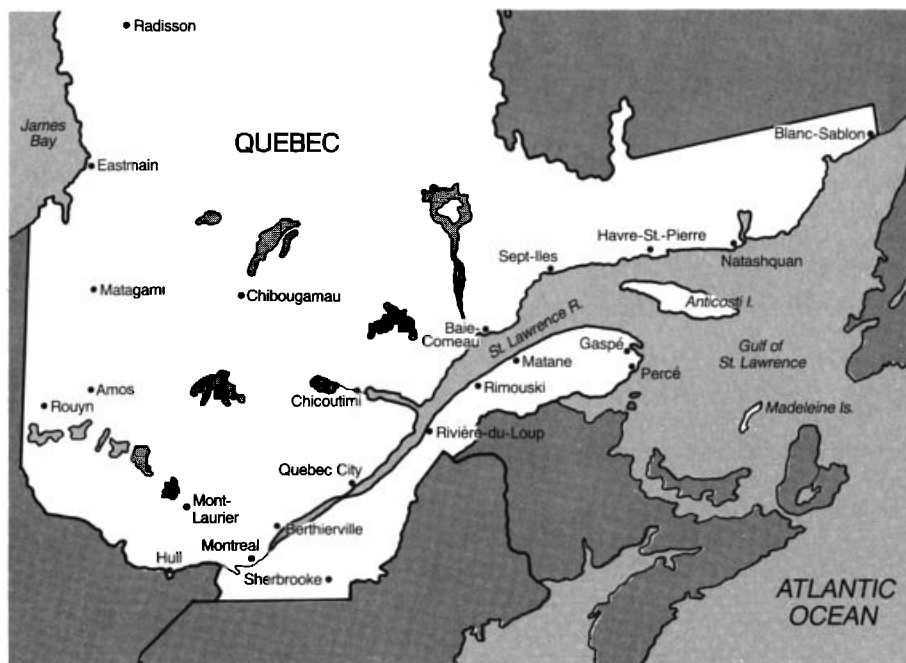


# québec region



## PIERRE BANNON AND NORMAND DAVID

It was a fairly normal summer. Temperatures were slightly above normal in western and northwestern Québec, and slightly below for portions of the Gaspé Peninsula and the North Shore. Rainfall was slightly below normal, especially in western Québec. These conditions likely did not adversely affect breeding success. There were few major rarities, but the lower St. Lawrence region offered the best opportunities for excellent birdwatching.

### GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Pied-billed Grebe on Anticosti I. July 13 was outside its normal range (M&D Landry). Bad news was received from the Magdalen Is., where the unique population of Horned Grebes in e. North America was down to 6 pairs (FS, AR). A pair of N. Fulmars was back at Corrossol I. near Sept-Îles in June, but no evidence of nesting was found (P. Brousseau, J. Thibault). Single birds were seen upriver at Métis July 16 (J. Munro) and from the Matane-Godbout ferry July 29 (JPO, ML). Three Manx Shearwaters were spotted on the same trip (JPO, ML). Although this species has been reported in the Region nearly annually in

the last 20 years, we are still without specimen or photograph to substantiate its presence.

Now almost annual, an Am. White Pelican was spotted in flight at Saint-Marc-sur-Richelieu June 6 (J. Caron, *vide* JLM), and two graced L'Isle-Verte June 30–July 15 (JPO, ML, v.o.). Double-crested Cormorants are now colonizing s. Québec, where new breeding colonies were discovered at Hull (M. Aubé) and in the Îles de la Paix Migratory Bird Sanctuary in June (PB). A remarkable six Snowy Egrets were found, the northernmost at L. Onatchiway, 49°00'N, 71°03'W (P. Labonté et al.). Other southern waders included a Tricolored Heron at Rivière-du-Loup July 15 (L&C Grenier); a Cattle Egret at Havre-aux-Maisons July 5, only the 2nd for the Magdalen Is. (C. Vachon); and a Glossy Ibis at Saint-Césaire July 11 (S. Ouellet, G. Savoie).

Enriching our knowledge of the distribution of the Tundra Swan along the Hudson Bay coast was a report of five individuals about 50 km s. of L. Guillaume Délisle, 55°45'N, 77°04'W, June 26 (D. Bordage, MR). Six Mute Swans at Dundee June 1, six at Valleyfield June 9 (*vide* A. Hogue), and nine at LaSalle June 25 (J.C. Sorel) were probably members of the same flock wandering through s. Québec. Reports of single

Barnacle Geese at Baie-Saint-Paul June 15–25 (AC, B. Thériault), L'Isle-Verte June 30–July 2 (JPO, ML, R. Saint-Laurent), and La Pocatière July 15 (CA) probably involved the same bird. Completely unexpected was a Wood Duck at Havre-Saint-Pierre June 7 (D. Cyr et al.). The Region's 12th Garganey, a male, furnished an exciting find at L'Isle-Verte June 2 (JPO, ML). Five Eur. Wigeon reports were about average for recent years. A female Red-breasted Merganser with nine ducklings at LaSalle July 11 confirmed breeding for the 2nd consecutive year at this location, and represented only the 3rd breeding record for the Montreal region (PB).

### VULTURES THROUGH TERNS

Turkey Vultures continued their increase across the province, particularly in the lower St. Lawrence region, where eight records numbered more than 50 throughout the season (RP). A bird also visited the Antoine Marsh in Abitibi June 1, where it is still considered a casual visitor (FB). A pair of Merlins raising two young in Victoriaville was noteworthy for 2 reasons: First, breeding is very unusual in the lowlands of s. Québec, and second, the nest was located in an urban habitat (L. Fortin, MG).

Yellow Rails were present at a half-dozen sites in the Region—including Pabos Mills, a new location for this species—June 18–mid-July (J.M. Smith). Noteworthy were 2 family groups of Com. Moorhens at L'Isle-Verte in July, representing the easternmost breeding records for the Region (JLM, J. Bachand). Displaced Sandhill Cranes included singles at Cacouna June 1 (JPO, ML), Rimouski June 18 (RP, GG), Saint-Paul-du-Nord June 20 (F. Laurencelle), and two adults at Cap de l'Est June 2–8, a 2nd record for the Magdalen Is. (JC. Richard et al.).

Single Am. Avocets brightened L'Isle-Verte June 30–July 9 (JPO, ML, v.o.), Cacouna July 18–25 (J. Larivée), and Métabetchouan July 20 (CC, GS). Breeding of the Greater Yellowlegs is difficult to confirm. Consequently, confirmations close to the s. limits of its range at Preissac June 24 (FB); L. des Cygnes, 49°53'N, 72°53'W, July 24 (FG et al.); and nearby L. Shikamatsh July 25 (FG et al.) were noteworthy. Unusual shorebirds included a Marbled Godwit at

Cacouna June 6–20 (LM, A. Gagnon) and two at Antoine Marsh May 25 (K. Rahm, M. Béliand); single Stilt Sandpipers at Saint-Barthélemy June 1 (E. Samson, A. Lacasse) and L. Osisko, Rouyn-Noranda, July 25—a first for Abitibi (FB); a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Pointe-Moisie May 31–June 2, the first spring record ever for the Region (BD); and single Reeves at Montmagny July 29–31 (AC et al.) and Sainte-Martine July 29 onwards (LS, LD).

Small gulls, most of them reported from the St. Lawrence estuary, included five or six Laughing Gulls, four Franklin's Gulls, eight Little Gulls, and two Black-headed Gulls. Although not unprecedented, two Ring-billed Gulls at Umiujaq June 19 represented one of few records along the coast of Hudson Bay (MR et al.). Summering Lesser Black-backed Gulls numbered eight individuals, all from the St. Lawrence estuary. Away from the Montreal region, where it is now a regular summer visitor, single Caspian Terns were reported at L'Isle-Verte June 4 and July 22 (JPO, ML) and I. aux Grues June 28 (P. Lane, J. Labrecque), while two individuals at L. Osisko June 28 represented a first record for Abitibi (M. Coulombe). The discovery of a Roseate Tern's nest containing 2 eggs at I. aux Cochons, Magdalen Is., was notable (FS, AR).

#### CUCKOOS THROUGH THRUSHES

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Saint-Magloire-de-Bellechasse June 26 provided one of very few summer records in recent years (S. Denault et al.). An agitated pair of N. Hawk Owls inspected a stump near Haymard L. July 12 (YA), providing another indication that this owl breeds in remote areas of the Gaspé Pen. A Mourning Dove at Kuujuaq July 15 (Y. Gauthier) was not unprecedented. Within its breeding range, a Red-headed Woodpecker was found near Huntingdon June 4 (A. Lanoue, FM); a nesting pair was on Mt. Yamaska in June (FM); one was reported at Rivière-Beaudette, also in June (C. Child, *vide* P. Hilton); and at least one was at St-Armand in early summer (J-G. Papineau). On the other hand, one bird some 200 km n. of Baie-Comeau in early July (J. Bouliane, *vide* M. Darveau) was obviously out of range.

At the very e. edge of its range, a pair of N. Rough-winged Swallows was inspecting the vertical wall of a pier at Rivière-du-Loup July 19 (JM. Béliveau). A new Sedge Wren breeding station was found at Aylmer June 21 (JD). The first Marsh Wren for the Abitibi area was found in Antoine Marsh, Abitibi L., July 17 (MR, FS), and two

singing birds were again reported from L'Isle-Verte July 12 (JLM), at the e. edge of its range.

A research project was launched this summer to study the habitat of Bicknell's Thrush. On the high summits of the Eastern Townships, where the forest floor was still covered by snow in early June, the species was found in good numbers: about 70 singing birds on Megantic Mt., and 27 on Gosford Mt. (G. Rompré, V. Connelly, G. Seutin). Northeast of Québec City, 16 singing birds were located in ZEC des Martres, and the species was also found at many stations in the heart of the Gaspé Pen. (YA, C. Marcotte). In addition, a Bicknell's Thrush was reported at Sainte-Blain-dine, Lower St. Lawrence, June 2 (J. R. Pelletier).

#### WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

With barely 20 records so far, and not yet proven to breed in the Region, the Blue-winged Warbler made news with 3 sightings: at Jonquière June 22–24 (J. F. Bédard et al.), at Sainte-Félicité, Matane, June 3 (*vide* PF), and at Lac des Joncs June 5 (J. Giroux). A male Prairie Warbler in advanced molt was seen by many in the Montreal Botanical Gardens July 16–20 (R. Hudon, S. Leroux, P. Gervais), providing a first summer record for the Region. A field-trip leader was rewarded by a Kentucky Warbler (for a few seconds only, of course) at Cap-à-l'Aigle June 1 (LM et al.).

Many Clay-colored Sparrows were found this summer, and it is tempting to establish a link with last spring's flooding in North Dakota and s. Manitoba; in addition to at least 14 single birds in s. Québec, the following list is probably incomplete: a nesting pair at Hemmingford May 24–July 1 (m.ob.); 2 pairs at Aylmer June 21 (JD); a nesting pair at Ste-Séraphine, Victoriaville (MG); one individual back at La Pocatière for the 3rd consecutive year (CA); and three birds at St-Philippe-de-Laprairie July 19 (R. Boulet). A Lark Sparrow at Sept-Îles June 5 (BD) added to the pattern of the species to stray in the s.e. parts of the Region. Our 2 well-known nesting sites for the threatened Grasshopper Sparrow in the Montreal area were subject to serious alterations. A large portion of the field at Ste-Marthe was cultivated with soya, while the one at St-Lazare was used intensively for horse riding. Despite this, two birds carrying food were seen at St-Lazare July 27 (PB, N. David), and two young were seen with an adult at Ste-Marthe in late July (G. Huot). A Snow Bunting in breeding plum-

age at La Martinique, Magdalen Is., July 6 (D. G. Gaudet, C. A. Gaudet, Z. Duchesneau) furnished a first local summer record. A Yellow-headed Blackbird showed up at D'Alembert L., Abitibi, June 8 (A. Fradette), and a first-year male Orchard Oriole was at Latulipe, Temiscamingue, June 21 (M. Gingras, *vide* D. Saint-Hilaire).

#### EXOTICS

A Greylag Goose was identified at Cap-Chat June 5 (D. Lepage et al.). A N. Bobwhite showed up at Baldwin Mills June 28 (P. Wery, VL). A feeder at Laval attracted a Ringed Turtle-Dove June 14–18. A pair of Budgerigar attempted to nest at Longueuil in June (D. Daigneault).

#### ADDENDA

The following belated reports have come to our attention: a **White-winged Dove**, photographed at Grande-Entrée, Magdalen Is., May 18, 1993 (J.-C. Richard, *vide* FS), chronologically represented the 3rd of 5 Regional reports, all since 1988. A **Rufous-collared Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) was videotaped in late May 1996 at Laprairie (D. Corvina, *vide* VL); although the origin of this bird remains undetermined, the species does not exhibit dispersion patterns and therefore we have no reason to suspect natural vagrancy.

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