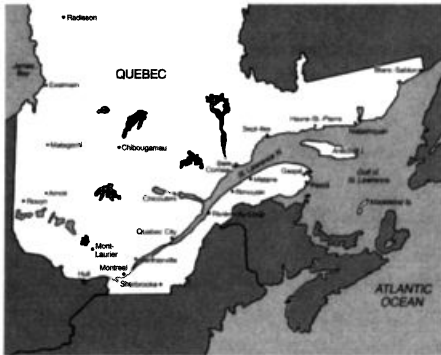


québec region



**PIERRE BANNON
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Weather conditions proved to be almost a repetition of spring 1998 with sunny and dry conditions prevailing throughout most of the period. These conditions were unfavorable to any big fallouts but, as opposed to last spring, more rarities were discovered. Pink-footed Goose, Garganey, Cinnamon Teal, Fieldfare, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, and Black-billed Magpie were amongst the most exciting. Incidentally, the handful of reports of the Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Common Teal (*Anas c. crecca*), and Lesser Black-backed Gull showed once again that all are regular transients and are nowhere unexpected.

EGRETS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The northward dispersal of southern herons was unimpressive, with only a single Snowy Egret at Sainte-Martine 1 May (F. Roberge, L. Gervais), and single Little Blue Herons at Cap Tourmente 9 May (L. Vézina et al.), and at Chandler 19 May (L-P. Luce). Glossy Ibis were noted at Sainte-Angèle-de-Laval 2–3 May (J. Ducharme) and Rivière-Ouelle 28 May (CA, CG).

The opening of a Snow Geese spring hunting season in cultivated lands of the St. Lawrence Valley failed to produce expected results, at least in part because dry and warm weather conditions induced the geese to leave early, and hunting pressure to disperse them widely. They left the Baie-du-Febvre main staging area the day the hunting season opened, and were recorded subsequently in numerous small flocks on the n. shore of the St. Lawrence from Hull to

Québec City. They showed up in the L. Saint-Jean region 17 Apr (*vide* GS), and were encountered in record-high numbers until mid-May. Likewise, good numbers of small flocks appeared in the Gaspé Pen. 25 Apr onwards (*vide* PP).

The saga of the **Pink-footed Goose** continued for a 4th consecutive year. After having been recorded in the fall (1996 and 1997) and last spring, what is perhaps the same individual was sighted briefly at Baie-du-Febvre 2 Apr (M. Grégoire), and also near I. d'Orléans, *Québec City*, 26 Apr (FD, RD). Single swans described as having the whole basal half of the bill bright yellow, at Saint-Barthélemy 2 May (G. Garneau et al.), and Cowansville 14 May (F. Surprenant), appeared to be **Whooper Swans** rather than Bewick's Swans. Two Mute Swans were at Dunham 19 Apr (F. Furtado, *vide* P. Gingras)

A male **Cinnamon Teal** seen at Saint-Barthélemy 13 Apr (P. Franche, A. Gosselin) was our earliest ever; another one (or the same?) was at Dundee 23 May (E. Samson, A. Lacasse). A male Garganey, at Kamouraska 29 May (P. Lane, J. Labrecque), as well as a male Tufted Duck, at Restigouche 24 Apr (G. Bélanger, O. Doiron), both fitted perfectly in known temporal and spatial distribution patterns. A female Harlequin Duck was totally unexpected inland near Montreal at Saint-Jérôme 20 May (N. Taillon). Extralimital Ruddy Ducks included a female 65 km e. of Sept-Iles 29 May (C. Cayouette, A. Reid, D. Cyr), and single birds at Amqui 28 May (R. Lang) and Barachois, *Gaspé*, 31 May (E. Arsenault, D. Mercier).

RAILS THROUGH ALCIDS

A Sora at New Richmond 5 Apr (B. Leblanc, J. Bourque) was early, but failed by only one day to match our record early arrival. Sandhill Cranes, now a regular feature of the agricultural landscape of central n.w. Québec (Abitibi area), undoubtedly migrate regularly just west of our Region. Most intriguing, however, are the numerous sightings in the L. Saint-Jean area, with at least 7 sightings of 1–12 birds 18 Apr–21 May (*vide* GS), when the species go virtually unreported along the St-Lawrence Valley (only 4 sightings of single birds this season).

A Marbled Godwit found on I. aux Fermiers 21 May (J. St-Pierre et al.) was heard

calling, and one was also sighted at Rigaud 30 May (G. Huot). Two Ruffs were found, with a male at Saint-Blaise 22–27 Apr (P. Savoie) and a female at Rimouski 22–24 Apr (G. Gendron et al.). A Laughing Gull was at La Malbaie 24 May (A. Côté et al.), and a Franklin's Gull at Châteauguay 28 May (M. Bertrand et al.). Twenty-two Black-headed Gulls were counted 4 May at La Martinique, *Magdalen Is.*, a breeding site used in the last 20 years. A Sabine's Gull at Saint-Irénée 22 May (JL) provided one of few spring records. A Com. Murre at Rivière-Ouelle 28 May (CA, CG) was an unusual sighting.

OWLS THROUGH SWALLOWS

A road-killed Long-eared Owl found at Longue Pointe de Mingan in mid-May provided an unusual record for the lower North Shore (S. Kavanagh, S. Marchand et al.). As part of a program to follow up the breeding of the Boreal Owl, 73 nesting boxes were set up along the lower North Shore. Four of these boxes were occupied by Boreal Owls which had fledged 21 young by the end of May, while three were occupied by N. Saw-whet Owls, confirming its range extension reported last year (CB, YR).

Although the date is not unprecedented for the Region, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Matapedia 30 Apr was extremely early for the Gaspé Pen. (C. Pitre, A. Firth, G. Gallant). Single Red-bellied Woodpeckers were present at Saint-Pierre-Baptiste for the first 3 weeks of March (*vide* D. McCutcheon) and at Saint-Armand 23–27 Apr (D. Daigneault, G. François); the latter had been wintering locally.

A W. Kingbird at Breckenridge 22 May represented one of few spring records (J. Dubois et al.). Even more extraordinary was the persuasive sighting of an imm. **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** at Bic 29 May, the first ever for spring (C. Gauthier, L. Masson). Now probably extirpated from the Region as a nesting species, a single Loggerhead Shrike visited Cap Tourmente 16 Apr (R. Lepage). Possibly heralding a breeding range extension, two Warbling Vireos spent the last 2 weeks of May at Hébertville (C. Cormier, GS); another one at Les Escoumins 19 May provided only the 2nd record for the North Shore (CA, CG). Especially intriguing was the appearance of a **Black-billed Magpie** at Saint-Liboire 7–23 May (H. Deschênes, A. Deschênes, F. Bourret). Northern Rough-winged Swallows seem to strengthen their presence e. of Québec City as evidenced by the discovery of a nest at Berthier-sur-mer (JL), while a bird wandered to Port-au-Saumon 1 May (GL).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

A Townsend's Solitaire, the 6th for the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area, brightened Roberval 16 Apr (L. Chiricota). Representing the 4th record for the Region, a **Fieldfare** was detected in a flock of migrating Am. Robins at Les Escoumins 20 Apr (CA, CG); according to the observers, its unmarked blue-gray head and very pale rump suggested a male. As proposed by P. Green (1998, *Birding* 30:212-219), this bird was presumably returning to its breeding ground in Greenland or n. Europe after wintering in N. America. A migrant Gray Catbird at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 9 Apr was only 2 days short of a record arrival date (P. Beaulé), but how to consider an individual present at a Mont-Laurier feeder 15 Mar (A. Ouellette, M. Ouellette, *vide* R. LeBrun). Was it a very early migrant or a bird wintering undetected locally? A huge influx of Bohemian Waxwings included several flocks of 5000–10,000 birds in the Québec City area in mid-March (*vide* JL), 10,800 at Chicoutimi 18 Mar (M. Savard), and 10,000 at Rimouski 25 Apr (J. Larivée, D. Gagné).

Now almost annual, single Blue-winged Warblers appeared at Frelighsburg 27 May (JG. Papineau, H. Jetten) and at Cap Tourmente 30 May (FD, RD, GL). A Golden-winged Warbler at Haldimand 27 May provided the first record for the Gaspé Pen. (M. Morency), and a Worm-eating Warbler at Westmount 18 May was the 13th for the Montreal area (P. Tarassov et al.).

An ad. male W. Tanager photographed at Franquelin 22–27 May was the 14th for the Region (D. Rousseau, N. Perreault, *vide* G. Cyr). Clay-colored Sparrows showed up in 8 different localities 22–30 May. Northern Cardinals are maintaining their presence in the Québec City area as evidenced by the report of numerous pairs (*vide* JL). One was found at Saint-Eusèbe in the lower St. Lawrence 22 Apr (M. Beaulieu). Unreported in the Montreal area since 1982, a W. Meadowlark at Hudson 1 May onwards represented a notable event (W. Grubert et al.). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were encountered at Montreal 15–28 Apr (G. Larivée) and at Berthierville 3 May. The four Orchard Orioles represented an exceptional total and included an adult at Philipsburg 15 May (C. Chalks, E. Mitchell), a first year male at L'Acadie 15 May (M. Arnaudin) and two first-year males at Cap Tourmente 29 May, with one remaining to 30 May (D. Campeau, GL). The House Finch continued to infiltrate e. Québec as shown by 4 reports for the lower St. Lawrence, two for the Gaspé Pen., and one for the North Shore. An

Eur. Goldfinch at Rivière Saint-Jean 15 May was apparently a first for the lower North Shore (CB).

NON-NATIVE

Two Chinese Geese were at Yamachiche Pt. 14 Apr (M. Bisson). A N. Bobwhite was reported from Hemmingford 31 May (D. Smith), although listing the species in this category is somewhat debatable. A pair of Ringed Turtle-Doves raised 2 broods during the season in Le Gardeur, near Montreal, where the species has been reported in the last 3–4 years (*vide* PB).

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new england region

SIMON PERKINS

Three meteorological phenomena were worthy of note this spring. The first two had little discernible effect on birds, but the third did. (1) The backlash immediately following the passage of several storms in early March brought the most severe conditions of the entire winter—a winter ranked as one of the mildest on record. (2) Precipitation levels in April were the lowest on record (there was no snowfall whatsoever in Boston), and the season as a whole was warm and dry. (3) For the second consecutive year, north and/or northeasterly winds prevailed nearly every day throughout late April and the first half of May. As with last year, the unfavorable wind pattern that persisted during what should have been the peak period of migration made for a relatively slow spring. Waves were few and far between.

Highlights included two Pink-footed Geese, a possibly wild Trumpeter Swan, a Garganey, two Wilson's Plovers, two kite species, three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in Massachusetts, all on the same day, and a Lark Bunting. For the first time in several years no Little Egrets were reported.

Abbreviations: H.B.S.P. (*Hammonasset Beach S.P.*, Madison, CT); Nantucket (*Nantucket I.*, MA); M.A.R.C. (*Massachusetts Avian Records Committee*); MV (*Martha's Vineyard, Dukes*



Co., MA); Monomoy (*Monomoy Island N.W.R.*, Chatham, MA); P.R.N.W.R. (*Parker River N.W.R.*, Essex Co., MA).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

The M.A.R.C. recently added Pacific Loon to the state list. Prior to this move, the Committee had listed all Pacific-types as "Arctic/Pacific." Two Pacifics reported in New England this spring were both in Massachusetts, in Provincetown 6–20 Mar (BN) and off Bass Rocks in Gloucester 14 May (RSH). A **Western Grebe** was in Manchester, MA, 12–14 May (RSH); another in