

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 January 2014

Snow & Ice Conditions

As of January 23, there was a good layer of ice on Indian Lake—at least 15 inches of good ice on the north end of the lake, and 18 inches of poorer ice next to the shoreline. 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>



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

Poor weather and ice-covered roads have limited the amount of time Fort Drum biologists have spent in the field this month, but there has not been much to see, either. Birds are often scarce on the installation during the winter, and this is a particularly slow winter, as half-hardies and irruptive finches are absent, northern hawks are present in unusually low numbers, and the very cold weather has pushed out most lingering waterfowl. Consequently, most visits to the field have turned up very few birds.

Easily the avian highlight of this winter in New York and the northeastern United States is a massive Snowy Owl invasion, said to be the largest in decades. The great majority of these owls are immatures, suggesting that high productivity this past summer in the arctic explains the abundance of owls that have come south this year. Prior to mid-January only one or two Snowy Owls were seen in TAs 12 and 13 on any given visit, and these were the only individuals that could be found on the installation, despite the presence of 5-10 owls on farm fields just to the west. An apparent influx of additional owls during the middle of January brought more individuals to Fort Drum, and on 24 January five owls were seen along Antwerp Road and two more along the TA3E boundary.



Snowy Owl in Training Area 12 in 2014.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 January 2014 (continued)

Birds (cont.)

In contrast to Snowy Owls, hawk numbers are unusually low this year. Red-tailed Hawks are present in numbers that seem on the low side of normal, but Rough-legged Hawks are much scarcer than most years. Usually, winter hawk surveys along Antwerp Road turn up at least 2-4 Rough-legged Hawks/day, sometimes 3-5/day is typical, and in some years as many as 12-18/day are the norm. Most surveys this winter have turned up none, although occasionally one has been seen. An immature Northern Goshawk was observed on Gray Road on 14 January during one raptor survey, which was one of the few highlights of the month.

At least one Red-headed Woodpecker persists in the oak woodland in TA5A, presumably the same individual that has been on the same territory consistently since May of 2012. Prior to that year no Red-headed Woodpecker had ever been documented on Fort Drum in winter, but very large acorn crops allowed several individuals to overwinter last year and at least one to attempt to do so this year.

Species observed on Fort Drum from January 6 - January 24:

American Black Duck
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Bald Eagle
Northern Goshawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Snowy Owl
Red-headed Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Shrike
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
European Starling
Snow Bunting
American Tree Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
American Goldfinch

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



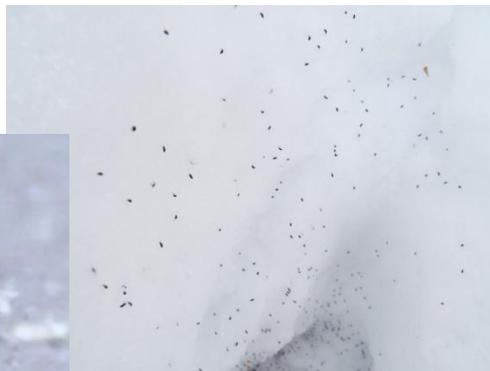
Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 February 2014

Snow & Ice Conditions

Snow has been the order of every day this winters. Indian Lake ice measurements of 22” early this month were the greatest recorded since regular measurements began in 2011. Ice and snow depths on Fort Drum can be found at the following page:

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

On warm winter days, you can see black insects jumping around on the surface of the snow like the photo on the right. These insects are commonly called “snow fleas,” but are also known as springtails. They have a type of anti-freeze protein that prevents them from freezing in cold temperatures.



Springtails on snow on Fort Drum (above). Close-up of springtail (left; image: wikipedia.org)

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

During February birds continued to be scarce on Fort Drum, which isn't surprising given the very cold temperatures and heavy snow that has characterized this winter. At least some of the birds that have remained in the area over this winter have been forced to move around because of heavy lake effect snows or very cold spells that froze over nearly all of the open water on Fort Drum. For instance, the number of Snowy Owls seen per visit to the TA12 and 13 fields increased from 1-2 early in the winter to as many as 6 following January's lake effect snows, but then dropped back to 1-2 after heavy lake effect snows in early-February.

Given how cold it has been this winter, and the almost total absence of open water during the cold snaps, it has been somewhat surprising to see small numbers of Canada Geese, Mallards, and American Black Ducks on local streams whenever small patches of open water appear.

Presumably there are a few spots on the Black River and other area streams with sufficiently fast flow to stay open even during the coldest weather, where these waterfowl hang out until the next warm-up allows them to find open feeding areas elsewhere. The only other waterfowl observed this period have been a couple of Common Goldeneye on open stretches of the Black River near Range 9, and a Red-breasted Merganser that dropped down into the Cantonment area, where it subsequently died. Red-breasted Mergansers do not normally occur on Fort Drum during the winter, and are rare during any season, but this species has been showing up in upland locations throughout New York, often in agricultural fields or on roadways, which are not locations that offer this species much opportunity for survival. (Continued on page 2)

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 February 2014 (continued)

Birds (cont.)

Presumably these mergansers have been frozen out of their normal feeding areas on the Great Lakes and are desperately looking for places where they can feed, and unfortunately in many cases not making it.

The main raptor story of the winter continues to be the exceptional number of Snowy Owls that are present throughout the eastern United States and Canada. Locations where Snowy Owls have been observed on Fort Drum include TAs 12 and 13 as described above, the western boundary of TA 3E, Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, and at least one range. The only other notable raptors reported during this period have been a few Bald Eagle sightings from across the installation, and a seasonally unusual American Kestrel along the western edge of TA3E. A Rough-legged Hawk in TA 13A on 13 February was noteworthy only because it was the first one observed in the Fort Drum grasslands in many weeks, where at least a few overwinter most years.

Overall there continues to be little of note to report concerning passerines and other land birds, the principle exception being the continued presence of Red-headed Woodpecker in TA5D. One Red-headed Woodpecker was known to be overwintering in this area for the second consecutive year, but on 13 February a second individual was observed in the same location. A Red-bellied Woodpecker in the Cantonment Area on 20 February was less unusual, but this resident species remains somewhat scarce on Fort Drum, although numbers seem to be increasing very slowly. Also on 20 February and in the same location, at least 37 American Robins were observed, more than have been seen on any other date of the winter, although at least a few were known to be in the general area. It remains unclear whether these robins all overwintered on Fort Drum, or if some moved in during a February thaw that brought a smattering of early migrants to other northern New York locations.

Species observed on Fort Drum from January 27 - February 26:

Canada Goose	Black-capped Chickadee
American Black Duck	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Mallard	White-breasted Nuthatch
Common Goldeneye	American Robin
Red-breasted Merganser	European Starling
Ruffed Grouse	Snow Bunting
Wild Turkey	American Tree Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Dark-eyed Junco
Rough-legged Hawk	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	American Goldfinch
Rock Pigeon	
Mourning Dove	
Snowy Owl	
Red-headed Woodpecker	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	
Downy Woodpecker	
Hairy Woodpecker	
Pileated Woodpecker	
American Kestrel	
Northern Shrike	
Blue Jay	
American Crow	
Common Raven	



Snowy Owl on a pole adjacent to Fort Drum.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 March 2014

Fish

The winter has been fairly cold and long and several inches of snow remain on the ground. During the long winter, Brook Trout eggs laid last fall have been developing in redds (nests). Generally, some have hatched by now and are visible in eddies and slower flowing waters of area trout streams. A visual survey on Friday, March 21 of LeRay Stream failed to locate any emergent fry. However, several caddisflies, mayflies, and snails were observed in the stream which should provide the trout with a good supply of food.

April 1st marks the opening of trout season in New York State. There are no minimum lengths for trout caught on Fort Drum but the state daily limit of 5 trout (any species combined) is in effect. The season is open through October 15. Brook and Brown Trout are stocked on Fort Drum in late April. Remember to regularly check the Fort Drum iSportsman web page for updates on stocking dates and locations.



Brown Trout stocked in Black Creek in 2013.

Walleye, pike and pickerel fishing seasons ended on March 15. Those seasons will re-open on May 3. These species spawn after ice-out which is the primary reason for the closed season. Even catch-and-release angling can cause stress to fish and cause physiological or behavioral changes, leading to a reduction in reproductive success.

Birds

Although it is officially spring, winter refuses to go away, and bird life continues to reflect the winter-like conditions with only a few hints of the new season. During the past few years early March warm spells brought large waves of migrants to northern New York, including many geese, Turkey Vultures, Ring-billed Gulls, Killdeer, blackbirds and a smattering of other species. No such large waves of arrivals have appeared so far this year; instead, typical early migrants have trickled north in small numbers, and these species mostly remain scarce, although most of the expected species have been seen somewhere on or near Fort Drum.

The first probable spring migrant observed on Fort Drum this March was a Red-shouldered Hawk in TA3D on 6 March, although there is a small possibility that this individual spent the winter on Fort Drum. An increase in the number of Horned Larks on Fort Drum during early March likely represented migratory movements as well. During the next couple of weeks a few additional arrivals were noted, including Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Ring-billed Gull, Song Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. Except for Ring-billed Gull, which is now fairly widespread, all of these species seem to be present in very small numbers, and are not likely to become much more common for at least another week if the current prediction for more cold weather comes to pass.

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Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 March 2014 (continued)

Birds (cont.)

Snowy Owls continue to occur in higher-than-usual numbers in northern New York, but overall numbers in Jefferson County seem to have dropped substantially since early February. Weekly surveys along Antwerp Road have turned up no more than one Snowy Owl per day since the first week of March, down from 2-3 per day in late February and early March and as many as 6 per day earlier in the winter. Similar declines have been reported in fields west of Fort Drum and near Lake Ontario, suggesting that many owls have either begun migrating north or are wandering in search of food.

Birds observed on Fort Drum 27 February – 24 March:

Canada Goose	Rock Pigeon	Horned Lark
Wood Duck	Mourning Dove	Black-capped Chickadee
American Black Duck	Snowy Owl	White-breasted Nuthatch
Mallard	Downy Woodpecker	American Robin
Hooded Merganser	Hairy Woodpecker	European Starling
Common Merganser	Northern Flicker	Snow Bunting
Wild Turkey	Pileated Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Turkey Vulture	American Kestrel	American Tree Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Northern Shrike	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-shouldered Hawk	Blue Jay	
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow	
Rough-legged Hawk	Common Raven	

Mammals

Deer are leaving their winter yards and are more commonly seen along roads. Skunks are beginning to emerge and their aroma is a sure sign of spring. A family of bobcats was seen along US Military Hwy this past month. Below is a photo of one of them passing by a trail camera.



Photo of Bobcat on US Military Hwy taken with trail camera.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 April 2014

Fish & Water Conditions

Most of the snow in the training areas has melted though there are still patches along road edges, especially along Alpina Road in Training Area 19D. The long winter and various heavy snow and ice storms have left many branches on roads, but continue to be cleaned up.

Trout fishing season opened with little celebration on 1 April. High water levels and snow along stream edges made fishing difficult. Access to trout fishing sites on the West Branch of Black Creek and the Black Creek greatly improved the week of 21 April. Quarry Pond in Training area 14B was stocked with 160 Rainbow Trout on 23 April by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Shortly after stocking, the trout could be seen surfacing in search of food. Fishing at Quarry Pond should be good for the next few weeks.



High water on the Indian River at the bridge on FUSA Blvd in Training Area 19 on April 14.

Northern Pike were seen schooling over gravel in the Indian River east of the Main Impact Area on 14 April where they have been known to spawn in the past. Both Walleye and Northern Pike are broadcast spawners, spawning in groups over gravel substrate or in vegetated areas, respectively. Both also spawn shortly after ice-out with Walleye spawning when water temperatures are between 40° - 50° F. On 14 April, Indian River water temperature was 48.2° F and it is likely that the Walleye spawning season for 2014 is over. Walleye and Northern Pike fishing seasons reopen May 3.

Birds

Winter seemed to drag on for far longer than usual, but spring has finally arrived, bringing with it a variety of migrating birds, although migration seemed to come as slowly as the winter ended. Often the spring's first significant migratory wave comes in early to mid-March, but this year it didn't happen until 27-29 March, and seemed to be unusually large perhaps as a result of its delay. The bulk of this movement came on 29 March, when flock after flock of Snow and Canada Geese passed over the installation, along with numerous Turkey Vultures, Ring-billed Gulls, American Robins, and blackbirds. Some of these Snow Goose flocks numbered in the thousands, and by the evening of 29 March approximately 27,000 Snow Geese had congregated in agricultural fields immediately west of Fort Drum. Unfortunately, 5-10 inches of snow fell on the night of 29-30 March, essentially ending this migratory push and making life miserable for many of the new arrivals.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 April 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

On 2 April large numbers of birds were observed on and over Fort Drum, but migration seemed rather confused. Modest numbers of Snow and Canada Geese were moving north, along with a few Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks, and the season's first Eastern Phoebe and Swamp Sparrow were found. A heavy sparrow migration was also noted, with more than 200 American Tree Sparrows and perhaps 25 Song Sparrows using shrubby areas along the western Fort Drum boundary. However, large numbers of birds seemed to be retreating south; at least 80 Killdeer, and numerous flocks of American Robins and blackbirds were observed flying south, with virtually no individuals of these species seen flying north. Also observed were four American Woodcock in small patches of bare ground surrounded by snow. On 3 April an American Woodcock was found dead on the side of Pleasant Road, and one wonders how many birds perished because cold and snow made it difficult to find food.

Migration proceeded at a slow pace between 3 and 13 April, with a few new species showing up but no large movements noted. Among the new arrivals during this period were a Pied-billed Grebe in the Cantonment on 3 April, a Winter Wren on Plank Road on 7 April, and at least two Vesper Sparrows at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on 9 April. Although few new arrivals appeared during this period, there was one surprise: A Fish Crow heard calling over TA4. Fish Crow has never been documented on Fort Drum before and is rare in Jefferson County, although there are nesting records from Watertown less than 12 miles from where the Fort Drum bird was observed.



Fish Crow (front left) with 2 American Crows, Ithaca, NY, 27 March 2000. Photo by Kevin J. McGowan.

Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*) are a rather small species of crow endemic to the Southeastern United States. Typically they have been restricted to the coastline from southern New England to Texas, but in the last few decades have been expanding their range, especially inland up large rivers. Visually, Fish Crows are difficult to tell from American Crows. Unless one has a great deal of experience in close observation of the species, identification is only safely done by voice. (Photo and information from Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY.)

The next big migratory push came 13-15 April, bringing large numbers of several species to Fort Drum, including Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Chipping and Field Sparrows. On 15 April one Blue-headed Vireo was heard singing in a hemlock stand in TA4D, and an Evening Grosbeak was heard calling as it flew over this area. It is likely that this influx of birds also included Ruby-crowned Kinglets, but none were detected on Fort Drum until 17 April. Also on 17 April, an immature Golden Eagle flew over TA5. American Bittern and Savannah Sparrow were not observed until 21 April but were almost certainly present earlier. The first Broad-winged Hawks were noted over Fort Drum on 21 April as well, and many were seen passing over the installation over the next few days. On 24 April a Bonaparte's Gull was in a settling pond in TA4. Bonaparte's Gulls likely migrate over Fort Drum at least occasionally, but this was the first that had ever been documented here.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 25 April 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

A few winter species lingered into April. At least two Snowy Owls were still in the Training Area 12 and 13 grasslands as of 7 April; none were seen on Fort Drum after this date, although at least one was in Leray just west of Fort Drum on 24 April. Similarly, Rough-legged Hawks were not seen on Fort Drum after 31 March but have been observed within a few hundred yards of the installation boundary through at least 23 April, and these hawks almost certainly are spending some of their time on Fort Drum. Several Northern Shrikes observed on 28 and 31 March were probably part of a migratory movement, and an individual in TA 4 on 9 April was the only report since the end of March. American Tree Sparrows were seen regularly through April to at least the 22nd, and the last individuals are likely to depart soon. In fact the next 10 days should see a substantial change in the local avifauna, as these lingering winter birds disappear while the first waves of neotropical migrants arrive.



*Photo from trail camera in Training Area 19—
a Bald Eagle on a deer carcass on 29 March.*

Species observed on Fort Drum 25 March – 23 April:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 May 2014

Fish

On May 17th, the annual Fort Drum Youth Fishing Derby was held at Remington Park. The most common species caught was Pumpkinseed followed by Largemouth Bass and Brown Bullhead. See the Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program web site for more information.

Black Bass season remains closed until June 21st in Jefferson Co. Catch and release fishing with artificial lures is allowed in other area counties.

Birds

Continuing the trend from earlier in the spring, migration seemed slow and a little later than usual through the end of April and into the beginning of May. Through the first week of May migrants mostly trickled northward in small numbers, with one or two new species for the year appearing each day between 30 April and 5 May. Migration

finally picked up during the second week of May, with progressively higher species diversity 6-8 May culminating in a series of large waves of migrants that passed through Fort Drum between 9 and 14 May. During these six days most of Fort Drum's breeding species went from scarce or absent to seemingly present in full breeding numbers. The best day of this period seemed to be 13 May, based on the 20 species of warbler seen in TA6A that morning, including at least two Orange-crowned Warblers and numerous Northern Parulas, Tennessee Warblers, and many other species. By the 15th of May migration seemed fully caught up and maybe even slightly ahead of normal, but a cold front that passed through the area on 16 May essentially shut down any movements of birds, and migration has remained relatively slow since. At least some migrants continued to pass through Fort Drum 19-23 May, with Tennessee Warblers being especially abundant.

As of 23 May virtually all of Fort Drum's regularly-occurring breeding species have been observed on the installation. The only local breeders that have not been observed are species not found every year, such as Least Bittern and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Birder's visiting Fort Drum often most want to see Henslow's Sparrow, but unfortunately the only male that has been observed this spring was a bird that sang for the morning of 7 May in TA12B but has not been found since. During some years the majority of Henslow's Sparrows that occur on Fort Drum arrive late, so perhaps more will appear in the coming days and weeks. All of the other grassland bird species that regularly breed on Fort Drum have been found this year, including at least two Sedge Wrens that appeared in TA13A very near Antwerp Road about 0.2 miles south of Poagland Road on 19 May, and several Upland Sandpipers that can occasionally be seen inside the airfield fence from Rt. 26 or the Main Tank Trail (but note that there is no access inside the airfield fence). As usual, a drive around the airfield will turn up many Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows and a few Clay-colored Sparrows. The latter species is most easily observed along the Main Tank Trail about 0.2 mile south of Elm Road. A dusk or dawn visit to this area should also yield numerous Eastern Whip-poor-wills and at least a couple of Common Nighthawks.



Maverick McBride, age 6, with a brook trout—one of his 24 fish he caught during the 18th Annual Fort Drum Fishing Derby.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 27 May 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Here are a few notes on other species that visiting birders often are interested in. The easiest location to see a Red-headed Woodpecker is right along the Main Tank Trail about 0.2 mile east of Bagram Road (the intersection where these two roads meet has a large concrete circle in it). Golden-winged Warbler surveys began this week, and some of the areas where male Golden-winged Warblers were seen close to roads include a small field at the extreme north end of Alexandria Road where it meets an unnamed connector road south of Reedville Road; a small swampy area at the north end of Lake School Road just south of Reedville Road; a clearcut in TA3A 0.7 miles north of Rt. 26; and Carr Road less than 100 yards north of the southern end of Matoon Creek Road in TA17B. Three Cerulean Warblers were found on 23 May, but all were in an area in TA15 that is rarely open to recreation.



Golden-winged Warbler in Training Area 8C in May 2013.

Turkey hunting reports have been poor region-wide. Canada goose goslings have been observed starting 19 May.

Species observed on Fort Drum April 28 – May 23:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 Jun 2014

Fish

Likely due to an extended winter and associated cool water temperatures, pumpkinseeds and bass can still be seen along the shoreline spawning over redds. Males of these species will guard their nest even after their young emerge and until their offspring disperse.

Black bass (largemouth and smallmouth bass) fishing season opened for the year on June 21, 2014. The season is open through November. Minimum retention length for black bass is 12 inches on waters of Fort Drum and the daily limit is 5 fish. Most lakes and ponds on Fort Drum provide excellent opportunities to fish for bass. As a reminder, Remington Pond remains a catch-and-release fishery.

Reptiles

Snakes and turtles are commonly seen this time of year on roadways. Turtles slowly make their way across roads to reach nesting sites or new bodies of water. Snakes will often sun themselves on the roadways.



A large 18" Smooth Green Snake on FUSA Boulevard on June 19, 2014.



Woodchuck mother and young in the Cantonment Area.

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.

Birds

Our last wildlife viewing report was posted in late May during the tail end of spring migration, after which small numbers of migrants continued to pass through for a few days, with the last obvious spring migrant observed on Fort Drum being a Blackpoll Warbler on 3 June. Other migrants seen during the last few days of May included an Olive-sided Flycatcher in Training Area (TA) 5C on 30 May, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers in TA 10B on 28 May and TA3E on 29 May, a Gray-cheeked Thrush in TA3E on 29 May, and good numbers of Tennessee, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers throughout Fort Drum 28-30 May. Also presumed to be migrating were two Sandhill Cranes that passed over TA3E on 29 May. **(continued)**

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 Jun 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

The biggest surprise of the past month was the presence of a singing male Kirtland's Warbler on territory in a young red pine plantation for about two weeks in June. The Kirtland's Warbler was discovered on 4 June in a part of Fort Drum where public access is restricted, so unfortunately visitors could not see this bird. For about the next 10 days it was observed behaving in much the same manner each time it was observed, moving around the pine plantation alternately foraging in the lower parts of trees or on the ground and perching on top of a pine to sing extended bouts of song. On 17 and 18 June this behavior changed somewhat, as the warbler started making flights well outside the pine stand, singing short bouts before returning to the pine stand. This behavior suggested that it might move soon, and subsequent visits have failed to turn it up, so it presumably has left this territory. This Kirtland's Warbler is only the second one ever documented in New York State; the first was a migrant seen one day only in western New York just three days before the Fort Drum individual was found, although there is at least one prior report from western New York that was likely legitimate but lacked sufficient documentation for acceptance as a first state record.

Black-billed Cuckoo seems to be more abundant this year than it has been any of the previous three years, as numbers finally seem to be increasing after several years of scarcity. Areas where multiple Black-billed Cuckoos have been observed in recent days include along Antwerp Road just north of Gray Road, Matoon Creek Road in TA17B, and Nauvoo School Road east of U.S. Military Highway. So far no Yellow-billed Cuckoos have been found on Fort Drum this year.

Nightjars also seem to be present in average to above average numbers this year. On the nights of 15-17 June Fort Drum biologists conducted six 10-stop nightjar survey routes, with stops one mile apart. On these surveys 146 calling Eastern Whip-poor-wills were counted, more than has been counted on these surveys any other year since they were established in 2008. Also on these survey routes 19 Common Nighthawks were counted, which is about typical. As usual, the best areas on Fort Drum for both nightjar species are around the perimeter of Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield and adjacent Training Areas, including TAs 4 and 5 and the west sides of TAs 7 and 8.

Red-headed Woodpeckers have been very quiet throughout the spring and early summer, and so far we don't have a very good idea of how many territories are present, but several pairs are nesting in traditional areas within TA5 and perhaps adjacent Training Areas. Probably the easiest place to see a Red-headed Woodpecker is just north of the Main Tank Trail immediately east of Bagram Road, but all of the nesting pairs have been relatively hard to find and require some patience to see.



Male Kirtland's Warbler on Fort Drum in 2014.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 Jun 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Also in TA5 and the airfield area are the usual sandplain grassland species, including large numbers of Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows and at least 6 Upland Sandpiper territories. These two sparrow species are easy to find along the airfield fence, and it is not uncommon to have daily tallies of 30+ Vesper Sparrows and 20+ Grasshopper Sparrows in this area. Upland Sandpipers are more difficult to find, but on several recent mornings 2-3 individuals have been seen performing aerial displays over the north end of the airfield or TA5D. A few Clay-colored Sparrows also nest in this area, a particularly good spot being just inside the airfield fence (easily observed from Main Tank Trail) about 0.2 mile south of Elm Road.



Clay-colored and Savannah Sparrows in Training Area 13A.

Usually the nesting species that visitors to Fort Drum most want to see are Sedge Wren and Henslow's Sparrow, but both species are scarce this year. Sedge Wrens have been found in TAs 3E, 13A, and 17B, with the most easily observed location being in TA13A about 0.2 mile south of Poagland Road (note that entry into this TA is often not possible because it is frequently closed for recreation, but these birds are at least sometimes visible from Antwerp Road). Very few Henslow's Sparrows are present on Fort Drum this year and so far none have been found in areas accessible to visiting birders. Also present in the old hayfield grasslands and shrubby fields on Fort Drum are numerous American Bitterns, several Northern Harriers, and dozens of Clay-colored Sparrows. The latter is especially common in the southwest corner of TA13A and adjacent TA12B, and a walk along Antwerp Road just north of Gray Road (so just south of the previously mentioned Sedge Wren spot) can yield 5-10 singing males. Also noteworthy in TA12C is the pond on Dogwood Road about 0.4 mile west of Antwerp Road, where an Orchard Oriole was found on 2 June; although not found here every year, this spot has become the closest Fort Drum has to a reliable spot for Orchard Oriole.

Fort Drum's bird biologist spent much of the first half of June conducting Golden-winged Warbler surveys, and the results are not encouraging. The data have not been summarized yet, but all indications are that Blue-winged Warblers are increasing at an accelerated pace at the expense of Golden-winged Warblers. Most upland shrubby fields on Fort Drum are now dominated by Blue-winged Warblers, with the majority of Golden-winged Warblers occurring in woodlands with broken canopies or a variety of wooded wetlands, and even in these latter areas there are a few Blue-winged Warblers and more hybrids. The area with the largest number of Golden-winged Warblers relative to Blue-winged Warblers continues to be along Reedville Road, especially in wet wooded areas such as the intersection where Purcell and Old Canfield Roads meet Reedville. Mourning and Canada Warblers can also be found in appropriate habitat all along Reedville Road. Another good place for Mourning Warbler is the shrubby woods along Russell Turnpike between Figert Road and South Tank Trail, where there are also a few Golden-winged Warblers, Blue-winged Warblers, and hybrids, and in the shrubby woods west of Russell Turnpike a few Prairie Warblers.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 30 Jun 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum May 28 – Jun 24:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 July 2014

Plants

It is still a great time to practice wildflower identification. Joe pye weed, black eyed Susans, day lilies, clover, chicory, daisies, wild roses, and several more kinds of flowers are currently in bloom. Wild parsnip and wild hemlock are two plant species commonly found near water that are also blooming. These plants that are members of the carrot family can cause rashes upon contact so avoid touching them. Raspberries and blueberries are also commonly found on Fort Drum this time of year. The edges of roads and trails where sunlight is abundant are good locations to look for these edible berries.



Wild parsnip, a plant which can cause skin rashes or burns upon contact, is seen growing along a Hunter Creek Tributary off of Pleasant Street on the border of Fort Drum

Fish

With Bass fishing in full swing, it is a great time to try a new angling site on Fort Drum. Mud Lake, Indian Pond, Indian River, and Indian Lake are among the best Bass fishing spots on post. All four waters are also home to Northern Pike which readily strike at top-water lures within close range of their ambush hunting spots. Either Bass or Pike will strike at poppers or buzz bait, as well as weedless-rigged plastic worms. In areas with Northern Pike or other toothy fish, it is a good idea to use wire leaders to avoid losing your favorite lure or that monster fish you were about to reel in.



Northern Pike from Indian Pond.

Birds

As is typical of late July on Fort Drum, many species of birds are much less vocal than they were in June, and some species have stopped singing for the season entirely. Many adults are feeding young, independent fledglings are becoming increasingly abundant, and some species are already starting to move south.

A major focus of bird monitoring in July has been on grassland birds, especially given the history of late arriving Henslow's Sparrows and Sedge Wrens to Fort Drum grasslands. By the end of June of this year only two or three Henslow's Sparrows had been found on Fort Drum, but during July at least six and as many as 10 singing males were observed, and a juvenile was seen on 22 July. All of these Henslow's Sparrows were well off roads in areas that are relatively inaccessible to visiting birders. **(continued)**

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 July 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

During many years the majority of Sedge Wrens that are found on Fort Drum arrive sometime between mid-June and mid-July, and this year was no exception. By 15 June only four Sedge Wrens had been found on Fort Drum, but by 21 July this number had increased to at least 15 and probably 17 singing males. Many of the Sedge Wrens are also well off roads, but several are close to Antwerp Road in TA13A along a 0.2 mile stretch immediately south of Poagland Road.

Surveys of the sandplain grasslands in the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield area on 10 July yielded impressive tallies for several sparrow species, including 17 Clay-colored Sparrows, 44 Grasshopper Sparrows, and 62 Vesper Sparrows. No Upland Sandpipers were observed on this day, but several have been seen throughout the summer around the airfield. Common Nighthawks were also conspicuous on several mornings in this area, such as on 10 July when between 8:00 am and 9:30 am at least 8 nighthawks were observed simultaneously calling and booming over TA5D. Smaller numbers of nighthawks have been observed over Training Areas 7G and 5E and elsewhere in 5D calling between sunrise and about 9:00 am.

In addition to grassland birds, Red-headed Woodpeckers have also been a major point of emphasis for July bird surveys. The woodpeckers have been somewhat challenging to work with this year, as they have been extremely quiet for almost the entire season, although they have been somewhat more vocal the last two weeks as their mobile fledglings have been wandering on to neighboring territories, stirring things up. As far as we can tell 11 or 12 Red-headed Woodpecker territories are present in Training Area 5, and we suspect there may be one or two more that we haven't found yet. So far juveniles have been found on seven territories, and several pairs still appear to have active nests, so it looks like nest success this year will end up being higher than it was the previous two seasons.

Several days of surveys in TA19 turned up mostly the expected birds, including a good mix of forest warblers. The Common Loon pair on Indian Pond has two chicks, but as usual loons have been present on Indian Lake but do not seem to have nested. The largest known Great Blue Heron rookery on Fort Drum is in TA19A, where on 26 June 39 nests and at least 79 nestlings were counted. An active Osprey nest is on the same pond.

Although it is still mid-summer, "fall" migration has begun, with a few birds conspicuously moving. Shorebirds are typically among the earliest southbound migrants, and although habitat for migrating shorebirds is scarce on Fort Drum, a few have been seen. One Solitary Sandpiper was on a small mudflat along Trout Brook in TA3D on 21 July, and two Solitary Sandpipers were heard and then seen flying over TA8A on 24 July. A few Least Sandpipers and one Upland Sandpiper were also heard calling as they flew over TA12 on 22 July.



Sedge Wren in Training Area 13A in 2008.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 July 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Although not clear whether they are actively migrating or just moving around, Yellow Warblers and Bobolinks have been conspicuously on the move. Starting during the third week of July a few Yellow Warblers have been heard passing overhead daily during surveys of open habitats on Fort Drum, and the numbers of Bobolinks calling overhead has increased from a few per day in mid-July to 15-25/hour by 22 July. Rather than migrating, at least some of these Bobolinks are flocking up in staging areas, as there are now numerous flocks on Fort Drum, some including up to (and probably more than) 150 individuals.

Species observed on Fort Drum June 25 – July 24:

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

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 August 2014

Birds

Bird activity has been light for nearly all of August, and while small numbers of migrants have been noted throughout the month, no large migratory movements have been observed on Fort Drum so far this season. As is typical, good numbers of Yellow Warblers, Chipping Sparrows, and Bobolinks were on the move during the first half of the month. By mid-month Common Nighthawks were conspicuous during the late afternoons, with groups of up to 20 seen on several days over the Cantonment Area. During the second half of the month a more diverse assemblage of warblers were moving, including such northern breeders as Tennessee, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers. Depending on weather conditions the first really large waves of warblers and other migrating songbirds could appear any day now.

On 12 August a Carolina Wren was heard singing along West Creek at the edge of the Cantonment Area. Carolina Wrens are rarely found on Fort Drum, with only about 1-2 reports annually, most occurring along the edge of Fort Drum where they presumably use bird feeders in off-post yards. At least one other Carolina Wren was reported in northern New York during this same week, after many months with no reports at all from the region, suggesting a small influx of Carolina Wrens during the first half of the month.



Carolina Wren (Photo: <http://wildsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CarolinaWren.jpg>).

On 13 August a Great Egret was at Mud Lake in the northeastern corner of Fort Drum. Great Egrets are infrequently observed on Fort Drum, with most observations coming from the late summer. Great Egrets have been seen at the Matoon Marsh in TA17B, Warren Swamp in TA7C, and the Cantonment Area, but the majority of sightings have been at Mud Lake.

On 14 August Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen feeding nestlings on two adjacent territories in TA5B. One of these nests was on a territory where no sign of nesting behavior was observed until recently, and this nest is believed to be the first successful attempt of the year, or at least is was presumed to be successful as it was very close to fledging on 14 August. The other nest was on a territory that had already fledged two young in June, so appears to be a second brood raised by this pair. So far this is the third pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers documented raising a second brood on Fort Drum this year, and these three territories just happen to be where the first three pairs were found this spring.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 August 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

On 18 August a trip to the Matoon Marsh in TA17B turned up several marsh birds, including 2 very small Pied-billed Grebe chicks, one Virginia Rail, and one juvenile Common Gallinule. A Black-billed Cuckoo called from the shrubs adjacent to the marsh. Also on the 18th a family group of Merlins was observed perched on the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield fence across the Main Tank Trail from TA4B.

On 19 August a Common Loon was found on Military Road next to the Cantonment Area; presumably it had mistaken the wet road for water and landed in the road from where it was unable to fly off. Fort Drum Natural Resources staff picked up the loon, determined that it was uninjured except for some scuffed feet, and released it into Remington Pond. It was later seen flying above Remington Pond, suggesting that it is in relatively good health, but it soon returned to the pond.

Species observed on Fort Drum July 28 – August 28:

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Yellow Warbler
Wood Duck	Merlin	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Mallard	Warbling Vireo	Blackpoll Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Canada Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Alder Flycatcher	Prairie Warbler
Wild Turkey	Least Flycatcher	Black-throated Green Warbler
Common Loon	Eastern Phoebe	Wilson's Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Great Crested Flycatcher	Eastern Towhee
American Bittern	Eastern Kingbird	Chipping Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Blue Jay	Field Sparrow
Great Egret	American Crow	Vesper Sparrow
Green Heron	Common Raven	Song Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Swamp Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Barn Swallow	White-throated Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Black-capped Chickadee	Scarlet Tanager
Common Gallinule	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
Killdeer	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Solitary Sandpiper	Carolina Wren	Indigo Bunting
Least Sandpiper	House Wren	Bobolink
Ring-billed Gull	Marsh Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird	Common Grackle
Mourning Dove	Veery	Brown-headed Cowbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	American Robin	Baltimore Oriole
Common Nighthawk	Gray Catbird	Purple Finch
Chimney Swift	European Starling	House Finch
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Cedar Waxwing	American Goldfinch
Belted Kingfisher	Blue-winged Warbler	
Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Tennessee Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler	
Hairy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat	
Northern Flicker	American Redstart	
Pileated Woodpecker	Blackburnian Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 September 2014

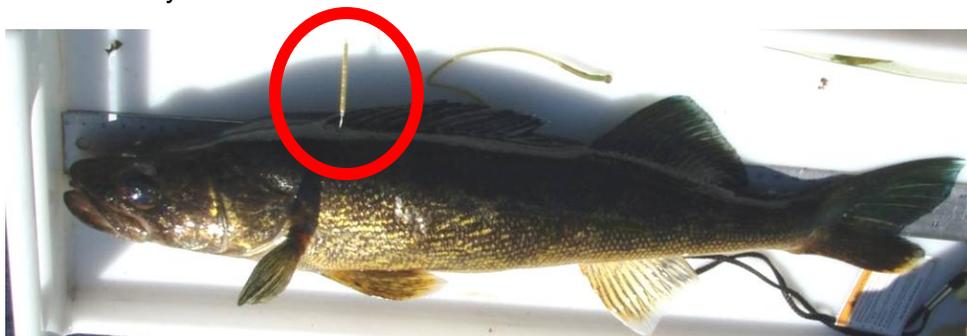
Fall Foliage

Cool weather and shorter days have caused several trees to start changing color. Vivid orange, yellow, and red leaves can be seen along the entirety of FUSA Boulevard and along the shores of Indian Lake. With this weekend's dry weather forecast, leaf viewing in the Adirondack Transition Zone of Fort Drum should be optimal. A drive along Route 3 to Cranberry Lake is also suggested for fall foliage viewing. Take advantage of living in the northeastern U.S. and check out fall foliage. For more information and a list of recommendations in the Adirondacks: <http://visitadirondacks.com/what-to-do/fall-foliage>.



Fish

Several Yellow Perch were caught during last week's Military Retiree Fishing Derby at Remington Pond. Pumpkinseeds were the most frequently caught fish. The largest fish caught in the tournament was a Largemouth Bass. Three bass and five yellow perch were tagged with spaghetti (floy) tags. If you catch a fish with one of these tags, please report the date it was caught, the location it was caught, its tag number, its species, and its length to the phone number included on the tag or to 772-6283. Several other fish were tagged this September in Indian Lake, reporting methods for fish caught in Indian Lake are the same or reports can be filled out in a voluntary creek survey form available from the Indian Lake kiosk.



Birds

Bird migration has been slow all fall, and relatively few migrants have been seen most days this month. Winds have generally been out of the south, with birds mostly trickling through in small numbers instead of flooding through in the large waves that northerly winds often bring in autumn. Fall movements tend to be largest following the passage of cold fronts, but most such fronts this month have been accompanied by rain, which usually keeps birds grounded, and have also occurred on weekends when no biologists have been on Fort Drum to witness any birds that may have passed through. (continued)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 29 September 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Despite the slow migration a few sizable flocks of birds were seen this month. The most impressive flock was along FUSA Boulevard just north of Alpina Dam on 4 September and included 18 species of warbler, with many Magnolia Warblers and several each Tennessee, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll Warblers and Northern Parulas. A smaller flock the day before in TA6A included 2 Philadelphia Vireos as well as several Bay-breasted and Wilson's Warblers. During most years a large assemblage of migrants roams around the oak woodland in TA5D, with numerous Eastern Bluebirds, Pine Warblers, and Chipping Sparrows that are joined by a constantly changing mix of other species. Such a flock has formed again this year, but so far has been much smaller than it often is, although numbers of bluebirds and Chipping Sparrows seem to have increased between 15 and 23 September. At its peak these flocks often include 20+ bluebirds, 25+ Pine Warblers, and 50-100+ Chipping Sparrows, and normally disperse during the first or second week of October.

By mid-September many early migrating species were entirely absent from Fort Drum. The latest dates that some of these species were seen on the installation this fall include: Yellow Warbler and Baltimore Oriole on 3 September; Eastern Kingbird and Bobolink on 8 September; Alder Flycatcher and Veery on 9 September; Blue-winged Warbler on 10 September; Ruby-throated Hummingbird on 15 September; and Wood Thrush on 17 September. Other species have not been seen at all this month, and most or all individuals presumably departed Fort Drum during August, including Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Golden-winged Warbler, and Henslow's Sparrow. However, some of these species can be very difficult to find in the fall, especially Henslow's Sparrow, and could well have simply evaded detection. While weekly surveys of grassland areas intended to capture late dates of occurrence for selected species yielded no Henslow's Sparrows this September, they did turn up 7 Clay-colored Sparrows on 8 September (none so far after this date) and 1-2 Sedge Wrens per day through 23 September.

Here are a few other notable observations. On 4 September 15 Pied-billed Grebes representing at least four family groups were at the Matoon Marsh in TA17B; on no other previous date this year had more than two grebes been observed here. Shorebirds have been virtually absent from Fort Drum all month, the one exception being an American Golden-Plover that flew over TA12C on 14 September. Also on 14 September, a Great Egret was at Belvedere Pond off Antwerp Road in TA12C. On 23 September one each juvenile Peregrine Falcon and adult Bald Eagle flew over TA12C heading south; the first Pine Siskin heard on Fort Drum since fall of 2013 also passed over TA12C on that day. On 24 September numerous raptors were seen migrating over the installation, mostly Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks. One kettle seen over TA12D included at least 27 Turkey Vultures, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 immature Bald Eagle, and 2 Common Ravens.



Pied-billed Grebe in Training Area 17B in 2010.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 September 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Up to 20 Red-headed Woodpeckers have been observed daily in TAs 5B and 5D through September, including numerous juveniles. Productivity was very high in 2014, with nearly every pair successfully fledging young, and at least one and probably several pairs fledging two broods. As of 23 September most of these woodpeckers seemed to still be on their breeding territories; during many years the majority of Fort Drum's Red-headed Woodpeckers have departed by this date. It seems likely that many of these birds are remaining on Fort Drum longer into the fall than usual to take advantage of another large acorn crop, and it will be interesting to see how many of these birds attempt to overwinter, something that had never been documented on Fort Drum until the past two winters.

Species observed on Fort Drum September 1 – September 24:

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Nashville Warbler
Wood Duck	Merlin	Common Yellowthroat
American Black Duck	Peregrine Falcon	American Redstart
Mallard	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Cape May Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Alder Flycatcher	Northern Parula
Ruffed Grouse	Least Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler
Wild Turkey	Eastern Phoebe	Bay-breasted 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
Great Egret	Warbling Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Green Heron	Philadelphia Vireo	Palm Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Red-eyed Vireo	Pine Warbler
Osprey	Blue Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Bald Eagle	American Crow	Canada Warbler
Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Prairie Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Barn Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Wilson's Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Chipping Sparrow
Sora	Brown Creeper	Clay-colored Sparrow
American Golden-Plover	House Wren	Field Sparrow
Killdeer	Winter Wren	Vesper Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Sedge Wren	Savannah Sparrow
American Woodcock	Marsh Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird	Song Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Veery	Lincoln's Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Swainson's Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Wood Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Eastern Whip-poor-will	American Robin	Dark-eyed Junco
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Gray Catbird	Scarlet Tanager
Belted Kingfisher	Brown Thrasher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Red-headed Woodpecker	European Starling	Bobolink
Red-bellied Woodpecker	American Pipit	Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing	Baltimore Oriole
Downy Woodpecker	Ovenbird	Purple Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	Pine Siskin
Northern Flicker	Black-and-white Warbler	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 October 2014

Birds

Bird migration overall has been rather slow for the past month, thanks to the continuation of the predominantly southerly winds that have characterized weather patterns all fall. Bird numbers on most days have been relatively low, as weather conditions have not been conducive to large migratory waves. However, several extended periods of pleasant weather likely allowed many birds to pass through the region undetected, and it seems likely that large number of migrants simply flew over Fort Drum on their way south. Despite the less-than-cooperative weather, some notable birds were observed this past month.

The period covered by this wildlife viewing report began in late September, at a time when many species of warbler, vireo, and other songbird was rapidly moving out of northern New York. During the last few days of the month 10-12 species of warbler were observed daily on Fort Drum, including the relatively uncommon Orange-crowned Warbler in TA19A on 29 September and TA6A on 30 September. By the second week of October Yellow-rumped Warblers continued to pass through the installation in large numbers, but virtually all other warblers were well south of Fort Drum. Other species that were last seen on Fort Drum in late September or early October include Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

At the same time warblers were rapidly vacating the region sparrow diversity was peaking, and large flocks of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows occurred throughout Fort Drum during the first half of October, with many Chipping, Field, Vesper, Savannah, Song, Lincoln's, and Swamp Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos as well. By 27 October most sparrow species were still present in reduced numbers, but Fox Sparrow and Dark-eyed Juncos were peaking in abundance. The rarest bird seen on the installation so far this fall was a Nelson's Sparrow along Zimmer Road in TA12C on 10 October (exactly one year to the day after a Le Conte's Sparrow was seen in the same area). Nelson's Sparrows presumably migrate through Fort Drum and elsewhere in northern New York regularly in very small numbers but are rarely encountered, and this is just the second record for Fort Drum, the first to occur in the fall. Also seen on 10 October in the same general area was a late Clay-colored Sparrow, about three weeks after the last local breeders were thought to have departed the installation.

Waterfowl migration through Fort Drum has been lackluster all fall. Small flights of Canada Geese have been noted passing over Fort Drum on many days this period, but no large flight has occurred yet, and Snow Geese have yet to start moving in any numbers. Ducks have been unusually scarce, with decent numbers of Wood Ducks and Mallards, but low numbers of a few other species, and none of other species that are usually observed in September and October.



Nelson's Warbler (Photo: by Alex Lamoreaux at www.nemesisbird.com)

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 October 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

The hawk migration is difficult to assess on Fort Drum, as raptors are often seen migrating over the installation, but there are no particular geographic features that concentrate hawks, so migrants are often dispersed and rarely seen in large numbers in any one spot. Between 21 and 23 October strong north winds were ideal for hawk migration and many raptors likely migrated over Fort Drum. Results from a 90-minute hawk watch in TA17B on 23 October included 25 Turkey Vultures, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 1 Northern Harrier, and 27 Red-tailed Hawks. A watch conducted on one of the previous two days would likely have resulted in higher totals. Also on 23 October, the season's first Rough-legged Hawk was in TA12C. On the following day, an immature Red-shouldered Hawk was in TA13A, and two immature Golden Eagles soared over the Natural Resources office in the Cantonment Area.

In addition to the Rough-legged Hawk in TA12C, several other typical winter birds arrived recently. American Tree Sparrows were first detected in northern New York on 19 October and have been observed on Fort Drum every day since. On 20 October the season's first Snow Bunting was heard calling over the Matoon Marsh in TA17B, and a Common Redpoll was heard over TA13A on 24 October. So far no Northern Shrikes have been seen on Fort Drum this season, but one should turn up any day now.

Although never recorded on Fort Drum during winter prior to 2012, it is growing increasingly likely that one or more Red-headed Woodpeckers will overwinter on Fort Drum for the third consecutive year. As of 21 October at least three Red-headed Woodpeckers were still present in TA5D, and two of these individuals were observed caching acorns, something that would seem not to make any sense if these birds were about to migrate. During most years Red-headed Woodpeckers depart Fort Drum by or shortly after the first of October, and most individuals were gone by this date this year, but at least one adult and two juveniles are still present on the same territory where two adults stayed through the previous two winters. This behavior was likely a response to very large acorn crops the past two years, and there was yet another large acorn crop this year.

A few other birds were notable for occurring later in the fall than usual. Bobolinks are rarely encountered on Fort Drum after mid-September, but this year two were heard over TA6A on 30 September. An American Bittern seen at the Matoon Marsh in TA17B on 20 October was one of very few October records for the installation. A Black-billed Cuckoo in TA6A on 27 October was particularly late, as this species had never previously been seen on Fort Drum after September.



Rough-legged Hawk on Fort Drum.



American Bittern on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 28 October 2014 (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum September 25 – October 27:

Canada Goose	Eastern Phoebe	Blackpoll Warbler
Wood Duck	Blue-headed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler
American Black Duck	Blue Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Mallard	American Crow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Common Raven	Wilson's Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Horned Lark	Eastern Towhee
Hooded Merganser	Black-capped Chickadee	American Tree Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Tufted Titmouse	Chipping Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Clay-colored Sparrow
Common Loon	White-breasted Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Brown Creeper	Vesper Sparrow
American Bittern	House Wren	Savannah Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Winter Wren	NELSON'S SPARROW
Turkey Vulture	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Fox Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Song Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Eastern Bluebird	Lincoln's Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Swainson's Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	American Robin	White-crowned Sparrow
Rough-legged Hawk	Gray Catbird	Dark-eyed Junco
Golden Eagle	Brown Thrasher	Scarlet Tanager
American Woodcock	European Starling	Northern Cardinal
Ring-billed Gull	American Pipit	Bobolink
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Mourning Dove	Snow Bunting	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	Ovenbird	Rusty Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	Tennessee Warbler	Common Grackle
Red-headed Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler	Purple Finch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler	Common Redpoll
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Common Yellowthroat	Pine Siskin
Downy Woodpecker	Northern Parula	American Goldfinch
Hairy Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler	
Northern Flicker	Bay-breasted Warbler	
Pileated Woodpecker	Blackburnian Warbler	
American Kestrel	Palm Warbler	
Merlin	Pine Warbler	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 November 2014

Birds

Relatively few birds were seen on Fort Drum during the month of November, as most migratory species left northern New York earlier in the fall, and persistent southwest winds were not conducive to passage for many late-season migratory species. A few late migrants were noted nonetheless, including such species as American Pipit, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, American Tree Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow. Waterfowl were unusually scarce during April, with few ducks or Canada Geese and virtually no Snow Geese observed. The timing of the Snow Goose migration through this part of New York has changed dramatically over the past decade, and if the recent pattern continues flocks of Snows should appear by the first week of December.

Several visits to the grasslands in Training Areas 12 and 13 throughout November turned up relatively few birds but some interesting species. On 6 November the last Eastern Meadowlark of the year was seen flying over Training Area 12C, and a flock of 40 Snow Buntings was also in the area. Lapland Longspurs and American Pipits were heard flying overhead on this and several other days, although pipits were not detected after mid-November. Several Northern Harriers present in these training areas in early November apparently departed around 18-20 November, which is when the first heavy lake effect snows hit Fort Drum. After this date several Rough-legged Hawks and only one Northern Harrier was seen afterwards in these fields. The season's first Snowy Owl was seen on 24 November in Training Area 13A.



Northern Harrier in Training Area 17C.

Continuing from October, more passerines have been noted in Training Area 6A than anywhere else on Fort Drum, although in much reduced numbers. Species such as Winter Wren, and White-throated and Fox Sparrows lingered in this area to mid-month, but have not been seen since the snows that fell the third week in November. As of 25 November small numbers of Pine Siskins were still present here, along with more typical species such as American Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Pine Siskin was the only irruptive finch species detected in November.

At least two Red-headed Woodpeckers remain in the oak woodlands in Training Area 5D as of 26 November, and show every indication that they will spend the winter. These birds, one adult and one juvenile, are on the same territory where at least one Red-headed Woodpecker spent the last two winters, and again this year seem to be taking advantage of abundant acorns. On several dates these woodpeckers have been seen storing acorns in cracks in oak trees. Prior to 2012 Red-headed Woodpeckers had never been documented on Fort Drum between early October and late April.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 26 November (continued)

Birds (continued)

Species observed on Fort Drum October 28 – November 26:

Canada Goose	Black-capped Chickadee
Wood Duck	Red-breasted Nuthatch
American Black Duck	White-breasted Nuthatch
Mallard	Brown Creeper
Hooded Merganser	Winter Wren
Ruffed Grouse	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Wild Turkey	Eastern Bluebird
Great Blue Heron	American Robin
Bald Eagle	European Starling
Northern Harrier	American Pipit
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cedar Waxwing
Cooper's Hawk	Lapland Longspur
Red-tailed Hawk	Snow Bunting
Rough-legged Hawk	American Tree Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Fox Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	White-throated Sparrow
Snowy Owl	Dark-eyed Junco
Red-headed Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Meadowlark
Hairy Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Pileated Woodpecker	Rusty Blackbird
Blue Jay	Purple Finch
American Crow	Pine Siskin
Common Raven	American Goldfinch
Horned Lark	

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 December 2014

Birds

Birding has been characteristically slow during most of December, but there have been some interesting sightings, and a few species have been observed in good numbers. Although it is now winter, “fall” migration has not entirely ended, as a few geese continue to migrate south over Fort Drum. In fact the first large southbound Snow Goose movement of the year came on 2 December, with moderate to heavy movements of Snow Geese passing over Fort Drum on several additional dates, the most recent on 19 and 20 December. Large numbers of Canada Geese passed over Fort Drum on all of these days, with several thousand more still in the area as of 24 December. Very few ducks, mostly American Black Ducks and Mallards, have been seen moving with these geese.

Snowy Owls have come south in unusually large numbers for the second winter in a row, although so far the number of individuals present on and near Fort Drum seems lower than last year. At least 3 Snowy Owls have been seen daily in Training Area 12 from Antwerp and Poagland Roads since late November, with additional individuals occurring at the airfield and at one or more ranges. Small mammal numbers are very high this year, providing abundant food for owls and hawks, but hawk numbers in Training Area 12 are not especially high. Typical hawk counts along Antwerp Road this year have been 1-2 Red-tailed Hawks and 1-3 Rough-legged Hawks, with no Northern Harriers, the latter species having apparently vacated northern New York after mid-November's heavy snowfall. The most notable hawk observation this month was of an adult Northern Goshawk seen from Reedville Road on 17 December.



Snowy Owl at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield in Dec 2014.

As mentioned in previous wildlife viewing reports, several Red-headed Woodpeckers are attempting to overwinter in oak woodlands within Training Area 5D for the third consecutive winter. On 9 December one adult and two immature Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen in this area, both immature were developing a slight red tinge to their heads. On 24 December two adults were in the same area, indicating for the first time that at least 4 individuals are overwintering here. This is the largest number of Red-headed Woodpeckers ever documented on Fort Drum during the winter months.

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program

Wildlife Viewing Report – 24 December (continued)

Birds (continued)

The year's first Common Redpoll was detected in late October, but this species remained scarce to absent for all of November, with increasing numbers during December. The first flock observed on the installation this year was one of about 23 individuals in Training Area 14C on 1 December. On 9 December three flocks totaling about 120 individuals were observed in Training Area 12, and on 19 December one flock of at least 135 was feeding in gray birch woodlands along Gray Road. Overall this is looking to be a relatively modest redpoll irruption, and no other species of irruptive finch as been detected on Fort Drum this season.

Throughout the Training Areas few half-hardies of any species have been observed, the only real exceptions other than the previously-mentioned Red-headed Woodpeckers being three American Robins on Pleasant Road on 4 December and one Song Sparrow in a shrub wetland off Coolidge Road on 19 December. However, as is often the case, several half-hardies have been found in the woods and shrublands along West Creek in the Cantonment Area. On 8 December one each Red-bellied Woodpecker and Song Sparrow was here, and on 23 December a more thorough search of the area turned up 2 Great Blue Herons and 5 White-throated Sparrows. The disparity between a scarcity of half-hardies in the Training Areas and more species and individuals in the Cantonment is a regular feature of birdlife on Fort Drum, but seems unusually striking this winter.

Several of Fort Drum's regular wintering species seem to be present in somewhat lower numbers than usual. Northern Shrikes seem particularly scarce, with no sightings during the month of November, although at least two have been seen along Antwerp Road since mid-December. Snow Buntings and American Tree Sparrows also do not seem to be as common as during many winters, although both species are reasonably easy to locate.

Species observed on Fort Drum December 1 – 24:

Snow Goose	Northern Shrike
Canada Goose	Blue Jay
American Black Duck	American Crow
Mallard	Common Raven
Ruffed Grouse	Black-capped Chickadee
Wild Turkey	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Great Blue Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch
Cooper's Hawk	Brown Creeper
Northern Goshawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Red-tailed Hawk	American Robin
Rough-legged Hawk	European Starling
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing
Mourning Dove	Snow Bunting
Snowy Owl	American Tree Sparrow
Red-headed Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Red-bellied Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Pileated Woodpecker	Common Redpoll
	American Goldfinch
	House Sparrow