

# Québec

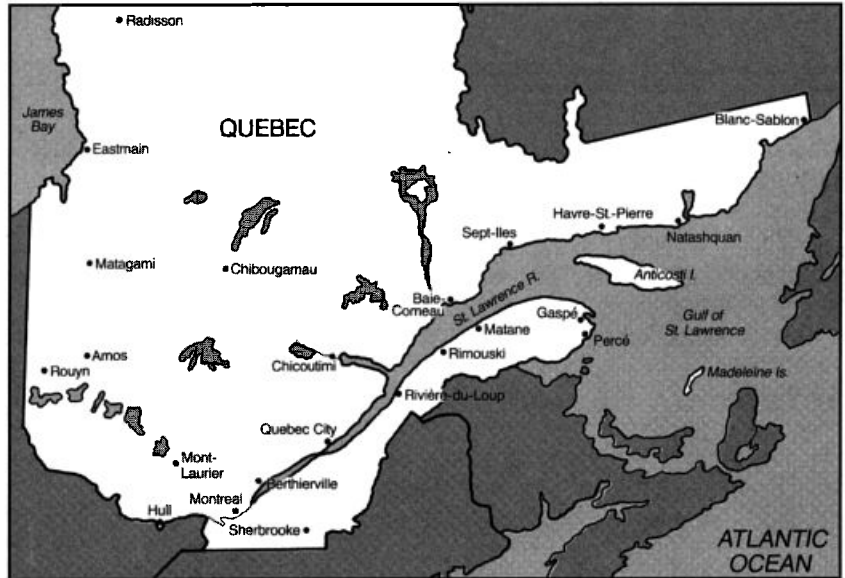
S.P.M., 20–22 Sep (RE). A Western Meadowlark at Inkerman, NB, 5–10 Oct was the 6th for the province (RR et al.). Iron-clad records of **Bullock's Oriole** are scarce in the Region; happily, an imm. male in Halifax, NS, 30 Nov+ was such a record (IM et al.). White-winged Crossbills were locally abundant in Nova Scotia in early autumn, but declined in Oct. Purple Finches were widespread in Nova Scotia; finches were otherwise generally low in numbers across the Region.

## Addendum

An imm. male **Bronzed Cowbird** picked up freshly dead in Dartmouth, NS, 8 Jul (specimen preserved; full details to appear elsewhere) represented the first substantiated record for Canada and adds some plausibility to 2 other sight records from Nova Scotia (S. Harvey, IM).

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**F**ew rarities of note embellished the fall season. Shorebirds and gulls, in particular, were meager in number and diversity. Counts of gulls were astonishingly low in the Montréal region. Only a few hundred large gulls were tallied at the Beauharnois dam, a site visited by at least 10,000 of these birds in November throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. Likewise, numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls on the Richelieu River were remarkably low. On the other hand, the Snow Goose and its diminutive, Ross's Goose, continued to flourish and were turning

up in new localities. A nice collection of locally rare warblers was noticed late in the season. By mid-October, most northern owls were showing some signs of a massive southern movement. This was particularly noteworthy for the Northern Hawk Owl throughout November. Great Gray and Boreal Owls also appeared south of their summer range later in the period. A better account should be available in the Winter Report for the last two species. The weather was generally cool and dry, with a slight increase in precipitation in November.

## Loons Through Cranes

Although Pacific Loons are known to nest regularly in coastal regions of Hudson Bay, most probably migrate west and few fully documented records are known for the s. part of the Region. This fall, the only well-described individual was recorded at Lévis 31 Oct (GL). Rare in the St. Lawrence estuary, single Sooty Shearwaters were spotted from the Trois-Pistoles-Les Escoumins ferry 26 Aug (G Gendron et al.) and from the Rimouski-Forestville ferry 7 Sep (R. Saint-Laurent et al.) An American White Pelican graced Île Saint-Ours, at Contrecoeur, 26 Sep (A. Boucher, *vide* A. Desrosiers). An exceptional count of 70 Great Egrets was made in late Aug at Saint-Timothée, where the species has been increasing dramatically since 1998 (ES, AL, m.ob.) There were no unusual heron and egret



reports, except for single Cattle Egrets at LaSalle 8 Aug (J. C. Sorel) and at Beauharnois 11 Aug (JM. Béliveau).

Numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese were roughly normal, with a total of 10 individuals. In the past two decades, the Greater Snow Goose has been steadily exploring new territories. This fall, incredible numbers invaded *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean*, a region not regularly visited by this taxon thus far. A staggering one-day count of 240,000 was made in late Oct (*fide* GS). High numbers of Ross's Geese were also associated with the Snow Geese. From 17 Oct to 13 Nov, 13 Ross's turned up in the above-mentioned region, where only one had been reported previously. Interestingly, 5, including a blue-morph, were immature (*fide* GS). In the south a family group comprising one ad. and 3 imm. was discovered at Victoriaville 11 Oct (MGr). Although Ross's Geese have been increasing for the last two decades in the Region, few immatures were reported until recently. Finally, 3 blue-morph adults visited the Québec City region 8 Oct–12 Nov (*fide* JLaC). A small Canada Goose exhibiting dark sides and breast at Victoriaville 19 Oct appeared to be of the race *minima* (CR). While the Mute Swan is definitely established in most of the neighboring regions, it is not yet established in the province, where 4 birds were reported, some or perhaps all locally escaped. A swan showing more yellow than black on the bill in Yamaska Park, Granby, 27 Aug was identified as a **Whooper Swan**, the 2nd for this locality

in a little more than a year (R. Morin, RP. Pépin, S. Ouellet).

Our two regularly monitored hawkwatches, Montréal and Tadoussac, produced above-average numbers (B. Barnhurst, M. McIntosh, CA, CG), while a promising hawkwatch at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré was manned for the first time (G. Lemelin). Numbers of Northern Goshawks were probably peaking this year, evidenced by excellent counts at Tadoussac (CA, CG) and in the *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean* region (*fide* GS). Unusual so early in the season were the persuasive sightings of single dark Gyrfalcons at Saint-Timothée 20 Aug (ES, AL) and at Isle-Verte 23 Aug (JY. Frémont, A. Larousse, Y. Trévoux, *fide* NDa). A sign of the times, 90 Peregrine Falcons were tallied at Tadoussac (CA, CG).

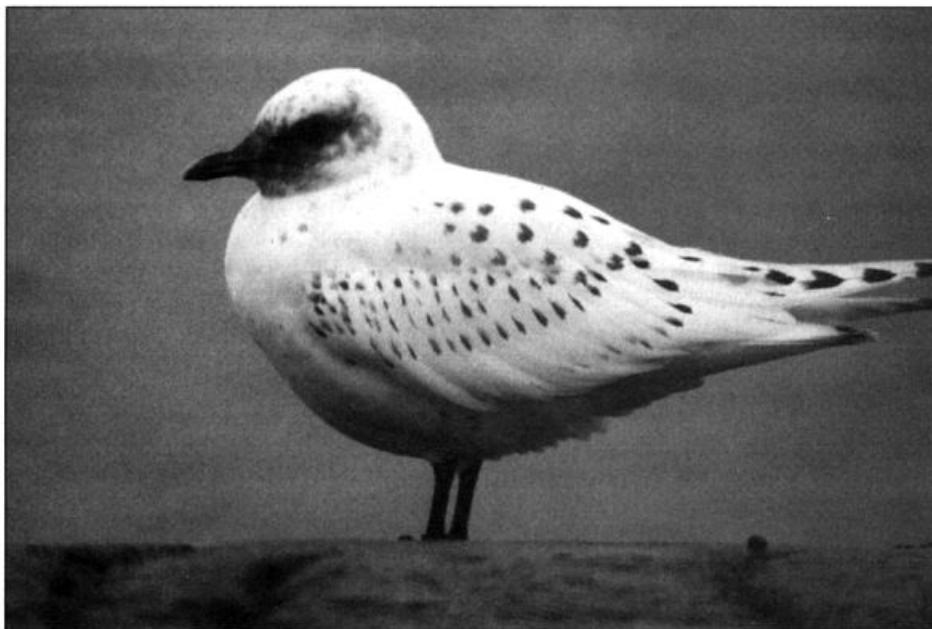
Wild Turkeys appeared for the first time in *Pontiac*, where 30 were at Onslow Corners 31 Oct (J. Van Velthuisen, *fide* MGo); more were reported from Quyon (*fide* MGo). These birds were believed to have originated from previous releases at Arnprior, ON (*fide* D. Saint-Hilaire). Continuing recent trends of excellent fall numbers, Sandhill Cranes reached a high of 1000 birds in *Abitibi* in late Sep (*fide* SG). A flock of 11 strayed to Saint-Luc-de-Vincennes, e. of Shawinigan, 7 Oct (B. Grégoire, E. Hainz, *fide* M. Robert). In *Témiscamingue*, 16 at Fugèreville 7 Nov were record late (*fide* JF) and 4 at Duhamel-Ouest 11 Nov were even later (JF). Incredibly, a **Common Crane** reappeared at Barraute, *Abitibi*, in one of the same fields where it resided in fall 1999. Again this bird

**SA** The Region experienced its most spectacular invasion of Northern Hawk Owls ever recorded. From mid-Oct to the end of Nov, almost 100 birds were reported (*fide* SB), and it is expected that approximately 200 will have been recorded by the end of the winter. Although it is possible that some were counted more than once as they moved from one locality to another, this possibility appears remote in a region as large as Québec. On the other hand, birders in Québec generally concentrate their efforts along the valleys of the St. Lawrence, Outaouais, and Saguenay Rivers during the winter months, an area representing < 20% of the whole territory of the southern half of the province. Consequently, the real extent of the invasion was certainly underestimated, so it is possible that over 500 birds were involved. Moreover, data from the Québec Birds Populations Study show a significant increase in numbers involved in winter invasions over the past two decades, even if one accounts for the increase in observer effort. Two invasions in the 1980s were relatively minor, comprising fewer than 40 birds. The past two invasions, in 1991–1992 and 1996–1997, totaled 123 and 102 birds, respectively, Oct–Apr (*fide* JLaR). Whether these statistics reflect a genuine increase in the population remains to be determined.

was part of a family group comprising an ad Sandhill and two putative juvenile hybrids. The group arrived 30 Sep, a day earlier than last year, and left 7 Oct, the same date as last year (G. Galarneau, SG, m.ob.).

### Shorebirds Through Owls

A female American Avocet delighted many at Métabetchouan, *Lac Saint-Jean*, 6–16 Sep (DG, Mi.T). Although few Western Sandpipers have been thoroughly described and photographed in the Region, a molting juvenile at Saint-Blaise 5–14 Nov, the latter record late, was corroborated by an impeccable description and a photograph (M. Bertrand, m.ob., ph. CM). Other sightings included 2 unaged birds at Pointe-au-Père 5 Aug (R. Fortin), one also unaged at Île aux Basques 29 Sep (RL, G Breton), and a juv. at Venise-en-Québec 19 Sep (P. Savoie). A Least Sandpiper was record late at Saint-Blaise 5–17 Nov (D. Daigneault, m.ob.). Purple Sandpipers made a strong showing in sw. Québec, where 9 were at Victoriaville 5 Nov (AD) and 12 at Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours 11 Nov (GZ, PB,



This first-winter Ivory Gull at Les Escomins 21 November 2000 provided one of the earliest record ever for Québec. Photograph by Claude Auchu.

m ob). Ruff sightings included singles at Baie-du-Febvre 8 Aug (AD), Sainte-Martine 13 Sep (P Hilton), and Île aux Grues 21–28 Oct (P. Lane, J. Labrecque). Almost unreported just a few years ago, the *hendersoni* race of the Short-billed Dowitcher is now reported more frequently, with birds appearing in five different localities of s. Québec in early Aug (*fide* PB). Now a regular fall migrant in the Montréal and Québec City regions, the Long-billed Dowitcher is also beginning to appear to the north and east. In *Gaspésie*, one at Hope and 3 at Saint-Siméon 8 Aug were the first reported there (LS, M. Ouellet), while one at Saint-Méthode 23–24 Sep was only the 2nd for the *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean* region (DG, Mi.T et al.) The only inland Red Phalarope was at Aylmer 4 Nov (B. Dilabio).

Particularly interesting was a Long-tailed Jaeger at Moisie 9 Sep (B. Duchesne, JF. Laporte). Well-described Thayer's Gulls included a juv. at Sainte-Catherine 29–30 Oct (PB, m.ob.) and a third-year bird at Pointe-au-Père 25 Nov (JLar, D. Gagné). A concentration of 5 Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Victoriaville 28 Sep was noteworthy (MGr). A Regional total of 10 Sabine's Gulls was below normal. An imm. Ivory Gull at Les Escoumins 21 Nov was one of the earliest ever found in the Region (ph CA, CG). A first-winter Forster's Tern, providing a first for the *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean* region, was a prize find for birders at Métabetchouan 3 Oct (S. Boivin et al.). Dovekies were well in evidence in Nov in the St. Lawrence estuary (*fide* CA, *fide* JLM), *Gaspésie* (*fide* PP), and *Îles de la Madeleine* (*fide* DGG). A Thick-billed Murre at Chandler 18 Nov provided a rare occurrence (PP, G. Roy). Two Black Guillemots at Saint-Pierre-les-Becquets 21 Oct were well w. of their range (R. Barbeau); there have been fewer than a handful of records w. of Québec City. Atlantic Puffins also strayed w. along the St. Lawrence R., where singles were observed from the Trois-Pistoles ferry 10 Sep (CA, CG) and at Sainte-Pétronille 29 Oct (C. Nadeau, G. Lord). The Region's 9th and 10th **White-winged Doves** were at Havre-aux-Maisons, *Îles de la Madeleine*, 26–27 Aug (C. Poirier, B. Vigneault) and Rivière-Madeleine, *Gaspésie*, 1–7 Sep (R. & G. Blanchette).

Following Northern Hawk Owls by about a month, Great Gray Owls started to appear s. of their breeding range in Nov, and only about 15 had been recorded by the end of the period (*fide* SB). The number of Boreal Owls banded at Tadoussac reached 113 by the end of the banding program 27 Oct (NDu, Y. Rochepault), but few reached the upper St. Lawrence valley before winter's arrival (*fide* PB).

### Hummingbirds Through Finches

A hummingbird exhibiting some rufous on the back and also on the tail, most probably a Rufous/Allen's type, was present at Saint-Boniface, near Shawinigan, early Oct–24 Nov (G. Ayotte, *fide* NDa). The Red-bellied Woodpecker at Dubuisson 30 Oct was the 2nd only for the *Abitibi* region (M. Collin); another at Trois-Rivières 25 Oct was more expected (JF. Langevin). A Western Kingbird at St-Anaclet, near Rimouski, 9–17 Oct, provided one of few recent records (S. Rhéaume, J. Marcoux). Single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers strayed to St-Jean-des-Piles, near Shawinigan, 5 Oct (E. Allard et al., ph. M. Sokolyk) and to Matane 17 Nov, the latter providing a record-late date (A. Gagnon).

Considering that fall dispersal by the Tufted Titmouse was not as spectacular as last year, 2 individuals at St-Nicolas, near Québec City, until 12 Oct were notable (P. Auger). Out-of-range Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers included singles at Rimouski 27 Aug (Y. Gauthier, S. Morand) and Grande-Rivière 26–27 Oct (D. Mercier). High numbers of thrushes were identified by their specific calls during nocturnal migration at Chicoutimi, as evidenced by 1420 Swainson's recorded 9–10 Sep and the 185 Gray-cheeked 21–22 Sep (CC).

A good variety of stray warblers drew attention; some occurred on very late dates. A Prairie Warbler stopped at St-Roch-de-l'Achigan 22 Oct (P. Franche, A. Gosselin). For the 2nd consecutive year a **Swainson's Warbler** was briefly seen at Cap Tourmente 22 Sep, providing our 2nd Regional record (RL). A *Seiurus* warbler at Rivière-Saint-Jean, *Lower North Shore*, 29 Aug was thought to be a Louisiana Waterthrush (Ndu), which would represent one of the northernmost records in North America. A male Kentucky Warbler was discovered at the Montréal Botanical Gardens 20 Oct and seen by dozens of observers 30 Nov+ (GZ, ph. CM). A Connecticut Warbler was a big surprise at Cap Tourmente 22 Oct, providing our latest record (LM). Also unexpected was the finding of an ad. male Hooded Warbler at the Montréal Botanical Garden 20 Oct, a record-late date, by the same lucky observer who had found the Kentucky less than an hour before (GZ). A Yellow-breasted Chat made a brief appearance at Trois-Pistoles 7 Aug (JP. Ouellet, M. Lafleur).

The only Yellow-headed Blackbird of the season visited a feeder at Dubuisson 2–28 Oct (F. Trudel). A male **Common Chaffinch**, a Regional first, was well-studied by an observer familiar with the species as it was eating on the ground under a feeder at St-Benoit-du-Lac 18 Nov (H. Tremblay). Although birds seen in the

northeast have sometimes been looked upon as wild (*Birding* 28:403), recent sightings in New Jersey were apparently birds of captive origin (*fide* P. Lehman). Considering the issue of recent European strays in Québec, however, it would be unwise to conclude too quickly that a bird originated from captivity.

### Addendum

A first-year male Summer Tanager was seen and photographed at Pincourt 11–12 May 2000 (S. Badanjak).

### Exotics

A Greylag Goose stopped at Cap Tourmente 7 Sep (RL), and a Bar-headed Goose found at La Baie 21 Aug was captured 19 Nov (M. Gauthier). An Emperor Goose at Saint-Lazare 5 Sep was joined by a second 27 Sep; both disappeared 7 Nov (LS, m.ob.). A Ruddy Shelduck was at Cowansville 28 Sep–10 Nov (B. Hamel). A Mandarin Duck accompanied a group of Mallards at Saint-Bruno 19 Oct (F. Werner), and a White-cheeked Pintail made a brief appearance at Sainte-Martine 16 Sep (PB, m.ob.). The Gambel's Quail reported last summer at Lennoxville was captured 15 Oct (*fide* C. Dufresne). Single Northern Bobwhites were discovered at Beauharnois 16 Sep (A. Hogue) and at Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley 28 Sep (D. Labbé, G. Lachance). A Ring-necked Pheasant at Hopetown, *Gaspésie*, 17 Oct was certainly an escaped bird (É. Arsenault). A Budgerigar was at Chicoutimi 12 Oct (CC, GS) and a Yellow-fronted Canary was at Québec City 14 Sep (LM).

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