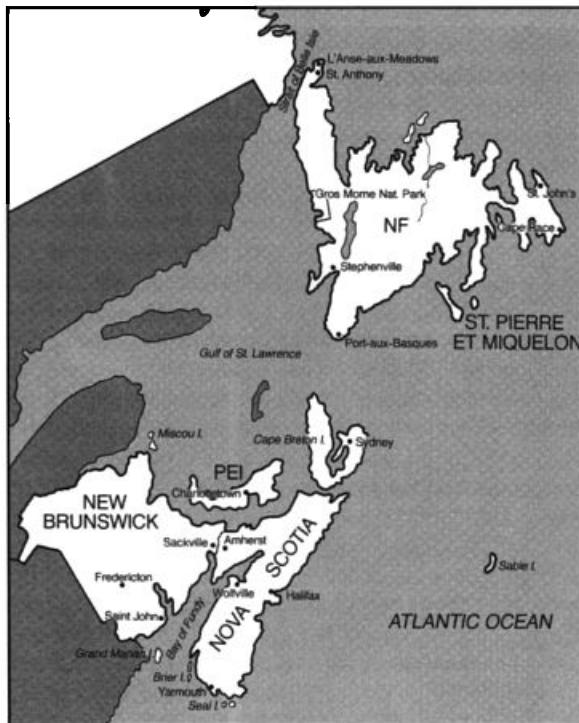


Atlantic Provinces



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Winter was a generally timid affair in the southern reaches of the expansive Atlantic region—but not so in Labrador, northern New Brunswick, and the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, where it was colder than normal. Temperatures dipped as low as -45 degrees C in western Labrador, though snowfall there by the end of the period was only about half of the long-term winter average (300 cm). When one considers that this Region stretches some 1920 km from Cape Chidley in the north to Cape Sable in the south, such extremes should not be unexpected. A good indication of this sharp climactic difference between north and south was the number of species detected in two adjoining provinces: Nova Scotia had a record 209 species for the period (BMy), while New Brunswick also raised the bar with 167 species (SIT). Extensive ice did not form in the Gulf of St. Lawrence until early January, resulting in a generally unhurried exodus of waterbirds. In keeping with recent mild winters, many species of half-hardy lingerers continue to set new endurance records, especially in Nova Scotia and the Avalon Peninsula.

Abbreviations: Avalon (Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland); C.B.I. (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia); C.S.I. (Cape Sable Island, Nova Scotia); H. R. M. (Halifax Regional Municipality); G.M.I. (Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick); SPM (St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands, France); PEI (Prince Edward Island).

GANNET THROUGH VULTURES

Northern Gannet continues to linger longer in winter, with singles at both Miquelon (RE) and Cape St. Marys, NF 15 Dec (John Wells). A good count of 225 was made off East Point, PEI 14 Dec (EVL). For the first time, they remained at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy all winter, with 45 in Seal Cove Sound, G.M.I. 29 Jan (VDG). An abundance of small herring was the attraction: a 30-km-long “cloud” of gannets estimated at 20,000+ birds was engaged in a herring feeding frenzy between C.S.I. and Seal Island, NS in the 2nd week of Dec (MN). Double-crested Cormorants continue to increase along the Atlantic coast, with 52 found on Nova Scotia C.B.C.s. Great Cormorants are thought to be rebounding in the French Islands (RE), where 200+ were found on the two local C.B.C.s.

An American Bittern at Truro, NS on 26 Jan was a good find (Jeff Ogden). A Cattle Egret was at Aylesford, *Annapolis*, NS until 11 Dec (Stephen Hawboldt). Two **Black Vultures** were found in Nova Scotia, one at L'Ardoise, C.B.I.

22 Dec (fide Billy Digout), and an imm. near Yarmouth 19-28 Jan (MN). Brier Island continues to hold the lion's share of wintering Turkey Vulture in Nova Scotia, with a peak of 20 there 17 Dec (ELM). Singles were notably far e. at Ingonish, 23 Dec (James & Kathryn Bridgeland) and New Haven 5 Jan (Angus MacLean), both C.B.I.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

A single Greater White-fronted Goose was found near Waterville, *Kings*, NS 7 Dec (BMy, Judy Tufts). Peak counts of Gadwall were 50 at South Rustico, PEI 13 Jan (Eric Marcum) and 24 at Barrington, NS 6 Feb (Paul Gould). Ten American Wigeon throughout the period at Saint John, NB made a record count for the province (v. o.). At least 7 Green-winged Teal toughed it out until 25 Jan (Laurent Jackman, et al.) at SPM. A drake **Canvasback** was at N Sydney, NS 21 Feb+ (DMq, Susann Myers), a hen at Yarmouth, NS 9-23 Feb (BMy, Richard Stern, et al.), and another hen at Daniel's Head, C.S.I. 9-17 Feb (MN). The only Redhead report was of one at Long Pond, PEI 8 Dec (David Seeler). An amazing 45 Ring-necked Ducks on the usually-frozen Hammond R., NB 30 Dec was an unprecedented winter number at one site (DSC). A “small” flock of 12 Tufted Ducks present throughout at Quidi Vidi L., St. Johns (TBO) was a new provincial high. A high count of 4254 Greater Scaup on the PEI N.P. C.B.C. 15 Dec was indicative of the open conditions there, while 5184 were on the Pictou Harbour, NS C.B.C. A pure flock of about 75 Lesser Scaup in Halifax Harbour in late Feb was notable (FLL). At least 13 King Eiders were picked out of flock of 11,000 Common Eiders at Cape Race, NF 16 Feb (BM). Two imm. male Kings at Orby Head, PEI 13 Jan (EMA et al.) provided one of very few winter reports from that province. Mid-Feb surveys for Harlequin Duck found about 200 at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick (fide VDG), and about 600 in Nova Scotia, mostly along the eastern shore e. of Halifax (Andrew Boyne, C.W.S.). There were 139 on the Cape St. Marys, NF C.B.C., up from only 20 in 1990, a welcome development! Best count of Long-tailed Ducks went to Prince Edward Island, with 3000 off East Point 14 Dec (EVL). Best count of Hooded Merganser was 75 at Lunenburg, NS 2 Jan (C.B.C.). A Ruddy Duck at Saint John, NB 27 Jan was apparently a first winter record for the province (KMI). Three were at Dartmouth, H.R.M. (BMy) 15 Dec.

The annual raptor count in e. *Kings*, NS turned up 333 Bald Eagles 9 Feb (67% ads, 33% imm.). This is a bit below numbers from the last few years (fide Jim Wolford).

Good numbers of Northern Harriers were found in early winter in s. New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia. Broad-winged Hawks are now almost annual in Nova Scotia, with six reports for the winter period. Birds were found at Tantallon, H.R.M. 2 Dec (Fulton Lavender); Wallbrook, *Kings* 15 Dec (George & Margaret Alliston); Belleville, *Yarmouth* 23 Dec (PG); Argyle, *Yarmouth* 11 Jan (MN); Glace Bay, C.B.I. 24-29 Dec (Cathy Murrant); and Dartmouth, H.R.M. 13 Jan (Terry Pacquet). The species is quite rare after early Nov in North America, and photographic documentation of any of these reports would be most desirable. An imm. Red-tailed Hawk delighted observers at St. John's 5-7 Jan, where rare (TBO). A total of 94 was found during a 2nd raptor count in e. *Kings*, NS 16 Feb. One or 2 Golden Eagles were present at Shepody Bay, *Westmoreland-Albert*, NB, the Region's only consistent wintering area (DSC et al.).

PTARMIGAN THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Willow Ptarmigan were in short supply in w. Labrador this winter, their reported numbers exceeded even by those of Rock Ptarmigan. At least 10 of the latter were present in Feb at Smokey Mt., Labrador City (Bernard Jolicoeur). Gray Partridge persists in the Region mainly on agricultural Prince Edward Island, where 56 were found on the Hillsborough C.B.C. 29 Dec. A **Sandhill Crane** that appeared at St. Anthony, NF in early Dec was still present 18 Jan, surviving on handouts from local residents (*fide* BM). Numbers of overwintering shorebirds have "increased noticeably" over the past five years in Nova Scotia, no doubt influenced by the warm weather (SF). Surprising was a lone Semipalmated Plover at Pinkneys Pt., *Yarmouth* 6-11 Jan (Paul Gould et al.); another was near the village of Miquelon 5-16 Dec (RE). A Lesser Yellowlegs was at C.S.I. until 15 Dec (C. B. C. data), and a Western Willet (subspecies *inornatus*) was present throughout the period at C.S.I. (MN, Johnny Nickerson et al.). Eight unidentified dowitchers were also at C.S.I. 20-28 Feb (MN). Some peak counts of shorebirds at C.S.I. were: 75 Black-bellied Plover, 25 Ruddy Turnstone, 95 Red Knot, 500 Sanderling, and 46 Dunlin. Two small, enigmatic sandpipers there 20 Feb (MN) were described as Semipalmated/Western. There were still 5 White-rumped Sandpipers at Long Beach, near Cape Race, NF 5 Dec (BM, Paul Linegar). One was at Grand Barachois, SPM 15 Dec (RE, Danielle Lebollocq) was well seen at close range, both on the ground and in flight. At least 4 overwintered at C.S.I. (MN et al.), where they are becoming somewhat regular (a unique situation in North America, perhaps). Small

numbers of American Woodcocks are now reported annually in sw. Nova Scotia, mostly in *Shelburne*, and there is little doubt that some successfully overwinter. A flock of 200 unidentified phalaropes were reported at Old Proprietor Shoal, G.M.I. 7 Feb (VDG); Red Phalaropes would be more likely, but even these would be almost unprecedented in the area in midwinter.

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS

Several Great Skuas were noted at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy off Brier Island, NS in Dec, as well as "large numbers" of Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers (CAH). A record 430 Black-headed Gulls were found on Nova Scotia C.B.C.s. The ad. **Thayer's Gull** at the Halifax—Richmond Pier returned for a 3rd winter, present 30 Dec-26 Jan (BMy et al.). Another was reported during count week on the East Pt., PEI C.B.C. (14 Dec, EVL). A major movement of **Ivory Gulls** took place past L'Anse-aux-Meadows, NF in early Jan, with 50+/day noted (BM). The only report outside of Newfoundland was an ad. feeding on a seal carcass at Dominion Beach, C.B.I. 10-13 Feb (v. o.). Surprisingly, one in St. Pierre harbor 26 Jan—7 Feb was only the 3rd ever for St. Pierre and Miquelon, and the first well-documented bird there. By and large, there were no large flights of alcids observed near shore in the Region this winter.



The name L'Anse-aux-Meadows, the site of Leifur Eiriksson's "Vinland" settlement, is synonymous in birders' minds with European Golden-Plover (and perhaps too therefore with Mactavish's name!), but it offers extraordinary winter birding for the hardy as well. This Ivory Gull was part of a strong flight of the species here in early January 2002, when as many as 50 per day were seen. *Photograph by Bruce Mactavish.*

DOVES THROUGH GNATCATCHER

A White-winged Dove arrived at a feeder in Alma, NB 1 Dec (Doreen Rossiter) and stayed about a week. Mourning Doves continue to "push the envelope," with at least 20 attempting to winter at a Labrador City feeder; only 6 remained by the end of the period (Cheryl Davis). Snowy Owls staged a good flight into the Region, the best showing since the late 1980s. At Cape Race, NF, 20 were found 22 Dec (BM et al.). A fair number of Northern Hawk Owls was noted in Newfoundland, with virtually none elsewhere. In comparison to last winter, there were few reports of Northern Saw-whet Owl mortality induced by deep snow cover. One Red-bellied Woodpecker was reported from each province, a definite reversal of the good numbers of previous winters. A **Red-bellied Woodpecker** at St. Phillips, NF (Avalon) from late Oct 2001 through at least early Apr 2002 was a long overdue first for Newfoundland (m. ob.). The big news in New Brunswick in Dec was the discovery of an astounding 4 **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, double the previous provincial total! Birds were found at Westfield, *Kings*, NB 2 Dec (David Smith), Alma 2 Dec (SIT et al.); Sackville 20-22 Dec (Sean Blaney); and Lower Jemseg 21-22 Dec (Don Gibson, Peter Pearce). Nova Scotia got its

SA The alcid event of the winter was a tragic one, precipitated by the deliberate practice of oil dumping off the coast of Nova Scotia by ships unknown. First reports of seabird oiling came 7 Feb from sw. Nova Scotia and by 22 Feb extended along the entire coast to C.B.I. Most reports involved Thick-billed Murres, but significant numbers of Dovekies were reported as well. Samples of oil taken from two dead birds revealed two very different types, according to Tony Lock of the Canadian Wildlife Service. "One was heavy fuel oil and the other a bilge oil mixture. This means more than one ship was engaged in oil dumping off southern Nova Scotia in early February. In my 30 years with the Wildlife Service I have never seen so much bird mortality from ship-source oil dumping. The number of birds killed will be certainly some thousands of birds."

first, with one at Voglers Cove, Lunenburg 1-7 Dec (Andy Dean, Lelia Dean; full details in *Birders Journal*). A Western Kingbird lingered until at least 9 Dec at Lockeport, NS (Donna Crosby). A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was found at Waterside, NB 1 Dec (DSC) and sporadically for several days thereafter. A White-eyed Vireo at Point Lance, Avalon 15 Dec was the latest by a month (BM, Ian Jones). A Red-eyed Vireo was seen in Halifax 3 Dec (IM). Carolina Wren made a good fall rush into the Region, with birds pushing as far e. as Halifax-Dartmouth (2) and Memramcook, NB. Single House Wrens were found at Halifax 2-15 Dec (TP) and Dartmouth 17 Dec (*vide* AH). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Sackville, NB in early Dec and another was at St. John's, NF in Mactavish's backyard 11 Dec.

THRUSHES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Two Townsend's Solitaires surfaced, one at Tantallon, NS in Dec—Jan (Steve King) and one at St. John's, NF 20 Jan (JW, KK). Many

thousands of American Robins invaded Avalon in Jan to feed on the heavy crop of Mountain Ash berries, the one area in the Region where they were not found during the exceptional winter of 2000-2001. Reports of Varied Thrush came from Nova Scotia, with one each at Lower West Pubnico 23 Dec—20 Feb (Raymond d'Entrement et al.) and Lower Harmony 16-26 Jan (Cindy Spicer et al.), and Newfoundland's 3rd was at Conception Bay South 6 Feb (*vide* J. Pratt). A **Swainson's Thrush** at C.S.I. 15 Dec would be a first for a Nova Scotia C.B.C. Four Gray Catbirds in Nova Scotia were not unexpected, but one at Penniac, near Fredericton, NB 5 Jan (DG) was unusual. Northern Mockingbird certainly lived up to its name, with 2 brave individuals as far n. as Labrador City. The first disappeared in early Jan, with the 2nd last seen 27 Feb (but found dead 1 Mar), despite plenty of care from the feeder owner (*vide* CD). Numbers have increased significantly on Nova Scotia C.B.C.s the past three years, to about 40 per year versus 15-20 in the early 1990s. American Pipit

continues to increase in winter in the Region, mostly along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia and the Avalon, but small numbers (up to 3) are now being regularly encountered in s. New Brunswick and n. Nova Scotia. The bird of the season was definitely the **Black-backed Wagtail** found at St. Pierre, SPM 21-26 Jan (ph. Bruno Letourneau et al.), a Regional first with little precedent for the Atlantic seaboard at this season (David Sibley noted one in Brooklyn, New York in December 1992). An image of this bird is posted at <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/iles-et-ailes/Berge_lug.jpg>. Bohemian Waxwing was again common throughout the Region, in stark contrast to 30 years ago. In Nova Scotia, for example, there were only eight records of the species prior to the winter of 1968-1969, when the first significant numbers reached that province. There is now little doubt they are fairly common breeders in n. Québec and Labrador, although this major eastward range extension has gone mostly unobserved, due to the paucity of observers in that huge area. Cedar Waxwings

SA Several species of warbler set new endurance records, mostly in Nova Scotia and the Avalon (Table 1, below). Some of these, such as the Blue-winged, Blackpoll, and Black-throated Green Warblers, would be considered extraordinary anywhere in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic United States at these dates. In one concentrated area of Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, in the first half of December, there were: Yellow-throated Warbler (perhaps 2 birds), an **Audubon's Warbler**, a Nashville Warbler, 4+ Orange-crowned Warblers, 2+ Pine Warblers, a Yellow-breasted Chat, a Blackpoll Warbler, and a Western Palm Warbler. It should be kept in mind that some of these birds depended on feeders for survival, such as a Wilson's Warbler at Halifax that came for its daily allotment of grape jelly and mealworms. At least 20 Yellow-breasted Chats were found in Nova Scotia.

Species	Location	Date(s)	Observer(s)
Blue-winged Warbler	Portuguese Cove, NS	2-4 December	David Currie, Azor Vienneau
Blue-winged Warbler	Eastern Passage, NS	15 December—1 January	Tim Allison, Terry Paquet
Magnolia Warbler	Schooner Pond, C.B.I.	3 December	Dave McCorquodale, Richard Knappton
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Antigonish, NS	1-21 December	<i>vide</i> Randy Lauff
Black-throated Green Warbler	St. John's, NF	9-27 December	Paul Linegar et al.
Black-throated Green Warbler	C.S.I., NS	20 January	Johnny Nickerson
Townsend's Warbler	St. John's, NF	8-23 December	Bruce Mactavish, Paul Linegar
Pine Warbler	Carbonear, NF	throughout period	<i>vide</i> Bruce Mactavish
Prairie Warbler	Sable Island, NS	2 December	Zoe Lucas
Yellow-throated Warbler	Tracadie-Sheila, NB	1-30 December	Robert Doiron
Yellow-throated Warbler	Halifax, NS	3-26 December	Andy Horn, m. ob., ph.
Yellow-throated Warbler	Carbonear, NF	early December—23 January	Paul Linegar et al.
Yellow-throated Warbler	St. John's, NF	7 January—1 February	m. ob.
Blackpoll Warbler	Halifax, NS	10-16 December	Blake Maybank, m. ob., ph.
Black-and-white Warbler	Moncton, NB	21 December	Jim Edsall
Black-and-white Warbler	St. John's, NF	5 January (3), 19 January (1)	Bruce Mactavish
Black-and-white Warbler	Summerside, PEI	2 January	Suzanne Essensa
Nashville Warbler	Ferryland, NF	11 January	Todd Boland, T. Smith
Nashville Warbler	Tancook Island, NS	2 January	Eric & Ann Mills
Wilson's Warbler	Halifax, NS	1 December+	Suzanne Borkowski, m. ob., ph.
Wilson's Warbler	Florence, C.B.I., NS	early December	Dave McCorquodale
Wilson's Warbler	Dartmouth, NS	early December	Blake Maybank
Ovenbird	Bedford, NS	29 December	C. B. C. data
Ovenbird	St. Pierre, SPM	14 January	Thierry Vogenstahl, Laurent Jackman
Yellow-breasted Chat	Saint John, NB	20 January	Frank Kelly
Yellow-breasted Chat	St. John's, NF	13-20 January	Dave Brown et al.
Yellow-breasted Chat	St. Pierre, SPM	1 January	Rita Ruel, Marc Dérrible

pulled their usual disappearing act, with only small numbers reported, mostly in Nova Scotia.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The amazing “hat-trick” of tanagers continued to frequent berry bushes at Canso (Town), NS in early Dec (Rose Ann McMullen et al.): one each of Scarlet, Summer and Western (cf. *N. A. B* 56:24). Two more **Western Tanagers** were found, one until late Jan in Halifax (Etta Parker) and an imm. male that appeared 23 Jan in Lower Sackville (Peter LeBlanc, m. ob., ph.).

A Summer Tanager was found dead near Sydney, NS in early Jan (Darryl MacAulay, *fide* John MacInnis), and another at a feeder in Fredericton, NB was last seen in late Dec (DG). A **Green-tailed Towhee** at a Saint John, NB feeder 4 Jan+ was a first provincial record (Jim Wilson, et al.). Clay-colored Sparrows numbered 3 in Nova Scotia and 2 in Newfoundland. A Field Sparrow was a good find at New Dominion, PEI 17-18 Jan (EM). A **Vesper Sparrow** at Renewes, NF through the period was the first confirmed record for the province (BM, Dave Brown et al.) Five Lark Sparrows were in Nova Scotia and 2 in Newfoundland. Quite rare were single Grasshopper Sparrows at Lunenburg 2-6 Jan (James Hirtle et al.) and Renewes, NF 29 Dec (BM, Dave Brown). An Ipswich Sparrow was a good find at Biscay Bay, Avalon 10 Feb (Rudolf Koes, BM). A spectacular assortment of *Ammodramus* sparrows came to light at Daniels Head, C.S.I. in mid-Feb, including 4 Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrows and one **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (first for Nova Scotia), a Seaside Sparrow, and a **Henslow’s Sparrow** (MN et al.). It was interesting to note that of 8 White-crowned Sparrows found in Nova Scotia, half were of the w. *gambelli* race. A plucky Dark-eyed Junco survived the period at a Labrador City feeder, but alas succumbed in late Apr (*fide* CD).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak made it to 22 Dec at Buchans, NF feeder (Dianne Burton). An Indigo Bunting at a Lameque, NB feeder 20 Jan was the latest ever for the province, as was one at a St. John’s feeder 26 Dec (John Pratt). Nice groups of Eastern Meadowlark included 5 each at Shepody Marsh, *Albert*, NB 11 Jan (BD) and Daniels Head, C.S.I. 17 Feb (Paul Gould et al.). A **Bullock’s Oriole** at Bathurst, NB 24 Dec—20 Jan (MD et al.) was a first for the province. Many Baltimore Orioles survived until well into Jan at feeders in Nova Scotia and even s. New Brunswick. A **Common Chaffinch** at a Halifax feeder until 13 Jan (FL et al.) brought birders from as far as California and was the 4th Nova Scotia record. As Mactavish put it: “It was a very good winter for most finch species.” Of special note were the many reports of Pine

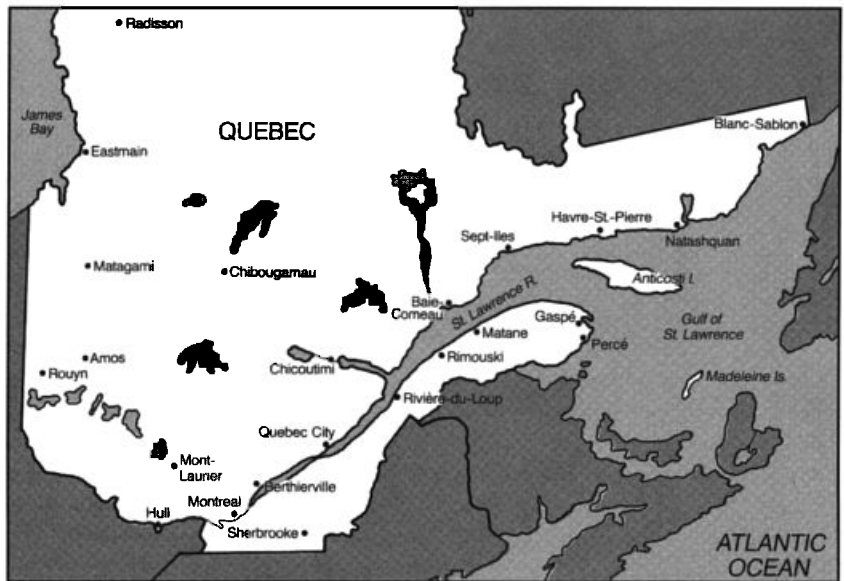
Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, and White-winged Crossbills coming to feeders, an increasingly common trend in just the past decade.

Observers (subregional editors in boldface): **Todd Boland**, David S. Christie, Brian Dalzell, Marcel David, Cheryl Davis, **Fred Dobson**, **Roger Etcheberry**, **Sylvia Fullerton**, Don Gibson, V. Dedreic Grecian (VDG), Carl

Haycock, **Andy Horn**, **Richard Knapton**, Ken Knowles, E. Vernon Laux, Fulton Lavender, **David McCorquodale**, **Ken McKenna**, **Ian McLaren**, Kenneth MacIntosh, Bruce Mactavish (BM), Eric Marcum, **Blake Maybank** (BMy), **Eric Mills**, Murray Newell, Johnnie Nickerson, John Wells, Jim Wilson.



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With temperatures exceeding the normal by 7 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit, the winter 2001-2002 will be remembered as the mildest ever in

southern Québec. One had to travel as far as Ungava Bay to find temperatures slightly below normal. At the same time, precipitation was below normal all along the St. Lawrence River but closer to normal or above normal farther north.

As a result of the mild weather, many species normally leaving the Region in fall lingered very late or in some cases overwintered successfully. Waterfowl in particular were much more abundant than usual in southern Québec, and expanding species such as the Carolina Wren and the Tufted Titmouse also appeared to benefit from these conditions. Finally, apart from the redpolls, winter finches were rather scarce.

Abbreviation: C.W.S. (Canadian Wildlife Service).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon at Les Escoumins 6-10 Jan established a new record late date for the Region (CA, CG). Once again, while none were reported in the southern part of the Region, Common Loons appeared in Feb at some more northerly