

Fort Drum Grasslands
Jefferson/Lewis counties, NY

107,000 acres 75E 38' W
44E 09' N

Habitats: Primarily grassland and shrub/scrub but other portions of the installation contain large acreage of deciduous woods, mixed woods, non-tidal wetlands, and riparian habitats.

Land use: Primary - U.S. Army training grounds. Secondary - wildlife conservation, recreation.

Threats: Potential - succession.

Site Description A portion of a U.S. Army installation used largely for training operations. The site is mostly old-field type meadow and shrub/scrub.

Birds Site supports one of the most significant grassland and shrubland breeding bird communities in the state. Breeding species include Northern Harriers, Upland Sandpipers (30+ in 1996), Henslow's Sparrows (12+ in 1995), Grasshopper Sparrows, and Vesper Sparrows (30+ in 1995). Other state-listed species that occur on the installation include Short-eared Owls, Least Bitterns, Red-shouldered Hawks, Ospreys, Common Nighthawks. The site hosts the largest (and perhaps the only significant) population of singing male Clay-colored Sparrows in the state, though breeding has not yet been confirmed.

Conservation Issues U.S. Army training activities keep area in early successional state to the benefit of the grassland bird community. It is hypothesized that if the area was abandoned and training maneuvers ceased, the potential is that the grasslands would be lost to succession. The Fort Drum Natural / Cultural Resources Branch has an ongoing grassland bird research program that is documenting the effect of different types of training activities on the distribution and breeding success of grassland birds.

State-Listed Species Summary

Species	Breeding	Winter	Migration
Short-eared Owl (E)	breeds	occurs	—
Least Bittern (T)	—	—	spring / fall migrant
Northern Harrier (T)	breeds	—	spring / fall migrant
Upland Sandpiper (T)	30+ in 1996	—	spring / fall migrant
Sedge Wren (T)	—	—	spring / fall migrant
Henslow's Sparrow (T)	12+ pairs in 1995	—	—
Osprey (SC)	—	—	spring / fall migrant
Red-shouldered Hawk (SC)	breeds	—	—
Common Nighthawk (SC)	—	—	spring / fall migrant
Vesper Sparrow (SC)	30+ pairs in 1995	—	—
Grasshopper Sparrow (SC)	breeds	—	—

Source:

Important Bird Areas in New York State, compiled by J.V. Wells
1998 National Audubon Society
200 Trillium Land, Albany NY 12203
518.869.9731
<http://ny.audubon.org>