

good Maritime breeding season, leading to CBC highs of 14 in NB and 43 in NS, including 17 at Wolfville, NS, 19 Dec and four at St. John's, NF, 29 Dec. Hardy flocks of Am. Pipits were 25 at Pubnico, NS, 6 Jan and 15 at St. Pierre 9 Jan. Bohemian Waxwings invaded in unprecedented thousands, with early winter flocks of up to 5000 in St. John's and 2000 in Halifax-Dartmouth, NS. They generally outnumbered Cedar Waxwings by about 10:1.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

An Orange-crowned Warbler to 31 Jan at St. Pierre (P. Boez) provided a first winter record for the islands. A Nashville Warbler at Halifax in Dec appeared to be of the western race *ridwayi* (IAM). Yellow-throated Warblers survived to 4 Dec at St. Pierre, 16 Dec at Kentville, NS, and 22 Dec at St. John's. Prairie Warblers were at St. John, NB, 13 Dec (K. Allard) and Schooner Pond, C.B.I., 8 Jan (JUM). Black-and-white Warblers lasted until 26 Dec at St. John's (PL) and, surprisingly, 2 Jan at Montague, PEI (CBC). An Ovenbird was on the Halifax-Dartmouth CBC 19 Dec. A Wilson's Warbler was at Wolfville, NS, to 12 Dec (BLF). A record 18 Yellow-breasted Chats were found on NS CBCs, with outliers at Shippagan, NB, to 7 Dec (*vide* MDA) and 11 Jan at St. John's (JW et al.). A male **Western Tanager** was at Barrington, NS, 5–10 Dec (*vide* MUN). A **Spotted Towhee** at Cornerbrook, NF, 15–18 Dec (L. Butler et al.) provided a provincial first. An E. Towhee survived the winter at a feeder in Millertown, cen. NF (D. Burton et al.), about as far east as it could go. An imm. **Golden-crowned Sparrow** at Halifax 19 Dec+ (P. Chalmers et al.) was about the fifth for NS.

A strong fall flight from the west allowed the N. Cardinal to consolidate its expanding permanent range in the Region, now extending n. and e. to Victoria and Kings counties in NB and e. to the H.R.M. in NS. Single E. Meadowlarks were at Kingsport, NS, and Castalia Marsh, G.M.I., both 22 Feb; a third was at St. John's to the end of Jan. Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Murray River, PEI, 15 Feb (ERM), Donkin, CBI, in Dec (CAM), and a pair at Moncton, NB, 18 Dec+. Baltimore Orioles were in good supply at feeders throughout Nova Scotia into early winter, but despite TLC, most eventually died. Seven at a feeder in Howie Centre, C.B.I., in early Dec is indicative. A **Bullock's Oriole** at St. Peters, PEI, 6–10 Dec (ERM, RCO) was photographed for a first provincial record. Pine Grosbeaks

were reasonably common in the Region, where many took to sunflower at feeders, perhaps because of the dearth of Mountain Ash berries caused by last summer's drought. Red Crossbills were in short supply, but many remarked on their presence at feeders, such as 18 at Salisbury, NB, 9 Dec (C. Colpitts). White-winged Crossbill numbers were down 90% on regional CBCs after having depleting the enormous spruce cone crop of 1998–1999. Some came to feeders. Common Redpolls smothered the Region: up from 33 on NS CBCs last winter to 11,000+ this winter and 13,287 on NB CBCs. Judging from reports, at least 1:100 was a Hoary Redpoll in NB, 1:500 in Nova Scotia, and as high as 1:20 in w. Labrador. For the most part, Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches bailed out ahead of the engulfing redpoll horde, but numbers were up on the A.V.P., where rare a decade ago.

EXOTICS

A Long-tailed Rosefinch (*Uragus sibiricus*) discovered at a St. George, NB, feeder 2 Jan remained throughout the period. It is a southern Siberian species commonly kept as a cagebird, especially in Europe.

Observers (sub-regional editors in boldface):

Todd Boland, Calvin Brennan, **David Christie**, Ray Cooke, Brian Dalzell, **Marcel David**, Cheryl Davis, **Fred Dobson**, **Roger Etcheberry**, Bernard Forsyth, **Sylvia Fullerton**, Carl Haycock, **Andrew Horn**, **Richard Knapton**, **Randy Lauff**, Paul Linegar, Zoe Lucas, **Bruce Mactavish** (BMT), Eric Marcum, **Blake Maybank** (BMy), **Dan McAskill** (DJM), **Ian McLaren**, **David McCorquodale**, Kenneth McKenna, **Angus McLean**, Hugh Metcalfe (JUM), **Eric Mills**, Cathy Murrant, Murray Newall, Johnny Nickerson, Fran Spalding, Edgar Spalding, Richard Stern, John Wells.



québec

YVES AUBRY

Canadian Wildlife Service,
P.O. Box 10100, Sainte-Foy, PQ G1V 4H5
(yves.aubry@ec.gc.ca)

PIERRE BANNON

1517 Leprohon, Montreal, PQ H4E 1P1
(pbannon@total.net)

NORMAND DAVID

11931 Lavigne, Montreal, PQ H4J 1X9
(ndavid@netrover.com)

It was a short winter, with most of the Region experiencing very mild conditions until about mid-January, while the first signs of spring were already obvious as early as the third week of February. As expected in such circumstances, many species lingered at record-late dates and there were unusual concentrations of waterfowl well into December and even into January.

In reference to rarities, they had their origins from the four cardinal points. Three Varied Thrushes, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, and a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch came from the West, one or two Fieldfares from the East, as well as a Painted Bunting and a Purple Gallinule from the South. From the north, a major invasion of Willow Ptarmigans was experienced on the Lower



North Shore of the St. Lawrence and in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean regions.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Although not unprecedented in the Region, it is worthy of mention that our only wintering Com. Loons were far from the southwest: two overwintered in Alma (S. Boivin), while four were still in Les Escoumins 9 Jan, with one remaining there until at least 26 Feb (CA, CG). A Pied-billed Grebe in Contrecoeur 21 Feb onward was probably an early migrant (Y. Tardif). Several records of Great Blue Heron also originated away from the sw., as shown by singles in Jonquière 1 Jan (C. Simard et al., J. Tanguay), Biencourt 8 Jan (C. Tardif, *vide* RP), Chandler 10 Jan (L.P. Luce), and Matapédia 2 Feb (C. Pitre). In the south-

west, one overwintered in Bécancour in the warm waters thrown out from a thermal power station (m.ob.), while one was noted briefly in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 4 Feb (M Cournoyer). One of the most unexpected events of the season was a Green Heron found on the Cowansville CBC 18 Dec, the latest ever in the Region by more than three weeks.

For the second consecutive winter, Tundra Swans appeared in Feb; this time a flock of five adults visited Sainte-Barbe 27 Feb onward (AH, m.ob.). Late Greater White-fronted Geese included one in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu until 10 Dec (m ob) and one killed in Cacouna 20 Dec (P Pettigrew, *fide* S. Rhéaume). Snow Geese lingered much later than usual, with 10,000 still in Victoriaville 16 Dec (CR) and 500 in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle 3 Jan (LS). Wintering birds included one in Auclair, *Lower St. Lawrence*, throughout the winter (M Beaulieu), six in Victoriaville for part of the winter (JD), seven in Sainte-Foy 22 Feb (P Darisse), and one in Lejeune, *Lower St. Lawrence*, 22 Feb (R. Pelletier). In the last two cases, the possibility of early migrants cannot be ruled out. Because the Ross's Goose is becoming a regular component of our avifauna, new record-late dates are set almost annually; this year, a new Regional record-late date was established 16 Dec in Victoriaville (CR). Good numbers of Canada Geese were present in the southwest until mid-Jan, but most disappeared afterwards. A small group remained in Chandler throughout the winter (M. Larivée, m.ob.). An Am. Wigeon encountered in Chandler 9–13 Jan represented the latest by almost two months for the Gaspé Peninsula (MC et al.). The discovery of a flock of 17 Greater Scaup wintering in Baie-Sainte-Catherine was a notable event (J F Rousseau). There was an interesting collection of hybrid ducks in Feb in Côte-Sainte-Catherine: a N. Pintail × Mallard for most of the month (E. Samson, A. Lacasse, PB), a Hooded Merganser × Com. Goldeneye on the 6th (PB), and a Barrow's × Com Goldeneye on the 12th (PB), not to mention Mallard × Am. Black Ducks.

HAWKS THROUGH ALCIDS

Single Turkey Vultures found in Sainte-Flavie 28 Dec (G. Michaud) and Laval 20 Jan (C. Aubut) were worthy of mention. An Osprey in Bassin, *Iles de la Madeleine*, 2 Jan set a new late date for the Region (DGG, CAG). An imm Golden Eagle in Zec Onatchiway, n. of Chicoutimi, 7 Jan, was a remarkable find (S. Denault et al.). Bald Eagles were widely reported, especially in the s. part of the

Region. A N. Harrier in Chandler 25 Jan was noteworthy (MC). Gyrfalcons numbered 14, a good Regional total.

Willow Ptarmigans staged a major invasion ne. of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint Jean area and on the lower North Shore. A few birds reached urban areas of the Saguenay region in Feb (*fide* GS). Curiously, no birds were reported for the Abitibi region. Helped by a series of mild winters, Wild Turkeys are now thriving in extreme s. Quebec; a count of 150 in two flocks was remarkable in Hemmingford 29 Jan (JMB, DD).

An ad. Purple Gallinule freshly killed (probably by a dog) was discovered in Pointe-au-Père 9 Dec (S. Tremblay, *fide* J. Larivée), setting a new record-late date for the Region. Depicting our short winter, two Killdeer were still in Boischatel 19 Dec (P. Otis, JL), while one was already returning in Les Escoumins 27 Feb (L. Messely et al.). Record-late shorebirds for the Region included a Ruddy Turnstone in Gros-Cap 10 Dec (JV) and three Sanderlings in Grande-Entrée 28 Dec (V. Gauthier), both in *Iles de la Madeleine*. Wintering Purple Sandpipers are now a regular feature in Baie des Chaleurs and on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence estuary, where a notable flock of 450 was encountered in Baie-Sainte-Catherine 9 Jan (R. Bisson et al.). Wintering Com. Snipe included one in La Pocatière 22 Jan (B. Desmeules) and one in Sainte-Félicité, *Lower St. Lawrence*, 22 Feb (D. Desjardins).

Late jaegers included single imm. Pomarines in Lévis 2 Dec (JL) and Les Escoumins 3 Dec (CA), and single Parasitics in Saint-Godefroi 3 Dec (EA) and Les Escoumins 4 Dec (CG, CA). A Regional record-late ad. Little Gull lingered in Pasbébiac until 17 Dec (EA). Mew Gulls continued to infiltrate the Region, with two ad. of one of the European subspecies in Les Escoumins 3 Dec (CA, CG), while two first-winter birds visited Dorval 23 Dec (BB). An imm. Ivory Gull in Paspébiac 17 Dec represented one of very few records in the northeast this winter (EA). An ad. Nelson's Gull (Herring × Glaucous Gull hybrid) 31 Jan and a third-winter bird 2 Feb were both discovered in Les Escoumins (CA, CG). A Black-legged Kittiwake in Les Escoumins 20 Jan represented the latest ever for the Region (CG, CA). Two unidentified terns turned up in Gros-Cap, *Iles de la Madeleine*, 10 Dec, an extraordinarily late date for any tern (JV). A Com. Murre in Les Escoumins 28 Dec was also late (CA). Seldom reported in midwinter in *Iles de la Madeleine*, single Thick-billed Murres appeared in Ile de l'Est

4 Feb (JV, DGG) and Havre-aux-Basques 26 Dec (DGG, CAG).

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Snowy Owls made a poor showing in s. Québec this season. The only reports of Great Gray Owl were singles in Kettle I., *Gatineau*, 20 Dec (P. Renaud), Lac-Saint Charles 21 Jan (JMG), Ile Bizard 29 Jan–5 Feb (C. Lamoureux, m. ob.), l'Anse-à l'Orme 3 Feb. (M. McIntosh, BB) and La Présentation, *Drummondville*, 12 Feb onward (*fide* F. Bourret). The male Rufous Hummingbird reported last season in Eastman, *Estrie*, was last seen 18 Dec. (L. and H. Schmitz).

Single N. Flickers lingered well into the season at a feeder in Jonquière 6–14 Jan (G. Simard), in Cap-Rouge, 22 Dec–17 Jan (S. Blais, M. Giroux), in Bassin, *Iles de la Madeleine*, at the very late date of 13 Feb (JV), and also in Percé, Saint Godefroi and Gaspé, Dec–Feb, (*fide* PP). A Tree Swallow in Grande-Ile, *Valleyfield*, 2 Dec set a new Regional record-late date (G. François, DD). Tufted Titmice appeared in record numbers on many CBCs in s. Québec, and a scouting bird even reached Matapédia, Gaspé Peninsula, 7 Jan onward (P. Beupré, photo). A Winter Wren was spotted in Sainte-Luce 6 Jan (G. Gendron). Carolina Wrens were well in evidence, with up to three in Philipsburg (JGP, GR) and singles in Saint-Luc (P. Beulé), *Valleyfield* (*fide* AH), Senneville (R. Carswell), Baie-d'Urfée (J. Gregson), Longueuil, Cowansville (BH), Neuville (MD et al), and Pont-Rouge (m. ob.). In addition, it was found that an ad. had been seen with a juv. last summer in Boisbriand, near Montréal, providing a 5th nesting record for the Region (V. Létourneau).

Several groups of E. Bluebirds attempted to winter. Two were still in Ile Saint Bernard, *Châteauguay*, 12 Jan. (J. Gauthier, R. Lavoie, DD et al.), four in Philipsburg 9 Jan (GR, JGP), while five were discovered in Hemmingford 3 Jan (M. Poulin et al.). One survived to 5 Feb in Hemmingford for a new Regional record-late date. A male Varied Thrush was present in Sainte-Gertrude, near Bécancour, 18 Dec–18 March (R. Barbeau, m. ob.), while another one showed up in Boischatel 2–16 Dec (JMG); a third was in Beaudry, *Abitibi*, 21 Nov–2 Jan (D. Nadeau, E. van de Walle). The highlight of the season was the **Fieldfare**: a bird brightened l'Ascension-de Patapédia, *Gaspé*, 1727 Dec, a 5th Regional record (C. Francoeur et al., videotaped), while a male (same bird?) showed up at a

feeder in Grande-Cascapédia, Gaspé, 14 Jan–13 Feb (Mr. & Mrs. A. Campbell, m.ob., ph.). While not as abundant as last winter in e. Québec, Bohemian Waxwings made a good showing in the south, while on the other hand, the Cedar Waxwing was much less common than last winter. Northern Shrikes were well in evidence.

A Yellow-rumped Warbler spent Jan–10 Feb in the Montréal Botanical Gardens (m.ob.). A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (m.ob.). A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in Neuville 28 Dec (MD, M. Courteau) was the second for the Region and also the latest, while a Yellow-throated Warbler appeared briefly in Montmagny 18–19 Dec (JL, M. Dion, N. Tanguay, C. Deschênes). Late Palm Warblers included singles in Noyan 2 Dec (LS) and Saint-Sulpice 6–10 Dec (J. Beauchamp), the latter a new Regional record-late date.

A late male Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Sainte-Sabine, *Richelieu*, lingered at a feeder from late Dec through at least 14 Jan (Mrs. Raymond, m. ob.). A female or imm. male **Painted Bunting** brightened a feeder at Sainte-Hélène-de-Bagot 11–26 Dec, furnishing the 7th record for the Region (E. Lapointe, m.ob.). An imm. male Dickcissel made frequent visits to a feeder in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 18 Dec–10 Feb (L. L'Écuyer, m.ob.), the latter a new Regional record-late date. A Field Sparrow overwintered successfully at a feeder in LaSarre, *Abitibi*, (L. Saulnier, *vide* S. Châteauevert, photo), while a White-crowned Sparrow attempted to winter in Chicoutimi-Nord Dec–20 Feb (M. Brochu, L. Dufour). An E. Meadowlark was present in Dundee 28–29 Jan (P. Éthier, JMB, DD), while a bird presumably of this species overwintered in Rivière-au-Tonnerre, *Lower North Shore* (L. Smith, m.ob.). An ad. **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**, photographed in Saint-François-du-Lac 4 Dec, provided only the second record for the Region (D. Jauvin). Red Crossbills were present in above-average numbers all over the southern part of the province, while White-winged Crossbills, Purple Finches, Am. Goldfinches, and Pine Siskins were either present in low numbers or generally absent from the Region. Many Hoary Redpolls were spotted among the numerous flocks of Com. Redpolls throughout the Region.

EXOTICS

Two Ringed Teals appeared in Saint-Hyacinthe 5 Dec (N. Roy), while a flock of 10 Mandarin Ducks spent Jan along the Richelieu R., near Chambly (L. Laperle et al.). A Eurasian Goldfinch spent Dec in the Montréal Botanical Gardens (m.ob.).

Corrigendum

In reference to the Cacouna's Cinnamon Teals in June 1999 (*N. Am. Birds* 53:361), it should be noted that both male and female were seen as early as 10 Jun (J. Bouchard, L. Dallaire). The report of the breeding of a pair of Eur. Goldfinches in the Montréal Botanical Gardens in summer 1999 should be omitted, as definitive evidences was lacking (*N. Am. Birds* 53:362).

Subregional editors (boldface) and observers: E. Arsenault, **C. Auchu** (North Shore), **P. Bannon**

(Montréal), B. Barnhurst, JM. Béliveau, **C. Buidin** (Lower North Shore), M. Castilloux, D. Daigneault, M. Darveau, **J. Ducharme** (Bois-Francis), CA. Gaudet, **D.G. Gaudet** (Îles de la Madeleine), C. Girard, JM. Giroux, **B. Hamel** (Estrie), A. Hogue, **J. Lachance** (Québec City), **J.L. Martel** (Lower St. Lawrence), **J.P. Morin** (Sherbrooke), JG. Papineau, R. Pelletier, **P. Poulin** (Gaspésie), G. Rennie, C. Roy, **G. Savard** (Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean), L. Simard, **D. Toussaint** (Outaouais), J. Villeneuve.



new england

Pam Hunt

66 Park St., #2
Nottingham, New Hampshire 03276

To repeat what seems to be becoming a mantra of sorts, the past winter was warmer than usual. December 1999 was the eleventh consecutive winter month with temperatures above the 30-year mean, although it was not as warm as December 1998. Temperatures averaged four degrees above average, with Maine beating the mean by almost six degrees. The warmth continued into early January, when the mercury reached into the 70s in southern New England, resulting in temperatures eight-to-ten degrees above normal. The picture shifted dramatically in mid-month, however, when in a matter of days the winter returned with a vengeance. Thermometers plunged to eight-to-ten degrees below normal, and the first measurable snowfall fell in the central portions of the region. The cold snap and precipitation persisted into mid-February, at which point things warmed and dried in what has become a fairly reliable late winter thaw over most of New England. On the whole, the winter was in the top fifth in terms of temperature, and roughly average in precipitation. There were few significant coastal storms, and the only other noteworthy weather event of the season was a very strong cold front on 22–23 January. As expected, birds responded positively to the unseasonable climate, especially in the first half of the winter. Lingering warblers were not as common as in 1998–1999, but waterfowl continued to remain north and inland at a time of year when such sightings were almost unheard of only a decade ago.



As might be expected after last year's absence, irruptive species made a good showing throughout the region. Dominating the flight were Northern Shrikes, Bohemian Waxwings, Pine Grosbeaks, and redpolls, including several Hoarics. The usual smattering of western passerine vagrants included Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, and Audubon's Warbler. More unexpected were Yellow Rails on Nantucket, possible Northern Lapwing in Maine and New Hampshire, Brambling in Connecticut, and perhaps most bizarre of all, an immature Brown Pelican that wandered up the Connecticut River as far as Westfield, Massachusetts, in early January.

Abbreviations: D.W.W.S. (*Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary, Marshfield, Plymouth, MA*), M.A.R.C. (*Massachusetts Avian Records Committee*), M.V. (*Martha's Vineyard, MA*), Nantucket (*Nantucket I., MA*), Ogunquit (*Ogunquit, York, ME*), Provincetown (*Provincetown, Barnstable, MA*), Rockport (*Rockport, Essex, MA*).