

on the Sackville, NS, CBC and Dec. 20 at Bouctouche, NB; a Lark Sparrow in St. John's, NE, until at least Jan. 15; two Vesper Sparrows through the winter in Nova Scotia; and a White-crowned Sparrow on the Wabush, Lab., CBC. An imm. Rose-breasted Grosbeak Jan. 3 near Halifax (P. Leblanc et al.) was upstaged by two imm. male **Black-headed Grosbeaks** appearing at feeders (v.o., ph.). The first spent January in Fredericton, NB, and the 2nd stayed from early February through the period in Antigonish, NS, 200 mi due east. A Blue Grosbeak lingered to Dec. 27 at Avonport, NS (E. Urban), and an Indigo Bunting at Mary's Pt., NB, into early December. Of about five Dickcissels each in s.e. Newfoundland and s.w. Nova Scotia, two at Pubnico, NS, remained through February. Worth noting was a female Red-winged Blackbird wintering in frigid Labrador City (CD). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Alma, NB, in December and at Enfield, NS, through winter. Despite the mild weather, no Baltimore Orioles were reported by late winter. Of two meadowlarks in New Brunswick and six in Nova Scotia, only one wintering on GMI, NB (BD), and two in Pubnico, NS (v.o.), were claimed as Easterns.

On CBCs Purple Finches were up in the Maritimes, as were House Finches in New Brunswick where they now reside n. to Miramichi City. Pine Grosbeaks numbers were somewhat depressed. Red Crossbills increased in Nova Scotia but not notably elsewhere whereas huge crops of spruce cones in w. Newfoundland and the Maritimes evoked an abundance of White-winged Crossbills, which were singing and courting in late winter. Most Com. Redpolls stayed north, accompanied by a few Hoarries in Wabush, Lab. (CD), and appeared elsewhere mostly in late winter. Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches increased somewhat from last year's Maritimes CBCs whereas Evening Grosbeaks decreased substantially.

Observers (subregional compilers in bold-face): Todd Boland, Calvin Brennan, **David Christie**, David Curry (DCu), **Brian Dalzell**, Cheryl Davis, **Fred Dobson**, **Roger Etcheberry**, **Sylvia Fullerton**, Carl Haycock, Matt Holder, **Andrew Horn**, F. Huttemann, Randy Lauff, Fulton Lavender, Paul Linegar, **Bruce Mactavish** (BMt), **Blake Maybank** (BMy), **Dan McAskill**, Ken McKenna, **Eric Mills**, Murray Newell.

Ian A. McLaren, Biology Department, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS B3H 4J1 (IAMcLar@is.dal.ca)

québec region



YVES AUBRY, NORMAND DAVID, and PIERRE BANNON

December, as well as the whole year, was warm. More extraordinary was the report of a grand total of 132 species found during December in the Montreal area, an all-time record. In contrast with December, January was very snowy and cold at first, but the end of the month saw a return to above-normal temperatures. February was quiet for birds despite mild temperature and lack of snow.

LOONS THROUGH ALCIDS

A Com. Loon remained at Alma until Feb. 1, setting a record-late date for this area (SB et al.). A Red-necked Grebe at Port-Daniel Jan. 19 (EA) represented a 2nd winter record for the area. A total of 275 Great Cormorants were counted at Port-Daniel Feb. 6 (EA) while a very late Double-crested Cormorant lingered at Havre-Aubert, *Magdalen Is.*, until Jan. 19 (G. Chiasson). A Great Blue Heron on Duberger R. all winter (P. Otis et al.) provided a first for the Québec City area.

A flock of 12 Tundra Swans remained at Saint-Lazare until mid-December and then moved to Saint-Thimothée until the end of the month (m.ob.). Three more adults were found at Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix Feb. 19 (G. Garneau et al.), coinciding with an early migratory passage in Ontario. An imm. Mute Swan was seen at L. Memphrémagog, Dec. 26–29 (*vide* P. Landry, v.t.) while another strayed at FarmBPoint, *Outaouais*, Feb. 27 (M. Dallaire).

Five Canada Geese overwintering at Chandler (JRL, M. Garant, R. Garrett) represented a first for the Gaspé Pen. Of two

imm. Snow Geese which attempted to overwinter at Auclair, *Témiscouata*, only one remained after Jan. 11 when it joined a mixed flock of domestic and wild ducks (M. Beaulieu, D. Deschênes). A single Ross's Goose found among a flock of 3000 Snow Geese at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague Dec. 13 (PB) established a record late departure date.

Noteworthy ducks for the season included a possible Mallard × Am. Wigeon hybrid at Lévis, Dec. 1–10 (JL et al.); an ad. male Blue-winged Teal at Boucherville Dec. 19 (M. Picard), which set a new record-late date for the province; and a male Ring-necked Duck at Chandler from Feb. 14 to the end of the season, a first wintering record for the Gaspé Pen. and one of the few for the province. A male Canvasback at Baie-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 16 (RB et al.) represented an early sighting in a remote locality for the species. Some reports of

SA As part of a study of the eastern population of the **Barrow's Goldeneye**, CWS biologists (D. Bordage, M. Robert, CM, C. LePage) have carried out aerial inventories in the St. Lawrence Estuary (from Baie-Saint-Paul northeastward to Pointe-des-Monts on the n. shore and from Rivière-du-Loup northeastward to Matane on the s. shore). Thus 2437, 1702, and 2634 Barrow's Goldeneyes were found Jan. 26 and Feb. 10 & 16 respectively, mostly near Baie-Comeau, Baie-des-Rochers, La Malbaie, Cap-à-l'Aigle, Baie-Sainte-Catherine, and Baie-de-Mille-Vaches. These results underscore the importance of the St. Lawrence Estuary for Barrow's Goldeneyes in e. North America, which number some 4000 individuals only. Almost all other Barrow's Goldeneyes of that population winter in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, mostly in Quebec (ca. 1000), but also in New Brunswick (ca. 400) and Prince Edward Island (ca. 100) whereas a few winter elsewhere in the Maritimes and in Maine. For all intents and purposes, the St. Lawrence therefore shelters nearly all of e. North America's Barrow's Goldeneyes during winter.

Greater Scaups from the Baie-des-Chaleurs area in late December and early January were submitted, but noteworthy were two males at Grande-Rivière Jan. 26–31 (DM, PP, JRL). An ad. male Lesser Scaup wintered successfully at Alma (SB et al.) for a 3rd consecutive winter. Other significant reports of Barrow's Goldeneye included 110 birds at Pointe-à-la-Garde, *Baie-des-Chaleurs*, Dec. 2 (RB, R. Lepage, A. Rasmussen). Winter aerial surveys conducted by Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) in the St. Lawrence estuary yielded 1790 Red-breasted Mergansers near Godbout Feb. 16.

The Black Vulture at New-Richmond was last seen Jan. 13, a record late date for the province. Ten records of Cooper's Hawk, mostly adults, were received from the Québec metropolitan area. An ad. Golden Eagle, originally banded near Port-Stanley, Ontario, Oct. 30, 1990 as a young male, was found dead in a wolf neck-snare trap near Mont-Laurier Dec. 10 (RL). This type of casualty involving large raptors is happening much too regularly; another example is a belated report of a Bald Eagle found in a trap in the same area Dec. 15, 1996, more than 20 years after being banded (June 30, 1976) in its nest near Paradise, Michigan.

The mild temperatures of December were probably responsible for an abnormally high number of N. Harriers in the Montreal area. A pair of Peregrine Falcons spent the winter in the vicinity of Cap Tourmente N.W.R. (m.ob.).

Some good numbers of Willow Ptarmigans reached Shefferville latitudes in mid-February, but otherwise no major movements were noticed in the s. part of the province. The only reports pertain to three birds at Chûtes-des-Passes Feb. 27 (Mrs. J. C. Lachance) and a single bird which strayed to Rivière-Saint-Jean Dec. 12–13 (C. Buidin, Y. Rochepault). A small flock of 30 Am. Coots lingered at Maple Grove until late December, at which time they appeared to have been decimated by sudden cold weather. Three Killdeers were observed at Maple Grove Dec. 23–29, the latter date tying the latest provincial record (LS, J. Gauthier, m.ob.) whereas a White-rumped Sandpiper at the same location Dec. 23–27 established a record late date (PB, JMB).

This season was significant for Purple Sandpiper. Many reports obtained from land and aerial observations give a better picture of the situation for this mostly inaccessible species in the St. Lawrence estuary. Up to 200 birds were observed at Baie-Sainte-Catherine Jan 17 (JL) while 60 birds

at Les Escoumins Dec. 2 increased to 80 by Feb. 3 and were seen until the end of the month (CA, CG). Noteworthy numbers provided by the CWS aerial surveys included 180 birds at Ile Blanche Jan. 26; 300 at Ile Rouge Feb. 16; 120 at Battures aux Alouettes Jan. 26; and 50 at Ile aux Fraises Feb. 16. Combined with scanty reports over the past 20 years, these data show that Purple Sandpipers winter in good numbers in the St. Lawrence estuary.

Three late Ring-billed Gulls were still at Les Escoumins Jan. 10 (CA, CG) while migrants appeared as early as Feb. 13 at Sainte-Catherine, Montreal, and Beauharnois. A first winter Mew (Com.) Gull was found at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Dec. 5 (B. Barnhurst). A small flock of 11 Black-legged Kittiwakes showed up at Les Escoumins on the very early date of Feb. 19 (CA, CG). A Dovekie was found dead on the snow beside a ski trail at L. Brulé near Saint-Agathe Jan. 1 (J. Morgan, *vide* P. Landry). An imm. Razorbill was located at Longueuil Dec. 12 (PB, G. Zenaitis). An ad. Atlantic Puffin found inside a building in the harbor of La Baie Dec. 1 (H. Fong) was probably assisted by a mariner from one of several boats that transited there at that period. After a veterinary examination, the bird was released at Tadoussac.

OWLS THROUGH ORIOLES

All irruptive owl species were virtually unreported. Several Short-eared Owls wintering in Brossard, near Montreal (m.ob.), were expected, but the following occurrences were quite unusual: one at Hébertville, Lac Saint-Jean, Jan. 10–26 (M. Tremblay, D. Gervais); and two at Cap-d'Espoir, Gaspé, Dec. 27–Jan. 3 (DM, M. Larrivée). A Red-headed Woodpecker remained at a Laprairie feeder from Dec. 9 into April (P. Beaulé, m.ob.), and the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue bird noted last fall disappeared at the end of January (*vide* PB). Northern Flickers were reported mostly outside the upper St. Lawrence Valley and included wintering birds at Aylmer (*vide* DT), Sainte-Béatrix (*vide* RP), Jonquière (*vide* GS), and Rimouski (*vide* SR).

Single Townsend's Solitaires were found in Sainte-Foy Dec. 20 (RB, H. Mead) and at Sainte-Anne-des-Lacs Jan. 10–12 (J. Lebeau, RP). A Gray Catbird at a bird bath Dec. 29 in Cowansville (BH) was extremely late since only 2 previous occurrences are known before Jan. 10. A not too cold winter and a good fruit crop likely explain several widely reported N. Mockingbirds, including singles at Rouyn-Noranda Dec 27 (L

Laurin, F. Bédard), Mont-Laurier Dec 13 (RL), Dunham Dec. 19 (A. Boyer, F Surprenant), Grande-Rivière Feb. 21 (R Imbeau), and three different birds in the Lac St. Jean region in December (*vide* GS) Huge flocks (numbering several thousands) of Bohemian Waxwings were encountered during the period in the Saguenay region and on the n. shore of the St. Lawrence from Saguenay R. eastward to Sept-Iles

An Orange-crowned Warbler in the Montreal Botanical Gardens Nov. 28 (J. Brisson) to Dec. 29 (S. Denault, M. Poulin) and a Yellow Warbler on nearby Notre-Dame I. Dec. 12–29 (JMB, m.ob) were both record late. A Yellow-throated Warbler delighted many observers in Cap-de-la-Madeleine Nov. 23–Dec. 26 (J. Belin), feeding in cobwebs clinging to a small chapel which it entered regularly to catch the warmth of lampions! An imm. Prairie Warbler at Ile des Soeurs Dec. 3–4 was noteworthy (D. Brongo, M. Brongo) An Ovenbird at Boucherville Dec. 19–31 (R. Chassé) was our latest ever. The presence of a Summer Tanager at a Longueuil feeder since mid-November (S. Péloquin, N. Morissette) was made known to birders only on Dec. 29; the bird did not show up Dec. 30 and was seen briefly Dec. 31, struggling desperately against very cold temperatures.

An imm. Harris's Sparrow made a brief appearance at a Cap-de-la-Madeleine feeder Dec. 22 (M. Bisson). Matching the spatial pattern of flickers and mockingbirds, Rusty Blackbirds were reported from outlying regions: one all winter in L'Ascension, Lac Saint-Jean (SB); in Cap-aux-Meules Feb. 18–28 (DGG); in New Richmond Feb. 4 (R. Guitard); and in Beauport Jan. 23 onwards (R. Gingras et al.). The Matapédia Hooded Oriole reported last fall was seen daily until Jan. 14 (*vide* C. Pitre), the coldest day of the month.

INTRODUCED BIRDS

A Mandarin Duck remained throughout December in Montreal (m.ob.) and was also seen in nearby Laval Jan. 24 (LS) An Indian Peafowl feeding with Canada Geese Dec. 29 at Saint-Timothée (PB) was indeed displaced. A Ringed Turtle-Dove attended a Laval feeder Dec. 3–Feb. 4 (D. Hughes) An Orange-cheeked Waxbill was in the Montreal Botanical Gardens until at least Dec. 20 (m.ob.). Three Eur. Goldfinches spent the entire period in the Montreal Botanical Gardens (m.ob.), three others were in Lachine Feb. 28 (R. Taylor), and one in Saint-Lin Dec. 24–Jan. 2 (C. Veevaete)

Subregional editors (boldface) and initialed observers: E. Arsenault, C. Auchu, P. Bannon, J.M. Béliveau, R. Bisson, S. Boivin, C. Cormier, **G. Cyr, S. Gagnon, D. G. Gaudet,** C. Girard, **B. Hamel,** S. Houle, **J. Lachance,** R. LeBrun, J.R. Lepage, C. Marcotte, D. Mercier, **E. Milot, R. Piché, P. Poulin, S. Rhéaume, G. Savard,** L. Simard, **D. Toussaint.**

Yves Aubry, Canadian Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 10100, Sainte-Foy, Québec G1V 4H5 (yves.aubry@ec.gc.ca), **Normand David,** 11931 Lavigne, Montréal, Québec H4J 1X9 (ndavid@netrover.com), and **Pierre Bannon,** 1517 Leprohon, Montréal, Québec H4E 1P1 (pbannon@total.net)



Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 138.

new england region



PAMELA HUNT

According to a recent report, 1998 was the warmest year of the current millennium. This certainly makes sense if you look at New England's climate during December, which was the sixth warmest on record. This was largely due to temperatures averaging 11 degrees above normal for the first three weeks, breaking 70° in five states December 7 (and reaching 67° in Vermont). If it hadn't been for below-normal temperatures in the last 10 days, December 1998 might well have been the warmest December since record keeping began in 1894. The obvious results of this unseasonable weather were lots of open water and a profusion of lingering migrants, both the traditional half-hardies and more unusual fare. Topping the list were 20 species of warblers and three species of tanagers for the month. The warm trend continued into January, although not spectacularly so, while February ranked among the top 15 warmest, again bringing an early wave of migrants north at the end of the season. Bird highlights are almost too numerous to mention, but in addition to the aforementioned warblers and tanagers, there were the largest alcid flight in at least 10 years, unusually high numbers of lingering waterfowl, and a

spectacular gull show in Connecticut. Rarities included an unprecedented five Ash-throated Flycatchers, possible Arctic Loon in Maine, Pink-footed Goose in Massachusetts, possible Yellow-legged Gull in Connecticut, three Western Tanager, and two wandering alcids: Long-billed Murrelet and Ancient Murrelet. On the downside, there was essentially no southward flight of raptors, finches, or waxwings, but such is the way of these northern wanderers.

Abbreviations: MARC (*Massachusetts Avian Records Committee*); Nantucket (*Nantucket I., MA*); P.I. (*Plum I., Essex Co., MA*); Provincetown (*Provincetown, Barnstable Co., MA*); Rockport (*Rockport, Essex Co., MA*).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A well-described bird matching most descriptions of **Arctic Loon** was seen off York, York, ME, Jan. 30–31 (†P. Moynahan, S. Spangenberg). This represents the first detailed report of this species for Maine, and although there are 3 previous reports for Massachusetts, none has been accepted as unquestionably Arctic (vs. Pacific) by MARC. **Pacific Loons** are more likely than Arctics on the east coast, and this winter there were two individuals at York, ME, Dec. 19–Feb. 7, and another at Provincetown Jan. 30 through February.

Considering the mild early winter, a lack of inland Pied-billed Grebes is somewhat unusual, but Red-necked Grebes perhaps made up for their smaller relative's absence. Two were inland at Bantam L., Litchfield, CT, Dec. 3, and one was at Quabbin Res., Hampshire, MA, Dec. 26. The **Bared Grebe** returned to Gloucester, Essex, MA, for a 3rd winter. Three W. Grebe reports was above average, but none remained for an extended period. This season's birds were at Sachuest Pt., Newport, RI, Dec. 5–7; Attleboro, Bristol, MA, Dec. 23–26; and Jamestown, Newport, RI, Feb. 19 through March.

Great Egrets lingered later than usual, including a very late individual in Salisbury, Essex, MA, Jan. 8 (RH). Nantucket hosted up to 22 Black-crowned Night-Herons in January, while singles showed up elsewhere



BIRD SLIDES

Nearly 6,000 species worldwide
Over 90,000 slides available

SLIDE SETS
Familiar Birds, Eastern Warblers, Raptors, Owls, Endangered Species
Bird Behavior, Bird Families of the World, Neotropical Migrants & more

INDIVIDUAL SLIDES
Request our free North American catalog or send a custom list
indicating age, sex, behavior, or color morph.
Catalog slides \$3.00 Custom slides \$5.00 Minimum order \$15.00
Allow 4 weeks for delivery.

These slides are for non-profit lectures only and may not be duplicated
For publication or other reproduction rights, please call us.

VIREO (Visual Resources for Ornithology)
The Academy of Natural Sciences
1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 299-1069
www.acnatsci.org/VIREO

