

Fort Drum Fish & Wildlife Management Program



Wildlife Viewing Report – 02 April 2010

Migration continues to progress nicely, with many species appearing on Fort Drum at or slightly earlier than their long-term mean arrival dates. The goose migration has slowed substantially since mid-March, but Snow and Canada Geese continue to fly over the installation in modest numbers. For instance on the morning of 1 April a single flock of about 65 Snow Geese and several flocks of Canada Geese totaling about 400 individuals were observed passing over TAs 12 and 17. Ducks continue to be seen in low densities at various ponds, rivers, and marshes on Fort Drum, with the best diversity generally coming from Matoon Marsh in TA 17B and the large wetland complex that parallels U.S. Military Highway in the eastern portion of TA 13A. On 1 April Fort Drum's first Pied-billed Grebes of the year were heard in both of these locations.

Probably the highlights of the last two weeks were the observations of immature Golden Eagles on 30 March and 1 April. The first of these eagles was observed soaring over the southern boundary of Fort Drum being harassed by a raven. The 1 April Golden Eagle was soaring over the Matoon Marsh, and was obviously a different individual as its white wing patches were much more restricted, especially on the upperwings, compared to the earlier individual. Other recent raptors include a Red-shouldered Hawk over Carr Road on 25 March and a migrating Rough-legged Hawk over the Matoon March on 1 April. American Kestrels began returning to Fort Drum during the last week of March.

The pace of the songbird migration is finally starting to pick up somewhat. New passerines for the year seen or heard on 1 April included Eastern Phoebe, Winter Wren, and Savannah and Swamp Sparrows. An obviously migrating Golden-crowned Kinglet was also observed; this species usually occurs on Fort Drum during winter, but is relatively uncommon except as a migrant. Only single individuals of each of these species were found on 1 April, but the warm weather and southerly winds forecast for the first week of April ought to bring good numbers of early spring migrants, including perhaps early individuals of some species that normally arrive a bit later in April.

Now, and continuing for the next several weeks, is a good time to get out in the evening to listen to displaying American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe as well as frogs. Woodcock and snipe are now present in good numbers and can be found throughout the more open Training Areas in the western half of Fort Drum. During the past few days spring peepers, western chorus frogs, and wood frogs have become very vocal, adding to the richness of the evening chorus.



American Woodcock on Fort Drum.

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Birds seen on Fort Drum 18 March – 02 April:

Snow Goose
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
American Wigeon
American Black Duck
Mallard
Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck
Hooded Merganser
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Pied-billed Grebe
Great Blue Heron
Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Golden Eagle
American Kestrel

Killdeer
Wilson's Snipe
American Woodcock
Ring-billed Gull
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Horned Lark
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Winter Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet

Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
European Starling
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow