, a bobcat was observed standing in the middle of Reedville Road during the middle of the day.

Birds

The breeding season is now in full swing, as are surveys of Fort Drum’s birds by Fish and Wildlife Program personnel. These bird surveys are conducted throughout the installation covering a broad range of breeding birds, but this year special attention is being paid to Red-headed Woodpecker, Golden-winged Warbler, and grassland birds.

This year a graduate student is studying Fort Drum’s Red-headed Woodpecker population. So far 14 territories have been found in Training Areas 5, 6, and 8, slightly more than estimates from previous years of 9-12 territories. Currently all but one of the territorial males is mated, and all but one of the pairs have active nests with eggs or nestlings. At this stage of nesting Red-headed Woodpeckers are quiet and amazingly difficult to find given their flashy plumage, but once the young leave the nests they will be much more conspicuous.



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail in Training Area 6A.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 18 June 2012 (continued)

Two graduate students are continuing a study of habitat use by grassland birds, with special emphasis on Sedge Wrens and Henslow's Sparrows. Unfortunately very few of either species is present on Fort Drum this year, none of which are in easily accessible areas near roads. During most years the majority of Sedge Wrens arrive on Fort Drum in June and July, and during many years there is also an influx of Henslow's Sparrows during mid-summer, so there may yet be more individuals of both species to come. The Short-eared Owl observed in Training Area 12 on May 27 has not been seen again.

The focus of Golden-winged Warbler surveys is on documenting the degree to which Blue-winged Warblers have spread throughout the installation, and in identifying those areas or microhabitats where Golden-winged Warblers persist with no Blue-winged Warblers as neighbors. Golden-wings are disappearing in part because of competition and hybridization with Blue-winged Warblers. Unfortunately, Blue-winged Warblers occur throughout the installation and apparently in every type of habitat used by Golden-wings. In fact Golden-winged Warblers have all but disappeared from Training Area 6A, the southernmost TA on Fort Drum with suitable habitat. So far this year surveys of TA6A have identified at least 16 territorial male Blue-winged Warblers, 3 male Blue-winged/Golden-winged hybrids, and just 1 Golden-winged Warbler. The situation is not so dire in other parts of the installation, and areas where Golden-wings seem to predominate include the Training Areas along the western and central sections of Reedville Road, Antwerp Road south of Birch Road, and several stretches of U.S. Military Highway. Most hybrids documented this year have been of the more common form, referred to as "Brewster's" Warbler, but three of the rarer "Lawrence's" Warblers have been seen, of which one in TA6A occupies a territory right along a road. To get to this spot, enter TA6A from U.S. Route 3, follow the gravel road to the first intersection and turn left, and drive about 0.3 miles north to a small stream crossing. The Lawrence's Warbler was singing from the edge of a small clearing just north of this drainage. Also noteworthy along this road were singing Mourning Warblers both north and south of the Lawrence's Warbler.

A nightjar survey conducted early in the morning of 8 June tallied 35 Eastern Whip-poor-wills and 13 Common Nighthawks on 10 stops in the southern portion of Fort Drum. Both species are easily found around the airfield and other open areas on Fort Drum, with nighthawks being restricted to the southern one-third of the installation where soils are sandy. Some of the same open sandy areas support good numbers of Vesper, Grasshopper, and Clay-colored Sparrows, all of which can be found easily around the perimeter of the airfield. On the morning of 13 June both nightjars and all three of these sparrows were found on the Main Tank Trail on the north side of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, where one Horned Lark was also singing.

Two southern species rarely observed on Fort Drum have been reported. During the first week of June a report came in from a military spouse who is also a birder of a Yellow-breasted Chat in one of the housing areas. Unfortunately this chat has not been seen again. There are at least 4 previous records of Yellow-breasted Chat on Fort Drum, all of which were during June or July of singing males on territory. During grassland bird surveys on 8 June a singing male Orchard Oriole was in a tree near the pond on Dogwood Road; presumably this was the same male observed in May but not on several intervening visits to the area. Single Orchard Orioles have been seen on Fort Drum during three previous years.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 18 June 2012 (continued)

During most years the spring songbird migration lingers well into June, with Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Blackpoll and Tennessee Warblers and occasionally an Olive-sided Flycatcher or Northern Parula migrating through Fort Drum through the first week or more of the month. Unusually, no Blackpoll Warblers have been observed on Fort Drum this June, and in fact the only obvious migrant songbird species observed this month has been Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, with a few passing through during the first four days of June. The only other clear indications of late migration were small movements of Broad-winged Hawks and Common Loons during the first week of June. Possibly migrating was an immature Bald Eagle over Carr Road on 13 June, but an adult Bald Eagle over TA9C on 11 June seems less likely a migrant. Pine Siskins continue to be heard flying over the installation, but it is not clear whether these birds are migrating or making local movements, as siskins nested on Fort Drum this winter/early spring.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum June 1 – 14:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 June 2012

Birds

Grassland birds are always one of Fort Drum's main attractions to visiting birders, but Henslow's Sparrows and Sedge Wrens remain scarce as of late June, with no territories located near roads or in otherwise accessible areas. During many years Sedge Wren numbers increase in mid-to-late June, but so far no influx of wrens has been noted. The grasslands on Fort Drum currently are unusually dry, so perhaps the habitat is not attractive to nesting Sedge Wrens this year. The Short-eared Owl observed in late May has not been seen again, suggesting that this bird was a transient rather than a local breeder. Grassland bird surveys on 23 June turned up at least 29 Clay-colored Sparrows in the northern part of TA 12B and southern portion of TA 13A. Most of these birds are several hundred yards off roads, but at least a few can be heard from Poagland Road about 250 m east of Pleasant Street or Antwerp Road north of Gray Road. As of late June approximately 75 Clay-colored Sparrows have been found on Fort Drum, with the largest number occurring in grasslands with scattered shrub patches.



Clay-colored Sparrows in Training Area 13A.

On 22 June at least 2 Upland Sandpipers were actively displaying over TA 5D and the northeastern boundary of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. One of these males flew around an area that was at least one-half mile across, giving "wolf-whistle" calls every few minutes from widely scattered locations. These were the first Upland Sandpiper vocalizations heard in this area since early May. These sandpipers were observed during surveys for grassland birds of the open areas in TA 5D, where 8 Grasshopper Sparrows and more than 12 Vesper Sparrows were observed, along with 7 Red-headed Woodpeckers. No young Red-headed Woodpeckers have fledged yet this year and the adults remain relatively quiet and difficult to find, although on the 22nd several were seen right along a truck trail that passes through the oak woodlands in the western portion of TA5D. Also seen were 8 adult Northern Mockingbirds on 7 territories, an unusually large number for this part of New York.

Golden-winged Warblers have essentially stopped singing during daytime for the year, although they can still be heard singing for a brief time at dawn each day. Survey data have not been compiled yet, but it appears that Blue-winged Warblers now outnumber Golden-winged Warblers on Fort Drum. Every surveyed patch of habitat that was occupied by Golden-winged Warblers this year also had territorial Blue-winged Warblers or hybrids in it, except for a couple of small swamps where only Golden-winged Warblers were seen. As has been the case in recent years, the only large area where many Golden-winged Warblers hold territories with few Blue-winged Warblers is along the western and central portions of Reedville Road, although the number of territorial Golden-winged-Blue-winged Warbler hybrids is increasing in this area.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 June 2012 (continued)

On 27 June several singing male Prairie Warblers were heard along the northwest boundary of TA 7G, along the road that parallels the railroad tracks immediately south of Rt. 3A. There is abundant habitat here that looks suitable for Prairie Warblers, and there are likely more present than were heard on 27 June. This area also has good numbers of nesting Common Nighthawks and Eastern Whip-poor-wills on both sides of Rt. 3A and is a good place to listen for these species without doing much night-time driving on installation roads. The rarest regularly nesting warbler species on Fort Drum is Cerulean Warbler, which have so far been found in only one location on Fort Drum this year, a mature maple stand just northwest of OP 5A.



Prairie Warbler in Training Area 6A.

Several Mourning Warblers continue along the loop road in TA6A, including at least two near the first intersection in from Rt. 3. Additional Mourning Warblers are scattered throughout the installation in woodland with a dense shrubby understory, including many places along Reedville Road and in timber sales along FUSA Boulevard.

Cuckoos were unusually scarce during 2011, especially Black-billed Cuckoos, a species that is normally fairly common on Fort Drum. Black-billed Cuckoos are more numerous this year than they were last year, but numbers remain below the average for the past 15 years. The largest numbers of cuckoos have been observed in TAs 11, 12, 13, and 15, although they are possible in successional woodland and regenerating clear cuts throughout the installation. A major tent caterpillar outbreak during the years 2002-2005 led to very high cuckoo numbers during that period, including Yellow-billed Cuckoos, a species that had previously been virtually absent from Fort Drum. Yellow-billed Cuckoos remained relatively common on Fort Drum for several years after the outbreak ended, and in 2011 the two species of cuckoo were present in very similar numbers. Yellow-billed Cuckoo numbers seem to have returned to historic levels this year, as there has been just one observation from the western boundary near Poagland Road.

Young animals are a common sight including woodchucks, foxes, Canada geese and numerous other bird species.

Everyone is reminded to keep their distance and not disturb wildlife. Many people assume that young wildlife alone are abandoned, helpless and in need of assistance. However, many adult animals will intentionally stay away from their young to avoid attracting predators, but will return to their babies at regular intervals to feed them. When baby animals are picked up by humans, usually more harm than good comes to the situation.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 June 2012 (continued)

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum June 15 – 28:

Canada Goose	Eastern Wood-Pewee	"Brewster's" Warbler
Wood Duck	Alder Flycatcher	"Lawrence's" Warbler
Mallard	Willow Flycatcher	Black-and-white Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Least Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Eastern Phoebe	Mourning Warbler
Wild Turkey	Great Crested Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Common Loon	Eastern Kingbird	American Redstart
Pied-billed Grebe	Yellow-throated Vireo	Cerulean Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue-headed Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
American Bittern	Warbling Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Green Heron	Blue Jay	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Pine Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Horned Lark	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Purple Martin	Prairie Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Tree Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Canada Warbler
American Kestrel	Cliff Swallow	Eastern Towhee
Merlin	Barn Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Killdeer	Black-capped Chickadee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
American Woodcock	Brown Creeper	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	House Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Winter Wren	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Eastern Bluebird	Swamp Sparrow
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Veery	White-throated Sparrow
Black-billed Cuckoo	Hermit Thrush	Scarlet Tanager
Barred Owl	Wood Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Common Nighthawk	American Robin	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Gray Catbird	Indigo Bunting
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	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	Ovenbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	Baltimore Oriole
Northern Flicker	Golden-winged Warbler	Purple Finch
Pileated Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	American Goldfinch

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 12 July 2012

Fish

Unusually dry weather has lowered water levels in most area streams. Oftentimes, fish become concentrated in isolated pools during these extreme dry spells, making them highly vulnerable to predation. Local native trout streams which are mostly spring and seep fed remain cool in temperature while surface-fed streams have increased in temperature.

Parasites called “yellow grubs” or “black grubs” become a more common occurrence when waters are flowing slowly, water temperatures are high, and fish are experiencing higher levels of stress. Several recently surveyed creek chub in Trout Brook were found to host large numbers of yellow grubs while several eastern blacknose dace were found with black grubs.

Black and yellow grubs are trematodes whose eggs are released by fish-eating birds into the water. Eggs develop in snails and then the larvae hatch and penetrate the muscles of fish and encyst. Infected fish are consumed by birds and the cycle repeats.

Although unsightly, fish with these parasite are still safe for human consumption if well cooked.



“Yellow grubs” on a Pumpkinseed.



“Black grubs” (also called “black spot disease”) on a Northern Pike.

(Image: www.pikeadventures.blogspot.com)

Birds

Bird surveys during the last few days of June and beginning of July were focused on Training Areas 18 and 19, where a good variety of forest birds were found. Nesting Great Blue Herons were found in three locations, ranging from 2 nests with young on a wetland in TA 19C to a rookery with 29 nests and at least 43 young in TA19A. Two active Osprey nests were also found. Common Loons were observed on Indian Lake and Indian Pond, but so far no young have been observed on Fort Drum this year. As usual, a good variety of warblers and other songbirds were found in these training areas, with the only locally unusual species being a Slate-colored Junco in TA19A on 1 July. During most years no more than 1-2 juncos are observed during the nesting season on Fort Drum, and the TA19A bird was the only one found this year so far. On 3 July a Northern Goshawk was observed carrying food into TA18A, where a goshawk was also seen during the winter. Red-shouldered Hawks were found in three locations in TAs 18 and 19, and also in at least 2 places in TA 9, all traditional nesting areas.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 12 July 2012 (continued)

Nightjar surveys were conducted on five 10-stop survey routes on the nights leading up to the full moon on 3 July. A total of 72 Eastern Whip-poor-wills were heard on these routes, with the best two routes tallying 27 and 24 whips. Adding these numbers to the route that was run in June brings a total of 107 Eastern Whip-poor-wills counted on this year's surveys. Additional informal surveys have turned up many more whip-poor-wills on Fort Drum, bringing the total number of birds known to occur on the installation close to 200. Nearly 50 Common Nighthawks have also been observed this season, but this species is poorly captured on point count based survey routes. Most of Fort Drum's nighthawks nest in areas with bare sandy soil and the species is therefore found primarily in the southern one-third of the installation, where sandy soils predominate. However, nighthawks were observed in early July booming in the eastern end of TA18A and the western end of TA 19A, where soils are not sandy. In these areas nighthawks probably nest on bare rock outcroppings, which area common here.

This has not been the best year for rare grassland birds on Fort Drum, with a few exceptions. On 9 July a Sedge Wren was singing about 40 yards south of Dogwood Road just west of Antwerp Road. Henslow's Sparrows remain scarce on Fort Drum, though, with none near roads and the few males present have sang poorly all year. Surveys in TA 13A and 12C on 9 July tallied 12 Clay-colored Sparrows, bringing the season's total on Fort Drum this year to 90+, the highest number documented on the installation during a single year. Since 6 July up to 8 Upland Sandpipers have been observed daily at the south end of the airfield near Rt. 26. Also in this area has been at least one Eastern Meadowlark, a species that is surprisingly rare on Fort Drum.

The first successful Red-headed Woodpecker nests fledged young during early July. These woodpeckers have been quiet most days since they began nesting, but should become more conspicuous as the season progresses, with TA 5D continuing to have the largest number on Fort Drum. Nearby, the Merlin nest near the permit office fledged two young this year.

Young animals are a common sight including woodchucks, foxes, Canada geese and numerous other bird species.

Everyone is reminded to keep their distance and not disturb wildlife. Many people assume that young wildlife alone are abandoned, helpless and in need of assistance. However, many adult animals will intentionally stay away from their young to avoid attracting predators, but will return to their babies at regular intervals to feed them. When baby animals are picked up by humans, usually more harm than good comes to the situation.



Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 12 July 2012 (continued)

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum June 29 – July 12:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 July 2012

Fish

Fishing has been slow due to the high temperatures and low water situations.

Anglers are reminded to be on the watch for the Round Goby, a highly invasive species which is abundant in Lake Ontario. They are generally more abundant in large lakes, but have also established populations in streams. **Round Gobies have NOT been found on Fort Drum, but please contact the Fort Drum Aquatic Biologist (772-6283) for more information or if you see one.**



Round Goby
(Image: US Fish & Wildlife Service)

Anglers are reminded that it is illegal to use round gobies as baitfish in New York.

Some native fish that dwell in the bottom of streams, such as Slimy Sculpins, are similar in appearance and often mistaken for gobies. For more information about the Round Goby and identification tips, see Minnesota Sea Grant (<http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/ais/roundgoby>) and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Default.aspx?tabid=23571>).

Mammals

Young animals are commonly seen this time of year, particularly white-tailed deer fawns.

Although fun to watch, drivers are cautioned to be wary of fawns standing next to the road as their movements are very unpredictable.

Everyone is reminded to keep their distance and not disturb wildlife. Many people assume that young wildlife alone are abandoned, helpless and in need of assistance. However, many adult animals will intentionally stay away from their young to avoid attracting predators, but will return to their babies at regular intervals to feed them. When baby animals are picked up by humans, usually more harm than good comes to the situation.



Birds

The summer doldrums seem to be in place now, as many songbirds are spending very little time singing or are entirely silent, and bird activity generally has declined substantially since June. Many birds seemed to stop singing earlier this summer than during most years, perhaps because their spring arrival and subsequent nesting was also early. Although most birds have been silent, some species remain fairly active, and there have been some interesting observations of adult birds caring for young.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 July 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Upland Sandpipers and Red-headed Woodpeckers have been among the avian highlights in recent weeks. During the first two weeks of July as many as 11 Upland Sandpipers were seen daily just inside the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield fence along Rt. 26. On 8 July an adult Upland Sandpiper was observed with 3 fledglings along Bagram Road on the east boundary of the airfield, in an area where adult males were observed displaying actively earlier in the season. In the nearby oak woodlands in TA 5D several Red-headed Woodpecker nests fledged, and fledgling movements seem to have resulted in increased territorial squabbling by adults. At least this explanation seems to account for a dramatic increase in calling and drumming by three neighboring pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers in TA5D on 18 and 19 July.



Red-headed Woodpecker in Training Area 5D.

One of the biggest disappointments of the season was a low number of Sedge Wrens and Henslow's Sparrows on territory in May and June. During July an additional 3 singing male Sedge Wrens were located, one in TA12C on 10 July as mentioned in the last wildlife viewing report, a singing male in TA13A near Antwerp Road on 17 July; and a singing male in a small field at the eastern end of TA6A. This latter location is unusual, as most of Fort Drum's Sedge Wrens occur in the extensive grassland habitat of TAs 12 and 13, but single territories are found in small fields like the one in TA6A about every 2-3 years. Unfortunately, Henslow's Sparrows continued to be scarce through mid-July, and the few males present sang poorly or not at all many days. A few Bobolinks are still caring for young, but several flocks of 40-120 Bobolinks observed in TAs 12 and 13 between 16 and 20 July are clear indications that the nesting season is largely over for this species.

Although winged warblers stopped singing weeks ago, several have been observed during the past couple of weeks. On 16 July a Lawrence's Warbler was observed in the center of TA13A, most likely an immature bird based on fresh plumage, although hybrid Golden-winged/Blue-winged Warblers can be difficult to sex and age. An adult male Blue-winged Warbler was in the same area. On 19 July an adult female Golden-winged Warbler was found along the south end of Birch Road with at least 2 begging fledglings. A Golden-winged Warbler singing shortly after sunrise in the Cantonment Area on 25 July was the first male heard singing since late June, and several Blue-winged Warblers gave brief bouts of song early on 24 July in TA6A. Although these warblers generally stop singing early in the season, it is not unusual for some males to sing briefly early in the morning after young have fledged.



Fort Drum biologists participated in the annual Adirondack Loon Count on 21 July. Participants in this survey observe one lake—in this case Indian Lake—between the hours of 8:00 and 9:00 am and count the number of loons they observe. This year 3 adult loons were counted, but no indications of nesting were seen.

Common Loon (Image: US Fish & Wildlife Service)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 July 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Noteworthy during the loon survey was the presence of 2 adult Merlins feeding 2 young along the shore of Indian Lake, and an adult Bald Eagle that flew over during the survey. Probably the biggest surprise during the survey was a female Ring-necked Duck that flew in and landed on the lake during the survey; this species had never been detected on Fort Drum during the summer months. It is also worth noting that songbirds were much quieter during this loon survey than they have been during this same hour in past years, with fewer species detected than usual. On 25 July a different Bald Eagle, this one in near-adult plumage but with an incomplete band on the tail, was seen at Mud Lake.

Other bird observations worth noting include a singing male Cerulean Warbler in the middle of TA13A on 16 July, just N of a patch of woods that was formerly reliable for this species. Eastern Whip-poor-wills were heard calling between 4:30 and 5:00 almost every morning on Fort Drum between late May and early July, and 16 July was the first morning that none were heard on early morning surveys of appropriate habitat. Eastern Whip-poor-wills have been mostly silent since 16 July. On 17 July a Pied-billed Grebe was sitting on a nest in the Matoon Marsh, where 2 American Bitterns, 2 Common Gallinules, and several Marsh Wrens were also seen.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum July 16 – July 26:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 August 2012

Fish

With low precipitation levels, area streams originating in wetlands and the Adirondacks continue to have lower water levels than those of the past three years. Some smaller streams which flow through grasslands, such as Hunter Creek, are mostly ponded. Minnows can be found in dense numbers in these isolated ponds. Other small spring fed natural trout streams, such as Pleasant Creek, have adequate flows and remain relatively cool.

Butterflies

Giant Swallowtails are usually rare at this latitude, but have been downright common on Fort Drum and elsewhere in northern New York this summer. Throughout August Giant Swallowtails have been seen daily, and there is some indication that they are breeding instead of just visiting as usual.



Giant Swallowtail in Training Area 10A in August 2012.

Birds

August is a month of transition from the nesting season to migration, and recent sightings include observations of both breeding and migrating birds. Most sightings involving nesting behavior this month have been of adult sparrows, vireos, or warblers feeding young. As of 23 August the last active Red-headed Woodpecker nest still had one nestling in it but was expected to fledge later in the day or the following day. Also on 23 August an adult Pied-billed Grebe had three very small chicks, probably just a few days old, on a pond in TA10B. Nesting activity should wind down for most species within the next couple of weeks as migration picks up.



Northern Waterthrush captured in mistnet, banded, and released on Fort Drum in 2009.

Several species that traditionally migrate early have been passing through Fort Drum since late July. Bobolinks, for instance, have been heard calling daily as they fly overhead throughout the entire month of August, and many Yellow Warbler calls have also been heard. The most unusual migrant seen so far was a Louisiana Waterthrush in TA 7B on 13 August. Only one Louisiana Waterthrush has been recorded on Fort Drum before, a male that occupied a territory for a week during May of 1997. Fort Drum is just north of the northern edge of the regular breeding range for this species, and nesting could well occur here, with some of the best potential habitat on the installation occurring within 1-2 miles of where this bird was seen. Although not as unusual as the waterthrush, three apparently migrating Blue-gray Gnatcatchers seen on 15, 17, and 22 August represented a good total for the month.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 August 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Migrating shorebirds have been typically scarce on Fort Drum, and waterfowl haven't been very conspicuous, either. As is usually the case, Solitary Sandpiper has been the most numerous shorebird this month, with few other species observed. Upland Sandpipers flew over TAs 3A and 6A on 15 August, and 1-2 have been seen several times just inside the airfield fence along Rt. 26, although the grass is tall enough to obscure them at the latter location. So far no ducks have been observed that do not nest on Fort Drum, although a Blue-winged Teal in TA17B on 16 August was not necessarily a local breeder.

Increasing numbers of migrating warblers have been observed in wooded areas throughout Fort Drum since 15 August, with mostly small mixed-species flocks seen daily. The first warbler seen this "fall" that does not nest on Fort Drum was a Tennessee Warbler in TA7D on 21 August, and a Cape May Warbler was in the same training area the following day. During the next week warblers, vireos, flycatchers, thrushes, and other migrants should continue to increase, and large mixed-species flocks could be possible any day.

A few other notable recent sightings include a Red-shouldered Hawk calling at Indian Pond on 14 August, a persistently calling Yellow-billed Cuckoo in TA 6A on 15 August, and a locally rare Tufted Titmouse in TA7D on 22 August.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since July 29:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 September 2012

Fish

With the recent freshet into area lakes and streams causing water temperatures to drop to milder temperatures, expect bass fishing to be better than it recently was during midday hours. Bass often become sluggish in waters above 80 degrees F, which is what our dry summer brought to many local shallow lakes. Their activity picks up when water temperatures fall below 80 degrees F. They are most active when water temperatures are in the high 60s to mid-70s.

In addition, the recent rains have raised water levels in lakes significantly. Expect boat launching at Indian Lake to be easier than recent weeks.

Birds

The bird migration has been mostly slow for the past two weeks, but on most days at least one or two mixed migrant flocks have been seen, and for the period a nice variety of passerines have been observed. A few recent highlights from the early songbird migration include:

27 August: The largest mixed-species flock up to this date was near the south end of U.S. Military Highway and included Tennessee and Bay-breasted Warblers among 13 warbler species. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was also in this flock.

28 August: Among very few active migrants in TA6A were one each Northern Parula and Wilson's Warbler. A variety of breeding species were still present, including singing Blue-winged and Brewster's Warblers and 2 Prairie Warblers.

29 August: More than a dozen Tennessee Warblers and a modest mix of other warblers were in the successional woodland along the west end of Reedville Road. A Gray-cheeked Thrush call heard overhead was early for this species. At the Matoon Marsh in TA17B a Pine Siskin was heard overhead and a Sora called from the marsh. A pond across U.S. military Highway from Range 20A was almost completely dry but still had several Solitary Sandpipers at it.

30 August: Red-headed Woodpeckers were very active in TA5D, with much drumming, calling, and chasing, behavior that seems more typical of late May than late August. At least 8 adults and 4 immature woodpeckers were observed in the open oak woodlands in the western end of the training area.



Juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker in Training Area 5.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 September 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

30 August (continued): In the nearby open oak savannah, and especially in and near a patch of grassland that recently burned, was a large mixed-species flock of passerines. The core of this flock seemed to be a group of at least 17 Eastern Bluebirds, 15 Pine Warblers, and 20 Chipping Sparrows. For the past few years flocks of these three species have been seen in this immediate area during September and early October, with a continuously changing mix of migrants joining the group. Other species here on 30 August included Eastern Phoebe, Traill's Flycatcher, Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos, Yellow-rumped, Palm, and Black-throated Green Warblers, and Baltimore Oriole.

31 August: A morning bird walk along Figert Road was slow except for a short stretch where the road comes closest to Black Creek, where a large mixed migrant flock included 13 warbler species, with Tennessee and Chestnut-sided Warblers being most common; other species included a female Golden-winged Warbler and at least 2 Blackpoll Warblers.

4 September: Overall very few birds seemed to be moving. A Merlin and 5 Palm Warblers were along the boundary of Wheeler-Sack army Airfield, and an adult Bald Eagle flew over the Cantonment Area.



Palm Warbler in the spring on Fort Drum.

5 September: A very slow morning in Training Area 6A. A Clay-colored Sparrow was the first seen in this area in 2012, but was in a small area of suitable habitat so may have been a holdover from the breeding season rather than a migrant. A Wilson's Warbler was among the very few obvious migrants noted.

6 September: More birds were moving on this morning than on any day in the previous week, at least based on a walk through the northeastern portion of TA7G. Among the 10 warbler species here were 3 Cape May Warblers and 1 Bay-breasted Warbler, although Yellow-rumped Warblers outnumbered all other species (somewhat unusually for this early in the migration). A Prairie Warbler foraging in low shrubs along the railroad tracks at the western boundary of this training area likely was on territory still. Several mixed sparrow flocks were also in this area, with every flock containing 7-12 Field Sparrows and 1-3 Vesper Sparrows, with Song and Chipping Sparrows occurring in some flocks.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 6 September 2012 (continued)

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since August 27 – September 6:

Canada Goose	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Common Yellowthroat
Wood Duck	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	American Redstart
American Black Duck	Trail's Flycatcher (probably both	Cape May Warbler
Mallard	Willow and Alder Flycatchers)	Northern Parula
Blue-winged Teal	Least Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Eastern Phoebe	Bay-breasted Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Great Crested Flycatcher	Blackburnian Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Eastern Kingbird	Yellow Warbler
Wild Turkey	Blue-headed Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Common Loon	Warbling Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-eyed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue Jay	Palm Warbler
American Bittern	American Crow	Pine Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Common Raven	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Green Heron	Tree Swallow	Prairie Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Barn Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Bald Eagle	Black-capped Chickadee	Canada Warbler
Northern Harrier	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Wilson's Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	Brown Creeper	Chipping Sparrow
American Kestrel	House Wren	Clay-colored Sparrow
Merlin	Marsh Wren	Field Sparrow
Sora	Eastern Bluebird	Vesper Sparrow
Killdeer	Veery	Savannah Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Song Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	Hermit Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Wood Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
American Woodcock	American Robin	Scarlet Tanager
Ring-billed Gull	Gray Catbird	Northern Cardinal
Rock Pigeon	Brown Thrasher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Mourning Dove	European Starling	Indigo Bunting
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Cedar Waxwing	Bobolink
Belted Kingfisher	Ovenbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Common Grackle
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blue-winged Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Downy Woodpecker	"Brewster's" Warbler	Purple Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	Pine Siskin
Northern Flicker	Tennessee Warbler	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 September 2012

Fish

The water level in Indian Lake is about 2 feet higher following the 3+ inches of rain we received on September 3, making launching of boats much easier than it was a few weeks back.

Fishing was average this week at the Indian River where it exits Fort Drum. Plastic or live worms are suggested bait at that area. There are no other fishing reports for this week.

Birds

Bird migration has been slow for the past couple of weeks, as winds have been out of the south almost every day. The one exception was the night of 15-16 September, when northerly winds prompted heavy migration throughout the northeastern United States. Unfortunately, no birders or biologists were on Fort Drum the following weekend day to witness this migration event, and only modest numbers of migrants have been observed on those days when surveys were conducted.

For the most part the waterfowl and waterbird migration has not been terribly conspicuous on Fort Drum this month. Modest numbers of Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal are using a few of the installation's ponds and marshes, and Wood Ducks and Mallards are widespread in small numbers, but few other ducks have been noted. Small groups of Canada Geese have been flying south over Fort Drum daily for the past week, but so far no significant goose migration has been observed. Waterbirds such as Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, and Sora continue to be seen at known nesting sites, but many of these birds will likely depart soon.

The raptor migration has also been lackluster over Fort Drum, with few observations of obviously migrating hawks. A handful of Broad-winged Hawks were thought to be migrating, and on 12 September 4 Sharp-shinned Hawks seen near one another in TA3 were probably active migrants, but otherwise hawks have been inconspicuous. Groups of up to 6 American Kestrels have been seen consistently around the airfield and along Antwerp Road, and a Merlin has been seen perched atop a snag near the Natural Resources Permit Office almost daily, but these falcons are suspected to be local breeders and/or offspring.



American Kestrel in Training Area 12B.

On 17 September a check of four of this year's Red-headed Woodpecker territories in TA5D turned up at least five adults and one juvenile, and several of the adults were engaged in territorial behavior. This was the same date that the last Red-headed Woodpecker was seen for the year in 2011, but this year the woodpeckers show no sign that they are ready to migrate. The acorn crop is large this year (compared to virtually non-existent last year), and it will be interesting to see whether the woodpeckers remain on territory later into the fall than usual, or maybe even overwinter, to take advantage of abundant food. To date there are no Red-headed Woodpecker records for Fort Drum between early October and late April.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 September 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Highlights from surveys of the TA12 and 13 grasslands conducted on 19 September included 35 Palm Warblers, 2 Clay-colored Sparrows, and 6 Lincoln's Sparrows. Palm Warblers are often easy to find in small willow stands within the grasslands, and on the 19th in one such willow clump at least 23 Palm Warblers were seen, all of which looked to be of the Western subspecies. Clay-colored Sparrows are often found on their summer territories through late September or early October, although it often takes a great deal of effort to find them at this time of year. During some years Sedge Wrens also remain on their territories into October, but so far no Sedge Wrens have been seen on Fort Drum this fall.

A good variety of warblers, vireos, thrushes, kinglets, and other songbirds have made up the bulk of migrants seen during the past couple of weeks. Thrushes have been mostly inconspicuous, with migrants heard calling overhead early some mornings but few individuals seen during the daytime. However, on 13 September in and near a shrub wetland in TA12A many Swainson's Thrushes and Veeries and at least one Wood Thrush were heard calling during mid-morning. Among warblers that do not breed on Fort Drum, numbers of Blackpoll Warblers have increased and Tennessee Warblers decreased since early September, with Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Wilson's Warblers continuing to be seen at least every 2-3 days. Philadelphia Vireos were seen in TA 6A on 10 and 17 September, on Lake School Road on 11 September, and north of Reedville Road on 13 September. A couple of recent arrivals have included Dark-eyed Junco on 11 September and Ruby-crowned Kinglet on 17 September. Single American Pipits and Pine Siskins were heard flying overhead on one or two dates in early September, but numbers for both species have started increasing this past week.

A number of species that were common earlier in the fall have not been seen during the past couple of weeks. Bobolinks were heard overhead daily throughout August and into early September, often in large numbers, with the last one heard on 10 September. Other species that have not been detected since early September include Willow and Alder Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbird, Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and Baltimore Oriole. For most of these species it is unlikely that any more individuals will be observed this season. In contrast a few species remain conspicuously on territory, as indicated above for Red-headed Woodpecker. Another example is Prairie Warbler, of which two males have been heard singing in TA6A as recently as 17 September.

A list of birds recorded since the last wildlife viewing report is on page 3.

Mammals

A pair of Northern River Otters were observed in TA 18 enjoying a clam and crayfish lunch. River Otters are relatively common in Ft. Drum's expansive wetland and water resources but always a treat when encountered. Shellfish and fish are typically their primary food item but will eat other animals as well such as turtles and small aquatic mammals.



River Otters in Training Area 18.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 September 2012 (continued)

Mammals (cont.)

Northern River Otters (*Lontra canadensis*) are New York's largest member of the weasel family (Mustelidae) and second in size only to the Wolverine (*Gula gula*) in North America. Typically weighing 15-20 lbs (up to 30 lbs in large adults) adult otters are up to 5.5 feet long which includes a 18 inch-long tail. With their long slender bodies, short dense fur and webbed hind feet Otters are perfectly suited for their aquatic habitats. Though aquatic by nature, River Otters will spend time in adjacent uplands foraging for food (rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, etc.) and searching for new areas. Often in winter their tracks and defining "slides" in the snow can be found on frozen lakes and in the upland hills.

River Otters have a well deserved reputation as being very playful. They can be seen sliding down snow and mud slopes on their bellies, dropping stones into water and diving to retrieve them, and always "playing tag". It is thought these activities help them hone skills that help them survive. They are curious as well, often swimming quite near canoeists and kayakers to take a look at you.

Where to see Otters on Ft Drum training areas? Look for any quite body of water (wetlands, streams, rivers). These two Otters were in a very small wetland. Mud Lake, Indian Lake, Indian River (north of the Antwerp access gate), and the border shared between Ft. Drum and Lake Bonaparte all provide opportunities to see these unique animals and enjoy a day on the water.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since September 7 – 20:

Canada Goose	Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Swamp Sparrow
Wood Duck	Northern Flicker	Ovenbird	White-throated Sparrow
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Blue-winged Teal	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Tennessee Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Green-winged Teal	Least Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler	Northern Cardinal
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Phoebe	Common Yellowthroat	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Ruffed Grouse	Blue-headed Vireo	American Redstart	Indigo Bunting
Wild Turkey	Warbling Vireo	Cape May Warbler	Bobolink
Common Loon	Philadelphia Vireo	Northern Parula	Red-winged Blackbird
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-eyed Vireo	Magnolia Warbler	Common Grackle
American Bittern	Blue Jay	Bay-breasted Warbler	Purple Finch
Great Blue Heron	American Crow	Blackburnian Warbler	House Finch
Turkey Vulture	Common Raven	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Pine Siskin
Northern Harrier	Black-capped Chickadee	Blackpoll Warbler	American Goldfinch
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Palm Warbler	
American Kestrel	Brown Creeper	Pine Warbler	
Merlin	House Wren	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Sora	Winter Wren	Prairie Warbler	
Killdeer	Eastern Bluebird	Black-throated Green Warbler	
American Woodcock	Veery	Wilson's Warbler	
Ring-billed Gull	Swainson's Thrush	Eastern Towhee	
Rock Pigeon	Hermit Thrush	Chipping Sparrow	
Mourning Dove	Wood Thrush	Clay-colored Sparrow	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	American Robin	Field Sparrow	
Belted Kingfisher	Gray Catbird	Vesper Sparrow	
Red-headed Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Savannah Sparrow	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling	Song Sparrow	
Downy Woodpecker	American Pipit	Lincoln's Sparrow	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 October 2012

Fish

Brook trout spawning begins in late September and early October and can still occur into November. Female brook trout lay their eggs in nests or redds. Eggs will develop over winter and emerge between February and April. Their rate of development is dependent on water temperatures. Those that are laid in warmer water will develop more quickly than those that are laid in colder water. Brook trout staged for spawning have been observed in a tributary of Pleasant Creek. As a reminder, trout fishing closes for the season on Fort Drum on October 15.

Birds

Migration has mostly been slow for the past couple of weeks, thanks largely to predominantly southerly winds, but large numbers of birds passed through Fort Drum at least one day in late September, and something interesting has been seen almost every day. Generally, the diversity of migrating songbirds has declined substantially since mid-September, as many species have entirely departed northern New York for the year. The volume of migrating birds remains high, however, as species such as Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco are passing through in large numbers. The next week or two should see the continued passage of numerous migrant songbirds, after which numbers will drop off rapidly.

Early on the morning of 27 September a heavy flight of Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes was documented over Fort Drum. In one 10-minute period 143 Swainson's Thrush calls and 83 Gray-cheeked Thrush calls were tallied over TA5B, and similar counts were made in several other areas. The TA5D count was made right at sunrise, and during the count a Barred Owl called to the north and a Great Horned Owl called to the south, while an American Woodcock circled over the counter. Later that morning large numbers of late-season migrants were seen in TA 4A, with Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglet being especially abundant.

Early on the morning of 27 September a heavy flight of Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes was documented over Fort Drum. In one 10-minute period 143 Swainson's Thrush calls and 83 Gray-cheeked Thrush calls were tallied over TA5B, and similar counts were made in several other areas. The TA5D count was made right at sunrise, and during the count a Barred Owl called to the north and a Great Horned Owl called to the south, while an American Woodcock circled over the counter. Later that morning large numbers of late-season migrants were seen in TA 4A, with Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglet being especially abundant.

Several species of songbird have been heard calling overhead far more than they have been seen, including American Pipit and Pine Siskin. At least a few Pine Siskins have flown over Fort Drum since late August, but numbers increased from 1-5 per day before mid-September to 10-30 per day during the past two weeks. On 1 October a Lapland Longspur was heard flying over TA 12, the earliest documented fall date for Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 October 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Except for a modest flight of Canada Geese over the past week, the waterfowl migration has been barely perceptible since mid-September. Several marshes and ponds that normally are visited by migrating ducks have been largely bird-free recently, although on 1 October about 20 Hooded Mergansers and a handful of Mallards were on the Matoon Marsh in TA17B. To some extent the lack of duck observations may be a result of a lack of observer effort in the northeastern portion of Fort Drum, where Mallards, American Black Ducks, and Ring-necked Ducks should all be congregating now.

Compared to waterfowl, the raptor migration has been slightly more obvious. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks have been seen almost daily over the past two weeks, and the number of Northern Harriers in TAs 12 and 13 seems to have increased since the end of September. American Kestrels have been conspicuously moving, with individuals disappearing from summer nesting sites and apparent migrants appearing where no kestrels were seen earlier in the year. On 1 October a Peregrine Falcon was seen flying south over TA13A near Gray Road.

The only notable marsh bird detected this period was a Virginia Rail in a wetlands mitigation site on Reedville Road 2 October, the latest date this species has been documented on Fort Drum.

Also later than usual are several Red-headed Woodpeckers in TA 5D. During most years the Red-headed Woodpeckers that nest on Fort Drum depart in mid to late September, occasionally sticking around to the first few days of October. This year, however, it appears that at least a few individuals are going to stay longer, as one adult was observed on 2 October caching acorns, a behavior that makes little sense for a bird that is about to depart. The oaks in this area are loaded with acorns, so it will be interesting to see whether these woodpeckers attempt to overwinter, something that has never been seen on Fort Drum before.

A list of birds recorded since the last wildlife viewing report is on page 3.

Mammals

One or more moose were seen the last weekend in September in Training Areas 13 and 17. Young bulls will sometimes wander long distances during the breeding season and find their way into Fort Drum/Watertown area from the Adirondacks. However, these observations were of an adult female as well as a young male.

The moose population in the Adirondacks is slowly increasing and it is not unreasonable for moose to be seen in the area at any time. Please report any moose sightings to Fort Drum's Fish & Wildlife Management Program at 772-9303 or 772-9636.



A cell phone photograph of a moose in Training Area 13 taken on September 28.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 October 2012 (continued)

Fall Foliage

Fall colors are peaking on Fort Drum. Especially spectacular is the drive along FUSA Boulevard. You will need a Fort Drum Recreational Access Pass to drive on roads in the Training Area.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since September 24 – October 4:

Canada Goose	Blue-headed Vireo	American Redstart
Wood Duck	Red-eyed Vireo	Northern Parula
Mallard	Blue Jay	Magnolia Warbler
Hooded Merganser	American Crow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Common Raven	Yellow Warbler
Wild Turkey	Black-capped Chickadee	Blackpoll Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Tufted Titmouse	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Palm Warbler
Turkey Vulture	White-breasted Nuthatch	Pine Warbler
Northern Harrier	Brown Creeper	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	House Wren	Black-throated Green Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Winter Wren	Eastern Towhee
Broad-winged Hawk	Marsh Wren	Chipping Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Field Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Vesper Sparrow
American Woodcock	Eastern Bluebird	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Song Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Swainson's Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Wood Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Barred Owl	American Robin	White-crowned Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Gray Catbird	Dark-eyed Junco
Red-headed Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Scarlet Tanager
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Downy Woodpecker	American Pipit	Indigo Bunting
Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Flicker	Lapland Longspur	Rusty Blackbird
Pileated Woodpecker	Ovenbird	Purple Finch
American Kestrel	Black-and-white Warbler	Pine Siskin
Merlin	Tennessee Warbler	American Goldfinch
Peregrine Falcon	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Nashville Warbler	
Least Flycatcher	Connecticut Warbler	
Eastern Phoebe	Common Yellowthroat	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 18 October 2012

Fall Foliage

Fall colors were at their peak last weekend in the Adirondacks and their foothills. FUSA Boulevard on the Northeast corner of Fort Drum currently offer some of the best fall leaf-viewing opportunities on Fort Drum. Especially brilliantly colored trees include sugar maples (the official state tree), aspens, birches, beech trees and larches.



Fish

Most trout fishing in Jefferson county ended October 15. *Shoreline of Mud Lake in Training Area 19.* This end date coincides with the start of native brook trout spawning season. Salmon fishing season is in full swing on Lake Ontario tributaries. Make sure to review the state's gear regulations, <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/31420.html>, before casting your line in these waters.

Birds

Sparrows continue to dominate the songbird migration, as most warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and other passerines have left the region for the year. Sparrow numbers peaked early in the month, but sparrow diversity was high last week. Yellow-rumped Warblers also passed through in good numbers, but very few warblers of any other species were seen. Although songbird migration is winding down, a few species were seen at later than usual dates this period.

On 11 October a grassland bird survey in TA12C turned up 9 species of sparrow, including a late Clay-colored Sparrow and 8 Lincoln's Sparrows. Also during this survey the season's first Snow Bunting flew over as well as 3 Lapland Longspurs. Sparrow diversity seemed to peak mid-week, and by the end of the week sparrow numbers seemed substantially reduced. For instance on 9 October at least 20 Vesper Sparrows and even more Chipping Sparrows were observed on the fence around the perimeter of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, but by 12 October no sparrows could be found along the fence.

A Scarlet Tanager in TA6A on 9 October was the latest this species has been documented in the fall on Fort Drum. At least 2 adult Red-headed Woodpeckers continue in the TA5D oak woodlands and continue to behave as if they are preparing to overwinter. The only warblers observed during this period aside from the ubiquitous Yellow-rumped Warblers were Common Yellowthroat and Palm, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Green Warbler. The latter species was seen in TA5B on 12 October, establishing another late fall date for the installation. At least 2 Marsh Wrens have been consistently found in the Matoon Marsh and were most recently observed on 15 October.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 18 October 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Nine Short-eared Owls were seen along the Antwerp Tank Trail in Training Area 13B on Sunday, October 14. These ground-nesting medium-sized owls favor the open areas found on the western side of Fort Drum. Short-eared Owls will often congregate open areas in the fall and winter.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since October 9 – 15:

Canada Goose	Eastern Phoebe	Palm Warbler
Wood Duck	Blue-headed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Mallard	Blue Jay	Black-throated Green Warbler
Hooded Merganser	American Crow	Eastern Towhee
Ruffed Grouse	Common Raven	Chipping Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Black-capped Chickadee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Brown Creeper	Savannah Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	House Wren	Fox Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Winter Wren	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Marsh Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Swamp Sparrow
American Woodcock	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird	White-crowned Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush	Scarlet Tanager
Belted Kingfisher	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	Rusty Blackbird
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling	Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker	American Pipit	Purple Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Pine Siskin
Northern Flicker	Lapland Longspur	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	Snow Bunting	
American Kestrel	Common Yellowthroat	
Merlin	Blackpoll Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2012

Birds

It has been more than a month since we published our last wildlife viewing report, and in that time the composition of bird species present has taken on a distinctly winter-like feel. Mid- to late-October saw the rapid departure of most late fall passerines, and unlike last year, very few individuals lingered past normal late dates. The most significant event of the late fall so far has been the arrival of redpolls and other northern irruptive species, although Fort Drum hasn't been an especially good place to view the "superflight" of northern species that has been documented widely throughout the eastern United States. During the next few weeks more finches and other irruptive species are likely to arrive on Fort Drum, and a significant goose flight is still possible through mid-December.

The fall waterfowl migration through Fort Drum was relatively unimpressive, with few observations of any but the most common species. The highlight was a single "Richardson's" Cackling Goose in a low-flying flock of Canada Geese over TA6A on 8 November. A few small flocks of Snow Geese have been observed migrating over Fort Drum, but numbers have been very small, and if the past few years are any indication, the bulk of the flight will likely occur during the first two weeks of December. Ducks generally seemed scarce this fall, with small numbers of the usual species—Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser—but almost no other species noted. During the past couple of weeks 1-2 Bufflehead have been in a small settling pond off the Main Tank Trail.

A Red-bellied Woodpecker was in TA6A near the Black River on 1 November. Over the past 10 years Red-bellied Woodpeckers have become modestly more common in towns and rural areas to the west of Fort Drum, with confirmed nesting within a mile of the installation boundary as early as 2001. Despite these increases, Red-bellied Woodpeckers are rarely seen on Fort Drum, with about half of all sightings coming from TA6. At least 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers continue to occupy territories established in the spring, extending the late date this species has been confirmed on Fort Drum by nearly two months so far.



***Red-bellied Woodpecker perched upside down showing its orange belly.
(Photo: US Fish & Wildlife Service)***

Until mid-October several Northern Harriers were seen in the TA12 and 13 grasslands daily, and were joined by one Rough-legged Hawk on 29 October, but since early November virtually no raptors have been observed in this area. *(Continued on page 2.)*

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Until mid-October several Northern Harriers were seen in the TA12 and 13 grasslands daily, and were joined by one Rough-legged Hawk on 29 October, but since early November virtually no raptors have been observed in this area. (continued on page 2.)

The group of Short-eared Owls that were seen in this area earlier in October also appears to have departed, with the last individual having been seen on 25 October, and an evening owl survey on 20 November turned up no birds. Low food supply is the likely reason for the poor raptor numbers; two trap lines run in TA13A earlier in the year resulted in the capture of very low numbers of small mammals. Northern Shrikes also seem to be scarce so far, with individuals observed in only three areas: at the edge of the pond along Antwerp Road in TA12C (near the helicopters), at a regenerating clearcut along U.S. Military Highway just north of Gormley Road, and along the western boundary of TA3B.

At this time last year half-hardies and lingering fall migrants were seen daily, with species such as American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Song and Swamp Sparrows present in unusually high numbers. This year these and other migrant songbirds seemed to depart the area rapidly, with very few individuals lingering. The following are a few late dates for species still present during this reporting period: Lincoln's Sparrow 26 October; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Savannah & Swamp Sparrows & Rusty Blackbird 29 October; Eastern Phoebe and Fox Sparrow 1 Nov; Winter Wren 5 November.

During many winters one or more northern finches irrupt south of their typical ranges, but this year the eastern United States is experiencing a superflight, during which the entire suite of these species is moving south at the same time. Of these species, Common Redpoll has been the most abundant species on Fort Drum, with numerous flocks roaming around the installation since about 5 November. One Hoary Redpoll was found in a flock of about 65 Common Redpolls in TA6A on 20 November. Only a single Pine Grosbeak has been found on Fort Drum so far this fall, a calling individual in a recently thinned conifer stand at the south end of Butts Road in TA9A on 19 November. Pine Siskins and Purple Finches were observed routinely this fall up to late October, and White-winged Crossbills were heard during the same period as well, albeit less regularly, but these finches have been scarce to absent since the beginning of November. Small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks have been coming to feeders in the Cantonment Area, but so far none have been found in the Training Areas, although some likely are present. Although not a finch, the irruptive Bohemian Waxwing has also moved south this winter, but so far only a single individual has been observed on Fort Drum, at the edge of the Cantonment Area near the village of Calcium.



***Pine Grosbeak in
Training Area 4 in 2008.***

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2012 (continued)

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since October 24 – November 29:

Snow Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Cackling Goose	Hairy Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Canada Goose	Pileated Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
American Black Duck	Eastern Phoebe	Fox Sparrow
Mallard	Northern Shrike	Song Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Blue Jay	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	American Crow	Swamp Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Common Raven	White-throated Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Horned Lark	White-crowned Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Black-capped Chickadee	Dark-eyed Junco
Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
Turkey Vulture	White-breasted Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Brown Creeper	Rusty Blackbird
Cooper's Hawk	Winter Wren	Common Grackle
Red-tailed Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Pine Grosbeak
Rough-legged Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Purple Finch
Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird	House Finch
Rock Pigeon	American Robin	White-winged Crossbill
Mourning Dove	European Starling	Common Redpoll
Short-eared Owl	American Pipit	Hoary Redpoll
Belted Kingfisher	Bohemian Waxwing	Pine Siskin
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	American Goldfinch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Snow Bunting	Evening Grosbeak

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 December 2012

Snow & Ice Conditions

As of December 20, there was no snow on the ground or ice on the ponds or lakes. That may change over the holidays based on the weather forecast.

Through the winter, there will be weekly updates of snow and ice conditions on Fort Drum found on the following page link www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/weather.aspx.

Remember, always test ice depths on each water body before ice fishing. Areas near islands and areas above water flow (i.e., where the Indian River flows through Indian and Narrow Lakes) tend to have thinner ice.

Birds

Half-hardies and lingering migrants are scarce this year, especially compared to last winter, although a few are around. A Great Blue Heron was in the Cantonment Area on 5 December, and at least 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers continue in TA5D oak stands; one Eastern Bluebird was also in TA5D on 3 December. One Song Sparrow has been using a created wetland on Reedville Road all month, otherwise sparrows other than American Tree Sparrow have not been found. Numerous flocks of Common Redpolls continue to roam around Fort Drum, some including as many as 400 individuals. So far Hoary Redpolls have been observed in flocks along the Main Tank Trail on the west side of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, in TA6A near the Black River, and in TA13B. Other than redpolls, few finches have been detected since mid-November. White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins moved through the installation earlier in the fall but are

scarce to absent now, and so far only a single Pine Grosbeak has been detected on Fort Drum this season. On 19 December 52 Bohemian Waxwings flew over TA5D; other than a single individual observed in the Cantonment Area on 28 November, these were the first Bohemian Waxwings detected on Fort Drum this season.



Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings along Pleasant Road between Training Areas 3 and 4 in 2011.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 20 December 2012 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Several thousand Canada Geese have been in the Fort Drum vicinity for the past month, mostly off-post, roosting on the Black River and feeding in area cornfields, although on some days many have been on Remington Pond. Flocks of Snow Geese were observed migrating over Fort Drum on several days in early December up to the 15th, but unlike the past few years, no large movements were noted on any one day. Ducks have been mostly scarce throughout Fort Drum, but concentrations of American Black Ducks have been seen in a few locations, the largest being a flock of 85 black ducks on the south end of Indian Pond December 20. These black ducks were accompanied by 36 Mallards, 1 American Black Duck-Mallard hybrid, 2 Northern Pintails, 2 Common Goldeneye, and 9 Hooded Mergansers. Smaller flocks of black ducks have been observed on Mud Lake and Warren Swamp this month, but most efforts to find waterfowl have turned up few to no ducks.

So far the number of hawks present in grassland areas is very low compared to most years. Weekly surveys of the fields along Antwerp Road have turned up 0-1 Rough-legged Hawk per day and no other raptors on most visits. The only other Rough-legged Hawk seen on Fort Drum this month was at the edge of an open field on FUSA Boulevard on 20 December. Red-tailed Hawks are present throughout the installation in low densities, but it looks like buteo numbers in general are at or near record lows for the season, most likely because of some combination of abundant food to the north and limited food here on Fort Drum. Other raptors seen in December include a Merlin along Reedville Road and a Northern Goshawk on Alexandria Road, both on December 6. Northern Shrike, and honorary raptor of sorts, seems to be present in relatively low numbers, with individuals seen along Reedville Road in TAs 11A and 10C, on Antwerp Road in TA12C perched on a decommissioned helicopter, and on U.S. Military Highway just north of Gormley Road.

Bird species observed on field trips to Fort Drum since December 3 - 21:

Snow Goose	Ring-billed Gull	Black-capped Chickadee
Canada Goose	Rock Pigeon	Red-breasted Nuthatch
American Black Duck	Mourning Dove	White-breasted Nuthatch
Mallard	Great Horned Owl	Brown Creeper
American Black Duck X Mallard hybrid	Red-headed Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird
Northern Pintail	Downy Woodpecker	European Starling
Common Goldeneye	Hairy Woodpecker	Snow Bunting
Hooded Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Merlin	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Northern Shrike	Dark-eyed Junco
Great Blue Heron	Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal
Northern Goshawk	American Crow	Common Redpoll
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Raven	Hoary Redpoll
Rough-legged Hawk	Horned Lark	American Goldfinch