

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 January 2013

Snow & Ice Conditions

As of January 30, there was a good layer of ice on Indian Lake—at least 11 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. Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page:

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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.

Birds

Relatively little effort has been spent by Fort Drum biologists to find birds or other wildlife on Fort Drum this month, and on most days when surveys have been conducted few birds or other wildlife have been seen.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the month came on 10 January, when a visit to West Creek along the Fort Drum boundary turned up one each Belted Kingfisher and Swamp Sparrow, neither of which was relocated on subsequent visits. Raptor surveys of grassland areas along Antwerp Road continue to yield paltry results, with 1 Rough-legged Hawk and no other raptors on most surveys.

At least 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers continue in the open oak woodland in TA5D east of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. Flocks of Bohemian Waxwings have turned up in various locations throughout the southwest corner of Fort Drum, the largest containing at least 450 individuals along the Cantonment Area boundary near Steinhelmer Road on 17 January. Common Redpolls continue to wander around the installation, but in much reduced numbers compared to December. The only other irruptive finches seen this month were 2 Pine Grosbeaks that flew over Rt. 26 near the Main Tank Trail on 10 January.

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Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 January 2013 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum January 2 through January 31:

Canada Goose	American Crow
American Black Duck	Common Raven
Mallard	Black-capped Chickadee
Ruffed Grouse	White-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey	Brown Creeper
Red-tailed Hawk	European Starling
Rough-legged Hawk	Bohemian Waxwing
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing
Mourning Dove	Snow Bunting
Belted Kingfisher	American Tree Sparrow
Red-headed Woodpecker	Swamp Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Pileated Woodpecker	Common Redpoll
Northern Shrike	Pine Grosbeak
Blue Jay	American Goldfinch

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 February 2013

Snow & Ice Conditions

As a reminder: Ice fishing is allowed only on non-trout waters which include Indian and Narrow Lakes, Indian Pond, and Mud Lake. Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page: <http://www.fortdrum.isportsman.net/weather.aspx>

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Birds

Fort Drum biologists spent very little time in the field during February, and when they did they saw few birds, but there was a surprise or two. As of 22 February at least two adult Red-headed Woodpeckers persisted in the TA 5D oak stands, one of which was observed collecting an acorn in a spot where deer had cleared snow from around the base of a large oak. That same day, five Rough-legged Hawks were tallied on a survey of the TA12 grasslands, suggesting a modest influx of raptors since late January, as every survey conducted this winter prior to February recorded either 0 or 1 Rough-legged Hawk. However, a survey of the same area on 26 Feb netted just one Rough-legged Hawk, so perhaps some of the birds from the 22nd were just moving through.



Rough-legged Hawk in Training Area 12B in 2011.

On 25 February a Winter Wren was along the edge of West Creek in the Cantonment Area, calling from a patch of white cedar. Despite the bird's name, Winter Wrens are rarely found in northern New York between December and March. Flocks of Bohemian Waxwings continue to wander around the area, with the largest flocks seen on Fort Drum this month containing about 175 individuals. Redpolls have been much less abundant since early January than they were earlier in the season, but a few flocks remain on Fort Drum, of which the largest seen in February included 50-60 birds and was observed on Pleasant Road on 25 Feb.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 February 2013 (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum February 1 through February 27:

Canada Goose	American Crow
American Black Duck	Common Raven
Mallard	Black-capped Chickadee
Ruffed Grouse	White-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey	Winter Wren
Red-tailed Hawk	European Starling
Rough-legged Hawk	Bohemian Waxwing
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing
Mourning Dove	Snow Bunting
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Pileated Woodpecker	Common Redpoll
Northern Shrike	American Goldfinch
Blue Jay	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 March 2013

Snow & Ice Conditions

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Birds

It is officially spring, although for most of March it has definitely felt like winter, with high temperatures in the 20s and 30s most days, and colder nights. A warm spell 9-12 March brought southerly winds and highs well into the 40s, and with it the first early spring migrants, but migration for the most part stopped when the weather returned to winter-like conditions on 13 March. Geese were a notable exception, as large numbers of Snow and Canada Geese could be seen all over Jefferson County much of the month. For the most part other migrants didn't start moving in any numbers until the last week of March.



Canada Geese on Fort Drum in 2011.

The large number of Snow and Canada Geese present for much of March was the obvious highlight of the month, and otherwise waterfowl numbers on Fort Drum were fairly low. Many thousands of Snow Geese fed in fields just west of Fort Drum, and could often be seen flying over the Cantonment Area as they traveled between roosting and feeding locations. On several days, especially 26 and 27 March, many more Snow Geese were observed migrating high over Fort Drum. As of 28 March nearly all of Fort Drum's ponds and wetlands were still entirely iced over, so little habitat has been available for ducks. A few ducks have been seen on streams such as West and Pleasant Creeks where flow has been sufficient to keep water open. Such ducks included 3 male Wood Ducks and a male American Wigeon on West Creek 11 March, and a pair of Hooded Mergansers at the same location on 15 March.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 March 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Raptors have not been particularly abundant on Fort Drum this month, but there have been some interesting observations. On 25 March 2 adult and one immature Bald Eagle were near the north end of FUSA Boulevard. The first Red-shouldered Hawk of the year was over TA12A on 12 March, and another was in TA5D on 27 March. Turkey Vulture first appeared during the warm spell on 11 or 12 March, but were not seen in any numbers until 25 March. Numbers of Rough-legged Hawks have remained low in the Fort Drum grasslands, with just one or two seen most days. Northern Harriers started returning around the middle of the month. On 23 March a Merlin was observed in the Cantonment at a location where this species has nested the past three years.

The early March warm spell brought with it the first Great Blue Herons, Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Common Grackles to Fort Drum. Ring-billed Gulls had been present in Jefferson County for a few weeks prior to this warm up, but did not appear on Fort Drum in any numbers until 12 or 13 March. A few individuals of other species probably showed up around the same time, but not in any numbers until late in the month, when the first individuals were actually observed. Examples of such species include American Woodcock, almost certainly present but not seen until 27 March, and Song Sparrow, the first of which was observed on 25 March. Other species that may be present in very low numbers but that should arrive in larger numbers soon include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tree Swallow, and Eastern Phoebe.

At least one and probably two Red-headed Woodpeckers continue in the TA5d oak woodlands. With the warming weather and disappearing snow, it seems that these birds survived the worst of the winter. Once the snow has completely disappeared Fort Drum staff will conduct a thorough survey of the habitat in an effort to determine how many Red-headed Woodpeckers are present before migrants return, which typically happens in May, although sometimes a few return as early as mid April.

Species observed on Fort Drum March 1 – 28:

Snow Goose	Ring-billed Gull	European Starling
Canada Goose	Rock Pigeon	Snow Bunting
Wood Duck	Mourning Dove	American Tree Sparrow
American Wigeon	Red-headed Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
American Black Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Hooded Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Ruffed Grouse	American Kestrel	Common Grackle
Wild Turkey	Merlin	House Finch
Great Blue Heron	Northern Shrike	Common Redpoll
Turkey Vulture	Blue Jay	American Goldfinch
Bald Eagle	American Crow	
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Horned Lark	
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Rough-legged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Killdeer	Brown Creeper	
American Woodcock	American Robin	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 April 2013

Fish

Northern Pike were seen in abundance in the Indian River just downstream from the old FUSA Blvd crossing on April 11. Previous early spring/late winter surveys have captured mature northern pike near this location, that combined with the time of year suggest that they were spawning or preparing to spawn. Walleye spawning is also over for the year. An interesting video of walleye schooling in the Indian River downstream from Fort Drum was recently posted on the internet

<http://www.frequency.com/video/rossie-walleye-run-underwater-on-indian/88859699/-/5-17320>.



Fort Drum biologist with northern pike during fish sampling in 2012.

Both Walleye and Northern pike fishing seasons will reopen this year on Saturday, May 04, along with pickerel.

The minimum retention length for Northern pike is 18" while the minimum retention length for Walleye and Pickerel is 15". Anglers may retain up to 5 legal length fish of each species per day. The best places to fish for both Walleye and Northern pike on Fort Drum remain the Indian River, Indian Lake and Narrow Lake. Please take the time to fill out a creel survey form (forms located at the Indian Lake Information Kiosk) when you go there to fish and deposit it in the metal drop box at the end of your fishing day.

Reminders:

- The Indian Lake latrine is scheduled for installation in early May.
- **DO NOT LITTER.**
- Please follow safe boating practices.

There are aquatic invasive plants in Indian Lake and aquatic invasive animals in many local bodies of water. Please remove all plants and animals from your boat and fishing gear to prevent their spread. For guidance on how you can get involved in aquatic invasive species management see: <http://protectyourwaters.org/>

Birds

Bird migration has been generally slow this month, with many species arriving at or slightly later than historic average arrival dates. Species that typically arrive to Fort Drum late March through mid-April are now back in good numbers, but most species seemed to come in at a very leisurely pace, and many remained scarce for at least another week after first detection. Most of the species that currently can be found on the installation are either residents or short-distance migrants that winter in the southeastern United States, and the first waves of migrants that winter in the tropics should appear within the next week.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 April 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

During the first week of April most of Fort Drum's ponds were still iced over, winds were mostly out of the north, and few birds migrated. During this week a few trips to the field turned up scattered Fox, Song, and White-throated Sparrows, but few other recent migrants. By 9 April many of the ponds had opened up, and waterfowl seemed to appear on these ponds as soon as open water was present. American Black Ducks, Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers made up the majority of ducks present, but a few Green-winged Teal and Bufflehead were seen. Five Lesser Scaup were on a settling pond near the airfield, and a few Common Mergansers were on ponds in the northeastern part of the installation. At Matoon Marsh, the first Pied-billed Grebe of the year was seen on 9 April. On that same date a modest push of landbirds included a fair number of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Golden-crowned Kinglet, and the year's first Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers. New arrivals on 10 April included Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, and Vesper Sparrow, and the season's first Field Sparrow appeared on 11 April.

Since 11 April migration has seemed to progress very slowly on Fort Drum, and at times seemed to stop entirely. Mid-April arrivals included Broad-winged Hawk, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Brown Thrasher, although the actual dates of their arrival



Golden-crowned Kinglet in Cantonment Area April 2013.

were not well documented. Several other species, including American Bittern and Eastern Whip-poor-will, were seen near Fort Drum during this period and most likely are present on the installation, although they have not yet been detected. After nearly a week of poor migration, a modest wave of migrants on 26 April brought the first individuals of several species, including an Upland Sandpiper at the north end of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, 2 Bank Swallows at Matoon Marsh, and several Northern Waterthrushes in TA5B. The current weather forecast indicates a warming trend during the last few days of April, which should bring with it many warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other neotropical migrants.

Although migration has been lackluster, a few interesting species were observed in April. On 17 April an adult Northern Goshawk called loudly from the forest near Mud Lake. Ospreys have also been observed at Mud and Indian Lakes since 5 April. On 23 April Red-bellied Woodpeckers were heard calling in two locations in the Cantonment Area. Red-bellied Woodpeckers are generally scarce on Fort Drum, and have not been confirmed to nest, although they probably do and seem to be increasing. Also on 23 April a Great Egret was in a Cantonment Area marsh, for the first documented spring sighting of this species on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 April 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum April 1 – 26:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 May 2013

Birds

Throughout nearly all of April the bird migration through Fort Drum seemed very slow, with many species arriving at or slightly later than historic average arrival dates, and remaining quite scarce for several days to a week or more after the first individuals showed up. The pace of arrivals picked up on 30 April, and for the next few days several new species were observed daily, but overall bird numbers seemed low. The volume of migrating birds seemed to increase after 5 May, with even more new species arriving, and other species becoming increasingly common. The following list includes the first dates of observation on Fort Drum for a number of species that arrived during the last two weeks. Note that biologists were not in the field on the weekend of 4-5 May, and many of the arrivals listed for 6 May likely arrived a day or two earlier.

29 April: Virginia Rail

30 April: Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow

1 May: Veery, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Green Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow

2 May: Green Heron, Least Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo

6 May:, Yellow-throated Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

7 May: Brant, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Baltimore Oriole

8 May: Gray Catbird, American Redstart

9 May: Solitary Sandpiper, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Parula

A few species from the previous list are worth highlighting. Many Grasshopper Sparrows were heard singing along the western boundary of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on 1 May, in locations where none were found the previous day, suggesting a large movement of this species on the night of 30 April/1 May. Also on 1 May, at least one and probably two Henslow's Sparrows were in the grasslands on Antwerp Road. At least two Upland Sandpipers were at the airfield and another was in TA13A on 1 May, the latter in a location where this species has been scarce in recent years.



***Grasshopper Sparrow in
the Cantonment Area.***

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 May 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

On 6 May one each Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, and Brewster's Warbler were found along the north end of Figert Road. The Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warbler were chasing each other in a maple swamp, with the Blue-winged Warbler seemingly the more aggressive of the two. At least 5 Prairie Warblers were just north of Figert in TA 14D.

The most surprising birds of the season so far were observed in the Indian Lake area on 7 May. During a brief check of the lake for loons (one adult present), a flock of about a dozen Brant flew over the lake heading north. Brant are observed migrating over the installation most springs, but usually during the last two weeks of May, and often in larger flocks. Shortly afterward a Black-backed Woodpecker was heard and briefly seen in the woods west of Indian Lake. Black-backed Woodpecker has been reported twice before on Fort Drum, but certainly doesn't breed, and it is not known whether the individuals seen on Fort Drum have wandered here from breeding areas in the Adirondacks and Tug Hill, or irrupted here from more northerly nesting grounds. During an effort to relocate the Black-backed Woodpecker, an Orange-crowned Warbler was found singing; this species is a rare spring migrant in northern New York.



Brant (Image: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

A few other species are worth mentioning. This year's arrival date for Red-headed Woodpeckers is difficult to determine because of the presence of individuals that successfully overwintered, but a bird observed at the northwest corner of TA 5D on 9 May likely represented a new arrival. Small numbers of Pine Siskins have been heard calling over the installation most days in late April and early May, usually just one or two at a time. On 30 April an Evening Grosbeak was heard over TA3. Between 28 April and 7 May eleven 10-stop American Woodcock survey routes were conducted, yielding a total of 219 peenting woodcock. Quite a few Barred Owls and Eastern Whip-poor-wills, and fewer Great Horned Owls, were also heard on woodcock routes.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 9 May 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum April 29 – May 9:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 May 2013

Fish

Late May is the nesting season for both Largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides*, and Smallmouth bass, *M. dolomieu* along with other members of the sunfish or Centrarchidae family. Other Centrarchids found on Fort Drum include Black Crappie, Rock bass, Pumpkinseeds, and Bluegills. Centrarchid nests are built and guarded by males of the species. Several females may lay eggs in the nest of a single male. The nests are guarded to prevent other fish from eating the nutrient rich eggs. Males also oxygenate their nests by moving water over and around their eggs using their fins. This action is referred to as “fanning” the eggs. The time eggs take to hatch can be influenced by water temperature, with increased water temperatures resulting in a quicker hatch. Eggs typically take between 3 to 4 days to develop before hatching. Nest guarding lasts until the fry disperse to feed in more open water. Initially, fry feed on plankton. As they grow larger, they begin feeding on aquatic macro invertebrates and other small fish. **Bass and Muskellunge season begins June 15.**

Insects

Biting black flies and mosquitoes have emerged from area waterways. Both hatch from eggs which are laid in water. Black fly larvae require clean running water, so after hatching they are most abundant around streams low in organic pollutants. Mosquito eggs can be laid in both standing and running waters and don't require high quality water to survive.

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.



Woodchuck mother and young in the Cantonment Area two weeks ago.

Birds

Finally, after weeks of very slow migration, the past two weeks has seen a flood of breeding birds pour into Fort Drum, with increasing numbers of more northern migrants. During this period new species for the year have been observed virtually every day, and as of 23 May all of the bird species that breed on Fort Drum regularly have been documented this year except for **(continued)**

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 May 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Least Bittern and Common Gallinule. Since 20 May most new arrivals have been boreal nesting species, including an Olive-sided Flycatcher in TA15C on 21 May, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Bay-breasted Warbler in TA13A on 22 May, and a Cape May Warbler along Figert Road on 23 May. On these same days Tennessee and Blackpoll Warblers were abundant and widespread across Fort Drum, and seemed to be present in much higher numbers than during most years. Also on 23 May, a flock of about 100 Brant was seen over State Highway 26 in the Cantonment Area shortly before sunrise.

All of the bird species that most visiting birders hope to see on Fort Drum are now present. The first Common Nighthawks were seen on 15 May, but most arrived a few days later, and this species is now easy to find around the airfield and other open sandy areas in the southern part of the installation. Many Eastern Whip-poor-wills can also be found around the airfield. At least 3 Upland Sandpipers are within the airfield fence, but are difficult to observe; the most likely place to see one is along the Main Tank Trail just west of Bagram Road, where sometimes a male from inside the airfield can be seen displaying overhead. Currently, the easiest place to see a Red-headed Woodpecker is just east (100-500 yards) of the intersection between Main Tank Trail and Bagram Road, in the open oak woodland on the north side of the road.

So far a small number of Sedge Wrens and Henslow's Sparrows have been found in TAs 12 and 13, mostly well away from roads. One Henslow's Sparrow is holding a territory in TA12C about 0.4 miles south of Hunter Creek, which is the stream lined by large willows Antwerp Road crosses mid-way between Poagland and Dogwood Roads. The Henslow's Sparrow sometimes sings very near Antwerp Road, and with patience should be visible singing from the top of vegetation. So far the only Sedge Wren found near a road is in TA 13A about 0.2 miles south of Poagland Road. Please do not play recordings of Henslow's Sparrow or Sedge Wren to attract these birds (or any other rare bird species) or try following them around their territories or otherwise disturbing them. Several pairs of Northern Harriers and many American Bitterns can also be found in these areas. Numerous Clay-colored Sparrows are also in TA13A south of the Sedge Wren location just described, but perhaps the easiest place to actually see a Clay-colored Sparrow is along the Main Tank Trail west and north of the airfield, where several territories are located right along the road.

Golden-winged Warblers have been present on Fort Drum for more than two weeks now, along with numerous Blue-winged Warblers and hybrids. The areas with the largest number of Golden-winged Warbler relative to Blue-winged Warblers are along Reedville Road (mostly west of Lake School Road) and U.S. Military Highway (especially south of Nauvoo School Road). Brewster's Warblers are widely scattered across the installation, but so far just one Lawrence's Warbler has been seen this year, a male in TA6A. This male has been using a regenerating clearcut on the south side of a small grassy field on the main road into TA6A about two-thirds of a mile in from State Highway 3.

Other notable birds include a Great Egret that has been moving around West Creek in the Cantonment Area for the past month (egrets are rarely observed on Fort Drum at any season, with most observations coming in late summer), and an immature dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk that flew over TA17B on 23 May (dark-morph Red-tails area rare in the eastern United States). Numerous Pine Siskin flocks have also been observed throughout Fort Drum since late April, but especially during the past week.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 23 May 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum May 10 – May 23:

Brant	Hairy Woodpecker	“Brewster’s” Warbler
Canada Goose	Northern Flicker	“Lawrence’s” Warbler
Wood Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Mallard	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Nashville Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Mourning Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Alder Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Wild Turkey	Willow Flycatcher	American Redstart
Common Loon	Least Flycatcher	Cape May Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Phoebe	Cerulean Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Great Crested Flycatcher	Northern Parula
American Bittern	Eastern Kingbird	Magnolia Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Yellow-throated Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler
Great Egret	Blue-headed Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Warbling Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Osprey	Red-eyed Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Bald Eagle	Blue Jay	Blackpoll Warbler
Northern Harrier	American Crow	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	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	Bank Swallow	Eastern Towhee
Merlin	Barn Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Black-capped Chickadee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Sora	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Killdeer	White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Brown Creeper	Savannah Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	House Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Greater Yellowlegs	Winter Wren	Henslow’s Sparrow
Lesser Yellowlegs	Sedge Wren	Song Sparrow
Upland Sandpiper	Marsh Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Wilson’s Snipe	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	White-throated Sparrow
American Woodcock	Eastern Bluebird	White-crowned Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Veery	Scarlet Tanager
Rock Pigeon	Swainson’s Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-billed Cuckoo	Wood Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Great Horned Owl	American Robin	Bobolink
Barred Owl	Gray Catbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Nighthawk	Northern Mockingbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Brown Thrasher	Common Grackle
Chimney Swift	European Starling	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	American Pipit	Baltimore Oriole
Belted Kingfisher	Cedar Waxwing	Purple Finch
Red-headed Woodpecker	Ovenbird	House Finch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	Pine Siskin
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Golden-winged Warbler	American Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	House Sparrow

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 June 2013

Fish

In a little over a week (June 15) black bass fishing season will open. Black bass include both smallmouth and largemouth bass. Smallmouth bass are commonly caught in larger flowing waters including the Indian River while the widely distributed largemouth bass is generally found in more sluggish waters including rivers near impoundments and all the named lakes on Fort Drum except for Quarry Pond. Both species are fun fish to catch. For best fishing results focus your efforts in weedy areas, submerged logs, or near other in-water structures such as docks. Both plastic worms and live night crawlers are good baits to use for bass.

From June 15, 2013 to October 15, most freshwater fish in the state will be legal to fish for. For more information on fishing seasons including species specific minimum retention lengths, daily catch limits, and special regulations please see the [New York State DEC fishing regulations](#).

The buoy marking the dangerous rocks near the Indian Lake boat ramp has been reinstalled after it broke free from its anchor a short while ago. High water in the lake still covers some submerged logs and other rocks so please be cautious when operating your motorboats on Narrow, Indian and Mud Lakes.

Birds

Several Blackpoll Warblers and a Magnolia Warbler seen along Pleasant Road on 24 May represented the last obvious migrants seen on Fort Drum this spring. During the week leading up to the 24th large numbers of Tennessee and Blackpoll Warblers were present on Fort Drum, with a smattering of other migrating passerines. Aside from that week very few migrants were detected on Fort Drum—virtually none most days—and the spring migration in general was characterized by the gradual arrival of birds on territory but no large waves of migrants or significant fall outs. During most years good numbers of migrating Blackpoll Warblers and smaller numbers of Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and Tennessee Warblers are observed through the first week of June, but none of these species were detected this year during the last week of May or the first week of June.

A few breeding birds may yet straggle in over the next week or so, but essentially all of Fort Drum's nesting birds are now on territory, with most well into their nesting season. So far grassland bird surveys have turned up 6 each Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow, most well away from installation roads. Ten Red-headed Woodpecker territories have been mapped, and nests found on nine of these territories; the first eggs hatched this week. Directions for the best places to see these three species can be found in the previous wildlife viewing report (dated 23 May).

(Continued)



Red-headed Woodpecker in Training Area 5D.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 June 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Surveys for Golden-winged Warblers have been a high priority the past two weeks. So far slightly more Blue-winged Warblers have been found than Golden-winged Warblers, with smaller numbers of hybrids mixed in. Reedville Road continues to have the most Golden-winged Warblers relative to Blue-winged Warblers, but other areas with extensive swampy woods have small pockets of Golden-wings in the absence of Blue-wings. Results of a survey of the upland shrublands and shrubby woods in the eastern one-third of TA10A performed on 28 May are more typical of upland areas on Fort Drum generally: 5 Golden-winged Warblers, 9 Blue-winged Warblers, 1 Brewster's Warbler, and 2 introgressed Golden-winged Warblers (appeared much like typical Golden-wings but with yellow on the breast).

A few other birds worth noting... Eastern Whip-poor-wills are now widespread on Fort Drum, with the largest numbers in open wooded areas on sandy soils and along FUSA Boulevard. Common Nighthawks are also present in good numbers in places with openings on sandy soil (e.g. throughout the southern one-third of the installation). Several Upland Sandpiper territories are around the airfield, and one individual has been seen several times along the Main Tank Trail where the airfield lights extend outside the airfield fence (about 1.3 miles north of State Highway 26). Black-billed Cuckoos seem to be more common this year than they were the previous two years, and certainly more than were present in 2011, when they were hard to find. No Yellow-billed Cuckoos have been found this year so far.

See Page 3 for a list of birds observed the past two weeks.

Mammals

White-tailed deer fawns are being seen frequently. Although fawns are able to walk shortly after birth, they spend most of their first several days lying still. During this period a fawn is usually left alone by its mother except when nursing. People occasionally find a lone fawn and mistakenly assume it has been orphaned or abandoned. In fact, the presence of humans will cause the mother to delay her next visit to the fawn to nurse. Human scent can also put the fawn at risk by attracting predators to the site. The best chance for a fawn to survive is to be raised by its mother. Fawns nurse three to four times a day, usually for less than 30 minutes at a time, but otherwise the mother keeps her distance. This helps reduce the chances that she will attract a predator to the fawn. The fawn's white-spotted coat provides camouflage, it has almost no scent, and it typically remains motionless to avoid detection by predators and people.



By the end of its second week, a fawn begins to move about more and spend more time with its mother. It also begins to eat grass and leaves. At about ten weeks of age, fawns are no longer dependent on milk, although they continue to nurse occasionally into the fall. During August, all deer begin to grow their winter coat and fawns lose their spots during this process. Should you find a fawn or other young wildlife, leave it where it is. It may be difficult to do, but this is the real act of kindness and in nearly all cases that is the best thing to do.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 10 June 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum May 24 – June 6:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 June 2013

Reptiles

Painted and Snapping Turtles are laying eggs. They are often seen crossing roads or laying eggs on the shoulder of roads. Please be careful when driving to avoid running them over.

Birds

Grassland bird surveys have turned up all of the expected species, with a few more Henslow's Sparrows than were found in 2012. Most of the Henslow's Sparrows are well off roads and not easily accessible, but on 25 June one male sang from an exposed perch that was visible from Antwerp Road (a scope is helpful). This location is in TA13A 0.5 miles south of Hunter Creek (where Antwerp road crosses a stream lined by large willows mid-way between Poagland and Dogwood Roads). It is not clear whether this male is the same bird that was heard earlier in June west of Antwerp Road and about 200 yards farther north. Note that TA13A is rarely open for recreation, so that this bird must be observed from the road. This also applies to at least two Sedge Wrens that have been consistently found in TA13A just east of Antwerp Road and about 0.25 miles south of Poagland Road.

On 26 June a partial survey of the fields and woodlands surrounding Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield turned up 3 Upland Sandpipers, 6 Clay-colored Sparrows, 34 Grasshopper Sparrows, and 41 Vesper Sparrows. The latter two species are hard to miss in the grassy areas near the airfield. The best spot for Clay-colored Sparrow is the shrubby field immediately inside the airfield fence on the Main Tank Trail roughly 0.25 mile south of Elm Road. On 26 June three sparrows sitting next to each other on the fence here included two Grasshopper Sparrows and one Clay-colored Sparrow carrying food. There are actually more Clay-colored Sparrows in TAs 12 and 13 than around the airfield, but most of these birds are well off roads. Upland Sandpiper remains very difficult to observe on Fort Drum, as most are nesting within fenced in, off-limits areas, but sometimes they can be heard and even seen over the roads on the north and east sides of the airfield.



Vesper Sparrow in TA5B in May 2013.

Nightjar surveys have turned up slightly fewer Eastern Whip-poor-wills than in previous years, for instance 19 individuals counted on a route up FUSA Boulevard compared to 24-26 most years, and 34 individuals on a route that follows the edge of the airfield before heading east compared to 37-41 during the past few years. Common Nighthawks are notoriously difficult to count accurately on surveys, and were barely detected on the routes that have been conducted.

(Continued)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 June 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

However, good numbers of nighthawks have been seen in the TAs surrounding the airfield and other open areas on sandy soil. Early on the morning of 25 June at least five nighthawks were observed booming and chasing over and through the thinned pine stand at the south end of Lewisburg Road, just north of Rt. 3 near Natural Bridge.

Fewer Red-headed Woodpeckers are on territory this year than was the case in 2012, but the birds that are present seem to be having better nest success. Currently, 10 pairs are nesting in TAs 5B, 5D, 5E, and 8B, with young currently in many nests. On 23 June the first Red-headed Woodpecker nest to fledge this year produced three fledglings, which is almost half the total productivity for all Red-headed Woodpeckers nests on Fort Drum last year. The easiest place to see a Red-headed Woodpecker continues to be along the Main Tank Trail just east of Bagram Road (about 100 to 250 yards east of the intersection with the large cement circle north of the airfield).

Golden-winged Warbler surveys have concluded for the year, as males have largely stopped singing for the year. Tentative results indicate a continued increase in the number of Blue-winged Warblers at the expense of Golden-winged Warblers. Of the 174 winged warblers observed during surveys, 62 were phenotypic Golden-wings, 74 Blue-wings, and 36 hybrids. The majority of hybrids were either Brewster's Warblers or introgressed individuals of either species (generally looked like a typical individual except for the presence of a yellow wash on the breast for Golden-wings, or yellow wing bars in the case of Blue-wings), and only two Lawrence's Warblers were observed. Golden-winged Warblers are now rather difficult to find, but places that offer the best opportunity for seeing one include red maple swamps and patches of shrubby wet woods with a broken canopy along Reedville Road and several small trails and side roads that intersect Reedville.

Visiting birders often ask about a few other warbler species, including Mourning, Cerulean, and Prairie Warblers. Mourning Warblers are widely scattered across the installation and are locally common but generally hard to see. Quite a few can be found in shrubby woods along Pleasant and Reedville Roads, and several are in TA6A at each of the first two intersections on the road into this TA from Rt. 3. TA6A is also one of the best places for Prairie Warblers, with about a dozen territories in a large regenerating clearcut on the road just mentioned. Other areas with Prairie Warblers include the northwest corner of TA7G, TA14D along a grassy trail that heads northwest from Figert Road near the intersection with Russell Turnpike, and several open sandy spots in the southern half of TA7D. Cerulean Warbler is among the rarest breeding bird on Fort Drum, but several singing males have been found in TA15C. Most of the Ceruleans are well off roads, but earlier in June one was heard singing close to Canfield Road about 0.4 mile north of OP5A. Note that this latter area is often closed to recreation, but may be open over the holiday.

See Page 3 for a list of birds observed the past two weeks.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 June 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum June 7 – June 27:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 19 July 2013

Insects

Deer flies, biting midges, mosquitoes, and other flying insects were the most commonly seen wildlife on Fort Drum last week. Deer flies are members of the Tabanidae family of the order Diptera. These flies breed near water, laying their eggs on aquatic vegetation, wetted bank leaf litter, or surfaces directly over a waterbody which allow just-hatched larvae to drop directly into the water. Their semi-aquatic life history is helpful in understanding their distribution with larger populations generally found closer to perennial water sources. In general, deer flies are most aggressive in the mid-morning and late-afternoon hours when it is sunny.



Deer Fly (Image: Texas A&M University).

Like mosquitoes, only female deer flies require a blood meal for egg development. Because they are a pest with a painful bite and some people can have severe reactions to deer fly bites, bite prevention is important. Insect repellents containing DEET are suggested for preventing deer fly bites and application of Permethrin to clothing helps, too. A non-chemical option is using tape or Deer Fly Patches. Natural predators of deer flies include some species of dragonfly, wasps, and killdeer.

Birds

Now that it is mid-July many birds are not as easy to find as they were earlier in the nesting season, as vocal activity is waning and many birds are spending much of their time feeding young. Most breeding species can still be found fairly easily early in the morning, but especially on the very warm days we've been having lately, birds have not been very active by mid-morning. A few songbird species have stopped singing entirely—most notably Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers and Henslow's Sparrows—and these species are now very difficult to locate.

Henslow's Sparrows have been hard to figure out this year. A few males were consistently found singing on their territories from the time of their discovery in May or early June until at least the middle of June; these males are no longer singing, but appear to still be on their territories, and at least some have young. What has been confusing has been the appearance of singing males in at least six locations where no Henslow's Sparrows could be found on any day after their initial detection. It is not clear how many individuals were involved in these sightings, and consequently the total number of Henslow Sparrows found on the installation this year could be anywhere from 6 to 12 singing males.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 19 July 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

During much of the period from May through mid-June grassland surveys consistently turned up 5 singing male Sedge Wrens, but starting in late June additional individuals arrived. On 29 June 5 singing males were found along Antwerp Road south of Poagland Road where 2 males had been previously, and during the subsequent two weeks at least 7 more singing male Sedge Wrens were found in TAs 11E, 12B, 12C, and 13A. By 15 July 14-18 male Sedge Wrens had been found, several with mates, but none of these males were heard on visits 16 and 17 July.

On 18 July at least 16 Upland Sandpipers were at the south end of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, just inside the fence along State Highway 26. This is a traditional gathering site for Upland Sandpipers in the late summer, but the 16 observed on the 18th is the highest tally recorded here since 2004.

Bobolinks are gathering into flocks now, and several groups of 50-75 Bobolinks were observed in TAs 12 and 13 this past week. Some of these Bobolinks are moving more widely as well, and individuals can be heard calling over just about any part of Fort Drum now. Yellow Warblers are similarly beginning to move.

As of 15 July four Red-headed Woodpecker nests had fledged young, and two more nests were within 2-3 days of fledging. Although fewer Red-headed Woodpecker territories are present this year than in 2012, nest losses have been lower this year, and it looks like overall productivity will be pretty good. As has been the case all season, the easiest Red-headed Woodpeckers to see are along the Main Tank Trail just east of Bagram Road.

The biggest surprise of the summer was a White-winged Crossbill heard calling over TA18A on 5 July. This was the first crossbill detected on Fort Drum this year, and the only unexpected species detected during the nesting season (so far). Most of the expected species have been observed, although no Common Gallinules have been observed so far. Gallinules often nest at several marshes on Fort Drum, with the Matoon Marsh typically hosting several, but numbers at this site vary widely between years, ranging from none to more than 10 pair.

See Page 3 for a list of birds observed the past two weeks.



White-winged Crossbill in Cantonment Area in 2009.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 19 July 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum June 28 – July 19:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 August 2013

Birds

Birding over the past month has been fairly slow, as is typical during August, but migration is now underway, and small movements of migrant passerines have been noted on several recent mornings. At least a few species have been moving since the second half of July, including Bobolink, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and Baltimore Oriole. Bobolinks can still be heard passing overhead just about anywhere on Fort Drum each morning, but some of these other species are becoming scarce, as many individuals have already departed northern New York for the year. Among songbird species that do not breed on Fort Drum, the first migrants seen this “fall” were two Tennessee Warblers in TA7D on 21 August. During the last week of August small numbers of migrating songbirds were seen daily, but as of 29 August no large bird movements had yet been observed on Fort Drum. Notable among late August migrants was an Olive-sided Flycatcher in TA5D on 28 August, in a mixed species flock with 1 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 1 Bay-breasted Warbler, and 4 Black-throated Green Warblers.

A few other August bird sightings merit mention. On 15 August a group of 10 Upland Sandpipers was just north of Rt. 26 inside the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield fence. This location is a traditional late summer gathering site for Upland Sandpipers, and this summer as many as 16 individuals have been present at a time, but on most days none have been seen. On 19 August a juvenile Common Gallinule was in the Matoon Marsh in TA17B, which was something of a surprise because no adults were detected here on several visits earlier in the summer. Recently, Red-headed Woodpeckers have been conspicuous in the open oak woodlands in TAs 5B and 5D, as numerous juveniles are present and many adults have been actively calling and drumming.



Common Gallinule in TA17B in 2009.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 19 July 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum August 12 – August 29:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 12 September 2013

Birds

Bird migration during the first two weeks of September was mostly slow, although with a few days of moderately heavy migration, mostly during the first week of the month. The largest numbers of migrants noted so far this month were seen on 3 September, when a visit to Training Area 6A turned up 15 species of warbler, including numerous Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Green Warblers, and smaller numbers of Wilson's and other warblers. Also seen that day was one Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. On 4 September an Olive-sided Flycatcher was in a swamp on Borland Road at the boundary between Training Areas 3A and 3B. A modest flock of migrant warblers on Figert Road 5 September included several Cape May Warblers and one Northern Waterthrush. Southerly winds predominated during the second week of September, and bird migration was slow and not very conspicuous, although a handful of migrants were observed on most trips into the field.

Species observed on Fort Drum September 3 – September 12:

Canada Goose	Least Flycatcher	Blackburnian Warbler
Wood Duck	Eastern Phoebe	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Mallard	Great Crested Flycatcher	Blackpoll Warbler
Wild Turkey	Yellow-throated Vireo	Pine Warbler
Common Loon	Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Bittern	Blue Jay	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Blue Heron	American Crow	Wilson's Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Common Raven	Eastern Towhee
Osprey	Black-capped Chickadee	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Vesper Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	House Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	Song Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Veery	Swamp Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	American Robin	White-throated Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Gray Catbird	Scarlet Tanager
Chimney Swift	Brown Thrasher	Northern Cardinal
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	European Starling	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Belted Kingfisher	Cedar Waxwing	Indigo Bunting
Red-headed Woodpecker	Ovenbird	Bobolink
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blue-winged Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Downy Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	Common Grackle
Hairy Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Northern Flicker	Nashville Warbler	Purple Finch
Pileated Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat	American Goldfinch
American Kestrel	American Redstart	House Sparrow
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Cape May Warbler	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Northern Parula	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler	
Alder Flycatcher	Bay-breasted Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 September 2013

Birds

Bird migration this September mostly consisted of a slow trickle, with brief bursts of greater activity corresponding to favorable weather conditions. During the first half of the month overnight rains frequently kept migrants grounded, and most birds passed through on a few clear nights. Later in the month high pressure resulted in very pleasant weather, but again was not particularly conducive to large migratory movements. In between these general weather patterns were a few days with northerly winds and heavy migration, but overall migration this month was rather lackluster.

Many species departed Fort Drum for the season during the first week of the month. On 3 September large numbers of migrants in TA6A included 15 species of warbler and 5 species of flycatcher, many of the latter not seen again this fall. Among the species present that day that were not seen on Fort Drum again in 2013 were Common Nighthawk; Chimney Swift; Yellow-bellied, Alder, Least, and Great Crested Flycatchers; Veery; and Baltimore Oriole. Also that week, an Olive-sided Flycatcher was on Borland Road 4 September and the season's last Northern Waterthrush was near Figert Road on 5 September.

The best warbler diversity of the season came on 13 September, when 18 species were observed in TA6A, including several flocks with multiple Tennessee, Blackpoll, Bay-breasted, and Cape May Warblers. The last Blue-winged Warbler of the season was also observed in this day. The preceding few days saw the last Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Bobolink of the season.

On 18 September another large mixed species flock on Borland Road included two Philadelphia Vireos, the first observed on Fort Drum this fall. By this date later migrants such as Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Winter, Wren, and White-throated Sparrow were just beginning to pass through. Perhaps the highlight of this day was an immature Northern Goshawk that flew over TA 3 heading southwest.

Small numbers of Canada Geese started passing over Fort Drum by the middle of the month, and one Snow Goose was in a small flock of Canadas on 16 September, but the first day with any sustained goose movements was 23 September. Also on this day, large numbers of late-migrating songbirds were present in TA7D, including 200+ Yellow-rumped Warblers, 40+ Blackpoll Warblers, and smaller numbers of Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wrens, White-throated Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbirds.

A visit to grassland areas in TA12 on 26 September turned up a couple of mild surprises, including a late but rather uncooperative Sedge Wren and two Pine Siskins heard overhead. As is often the case in late September, every willow patch seemed to have half a dozen Palm Warblers and more Yellow-rumped Warblers. Three Lincoln's Sparrows were also seen on this date.

A modest flight observed in TA11B on 30 September was dominated by Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped and Blackpoll Warblers, and White-throated Sparrows. Some of the more interesting species included one each Philadelphia Vireo and Gray-cheeked Thrush.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 September 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum September 3 – September 30:

Snow Goose	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Canada Goose	Eastern Wood-Pewee	American Redstart
Wood Duck	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Cape May Warbler
American Wigeon	Alder/Willow Flycatcher	Northern Parula
American Black Duck	(probably Alder)	Magnolia Warbler
Mallard	Least Flycatcher	Bay-breasted Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Eastern Phoebe	Blackburnian Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Great Crested Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Yellow-throated Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Blue-headed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Warbling Vireo	Palm Warbler
Wild Turkey	Philadelphia Vireo	Pine Warbler
Common Loon	Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Blue Jay	Prairie Warbler
American Bittern	American Crow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Common Raven	Canada Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Horned Lark	Wilson's Warbler
Osprey	Black-capped Chickadee	Eastern Towhee
Bald Eagle	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Harrier	White-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Brown Creeper	Vesper Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	House Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Goshawk	Winter Wren	Song Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk	Sedge Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Marsh Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Common Gallinule	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	White-crowned Sparrow
Solitary Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Yellowlegs	Veery	Scarlet Tanager
Ring-billed Gull	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Rock Pigeon	Swainson's Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Great Horned Owl	Wood Thrush	Bobolink
Common Nighthawk	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Chimney Swift	Gray Catbird	Rusty Blackbird
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Brown Thrasher	Common Grackle
Belted Kingfisher	European Starling	Baltimore Oriole
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Pipit	Purple Finch
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing	Pine Siskin
Downy Woodpecker	Ovenbird	American Goldfinch
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	House Sparrow
Northern Flicker	Blue-winged Warbler	
Pileated Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	
American Kestrel	Tennessee Warbler	
Merlin	Nashville Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

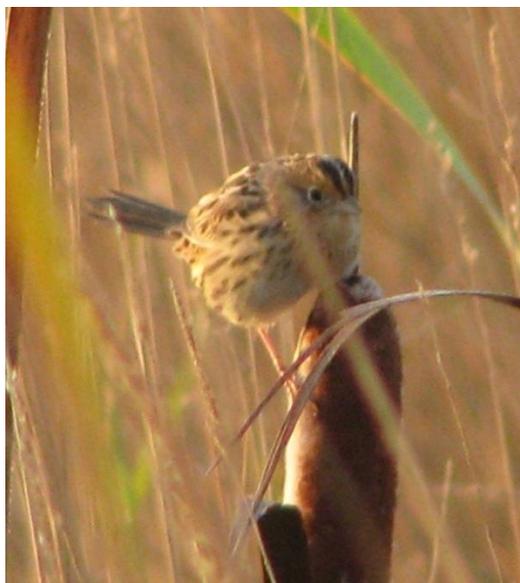


Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 October 2013

Birds

Following the pattern that has seemingly predominated throughout the year, bird migration was rather slow in October, with many species departing Fort Drum at or earlier than average dates, although a few species lingered rather later than usual. Generally speaking, warblers, vireos, and other neotropical migrants departed very quickly and did not linger much beyond 1 October, with fewer species and individuals than usual persisting into the second week of October. It was therefore quite a surprise when a Yellow Warbler appeared in TA13A on 15 October, more than a month after the last Yellow Warbler had been observed on Fort Drum this year. The 15 October Yellow Warbler appeared to be of one of the Canadian-breeding subspecies that migrates later than the local breeders, but which is rarely reported in northern New York. A Swainson's Thrush in TA6A on 16 October was the only other songbird noted at a particularly late date.

Sparrows typically dominate the songbird migration during October, and while sparrow numbers seemed generally low this year, some unusual species were detected. Among these a Le Conte's Sparrow in a wet old field in Training Area 12C on 10 and 11 October was exceptional, as not only was this the first individual of its species observed on Fort Drum, but was one of only about 15-20 or so sightings ever reported in New York State. On 16 October a bird believed to be a Lark Sparrow was observed in Training Area 5D, although it was seen at some distance and briefly before it flew away. Among regularly occurring species, Fox Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos seemed to pass through in very low numbers, while White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows were less abundant than during many years, but not dramatically so.



LeConte's Sparrow in TA12C.

Waterfowl were also unusually scarce for most of October, with many fewer ducks being seen than is typical for this time of year. The Goose migration was fairly slow, although a steady but modest passage of Canada Geese was apparent most days during the last half of October. On 21 October about 40 Brant flew over Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, and on 24 October a single Cackling Goose was seen in a small flock of Canada Geese over Training Area 13A.

Some other noteworthy birds included an immature Golden Eagle soaring over Training Area 17B on 17 October; a Peregrine Falcon and 2 Merlin along Antwerp Road on 11 October; one Red-headed Woodpecker acting like it is going to overwinter again in TA5D; and Orange-crowned Warblers in Training Area 13A on 11 and 17 October. The first avian signs of impending winter included a Lapland Longspur over Coolidge Road on 11 October and the season's first American Tree Sparrows on Antwerp Road 24 October.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 October 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum October 1 – October 30:

Canada Goose	Eastern Phoebe	Palm Warbler
Wood Duck	Blue-headed Vireo	Pine Warbler
American Wigeon	Blue Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Black Duck	American Crow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Mallard	Common Raven	Eastern Towhee
Blue-winged Teal	Horned Lark	Chipping Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Tree Swallow	Field Sparrow
Bufflehead	Black-capped Chickadee	Vesper Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Red-breasted Nuthatch	LARK SPARROW?
Great Blue Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch	Savannah Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Brown Creeper	LE CONTE'S SPARROW
Bald Eagle	Winter Wren	Fox Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Marsh Wren	Song Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Lincoln's Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Swamp Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Eastern Bluebird	White-throated Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Swainson's Thrush	White-crowned Sparrow
Golden Eagle	Hermit Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Yellowlegs	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	Gray Catbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Rock Pigeon	Brown Thrasher	Rusty Blackbird
Mourning Dove	European Starling	Common Grackle
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Pipit	Purple Finch
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing	American Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	Lapland Longspur	House Sparrow
Hairy Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Northern Flicker	Common Yellowthroat	
Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Parula	
American Kestrel	Bay-breasted Warbler	
Merlin	Yellow Warbler	
Peregrine Falcon	Blackpoll Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2013

Birds

Fall migration is largely over and many winter birds are now present on Fort Drum. American Tree Sparrows are widespread in shrubby areas throughout Fort Drum, where a few Northern Shrikes are also widely scattered. Snow Buntings are increasing in abundance, with the largest flock seen so far consisting of about 180 individuals on the west side of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on 26 November. A few Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs are likely in the area as well, although none have been observed recently. So far no winter finches or Bohemian Waxwings have been observed on Fort Drum this fall, and these species are expected to stay north this winter where food is reportedly abundant.



Snow Bunting in TA12C in 2009.

Waterfowl have been scarce all fall, with fewer species detected and no sizable flocks of duck species. Perhaps the most notable duck observation of the entire fall was a group of about 50 Wood Ducks in Training Area 13 on 2 November, a relatively late date for so many. The goose migration has been slow for most of the fall, but given that peak Snow Goose migration has occurred in early December the past few years, there is still a chance for good numbers of geese to pass over Fort Drum before fall migration ends.

A Pine Warbler in Training Area 6A on 7 November was unusually late, but otherwise few songbirds have lingered much later than normal. The last Fox and White-throated Sparrows observed on Fort Drum this fall were also seen during the first week of November, and a Rusty Blackbird on 21 November was relatively late but not exceptionally so. By the last week of November it certainly appeared that half-hardies—species that usually migrate south for the winter but for which a few individuals sometimes remain into the winter months—were virtually absent, perhaps not surprising given the cold temperatures. The only exception is a Red-headed Woodpecker that appears to be overwintering in Training Area 5D for the second consecutive year, something that had not been documented on Fort Drum prior to 2012.

So far only one Rough-legged Hawk has been seen on Fort Drum this fall, an immature bird that passed over Training Area 12 on 6 November. Since then several visits to the open areas on Fort Drum where raptors sometimes overwinter in good numbers have turned up no hawks at all, not even a Northern Harrier or Red-tailed Hawk. There is still time for winter raptors to arrive, but so far it looks like it is going to be a poor year for them on Fort Drum. In other words, given the absence of half-hardies, winter hawks, and irruptive finches, it looks like it is going to be a long winter for bird lovers.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 November 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum November 4 – November 26:

Canada Goose	Red-headed Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Wood Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
American Black Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Mallard	Northern Shrike	Eastern Meadowlark
Green-winged Teal	Blue Jay	Rusty Blackbird
Ring-necked Duck	American Crow	Purple Finch
Bufflehead	Common Raven	American Goldfinch
Common Goldeneye	Black-capped Chickadee	
Hooded Merganser	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Common Merganser	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Ruffed Grouse	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Wild Turkey	American Robin	
Great Blue Heron	European Starling	
Bald Eagle	Cedar Waxwing	
Cooper's Hawk	Snow Bunting	
Rough-legged Hawk	Pine Warbler	
Red-tailed Hawk	American Tree Sparrow	
Ring-billed Gull	Savannah Sparrow	
Herring Gull	Fox Sparrow	
Rock Pigeon	Song Sparrow	
Mourning Dove	White-throated Sparrow	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 December 2013

Birds

Winter is generally a very slow time for birds in northern New York, but this winter has been especially slow, as fewer species overall seem to be present in most of the region, including on Fort Drum. This scarcity of birds is the result of several factors, including a reported abundance of food farther north that is preventing many irruptive species from moving south in large numbers; and a harsh early winter that has pushed waterfowl out of the region earlier than usual and discouraged half-hardies from sticking around. Snowy Owls constitute a major exception to the general trend this winter, as large numbers of overwhelmingly immature individuals have moved into southern Canada and the northern United States this season in what appears to be the largest Snowy Owl irruption to the northeast in several decades. Despite frigid conditions a few half-hardies remain as well, so a day of birding can still turn up a few interesting species.

Although several Snowy Owls have appeared in Leray and Philadelphia just off Fort Drum, only one or two individuals have been seen on the installation, with all sightings occurring in Training Areas 12 and 13 within a mile of the intersection of Antwerp and Poagland Roads. There may well be more Snowy Owls present on Fort Drum, with Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield and some of the larger ranges being particularly likely locations, but multiple trips to the open areas along Antwerp Road have failed to find more than one bird. It seems a little odd that so few Snowy Owls are in suitable habitat on Fort Drum at the same time as 5-10 individuals are present in hayfields within two miles of the installation boundary, and the reason for this disparity is not clear.



Snowy Owl on Fort Drum in 2009.

In contrast to the Snowy Owl situation, the scarcity of wintering hawks on Fort Drum reflects the regional pattern quite closely. Both on Fort Drum and throughout northern New York, Red-tailed Hawks are present in much lower-than-usual numbers, and Rough-legged Hawks are even harder to find. Most visits to Fort Drum's open areas over the past month have turned up 1-2 Red-tailed Hawks and no Rough-legged Hawks, although a couple of Rough-legged Hawks were observed on 12 December. Unusually, no Northern Harriers have been seen on Fort Drum during the month of December; during most years harrier numbers decline in the early winter, but a few often persist into late December or early January. Given the overall paucity of hawks, A Red-shouldered Hawk on the north side of Gray Road on 3 December was a surprise, especially considering that this species had not previously been documented on Fort Drum during the winter months. An American Kestrel was also seen on the western boundary of Training Area 3E on 3 December.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 December 2013 (continued)

Birds (continued)

A few seasonal rarities and lingering migratory species are still present on Fort Drum, although as mentioned above such species are generally scarce this winter. At least 2-3 Great Blue Herons have been seen regularly all December, including 1-2 individuals per day on West Creek in the Cantonment Area, and one in Training Area 3D where Gardnerville Road crosses Trout Brook. On 11 December a Belted Kingfisher was observed diving into Pleasant Creek near Simonet Road. Several Northern Flickers and American Robins have been observed in various locations, with flickers apparently present in slightly above average numbers for winter, but robins being somewhat scarce compared to many years. Other half-hardies, such as Song and White-throated Sparrows, were not documented on Fort Drum this month.

Species observed on Fort Drum December 2 – December 24:

Canada Goose	Northern Shrike
American Black Duck	Blue Jay
Mallard	American Crow
Ruffed Grouse	Common Raven
Wild Turkey	Horned Lark
Great Blue Heron	Black-capped Chickadee
Bald Eagle	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Cooper's Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Rough-legged Hawk	American Robin
Red-tailed Hawk	European Starling
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing
Mourning Dove	Snow Bunting
Snowy Owl	American Tree Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Song Sparrow
Red-headed Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Downy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Hairy Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Northern Flicker	
Pileated Woodpecker	
American Kestrel	