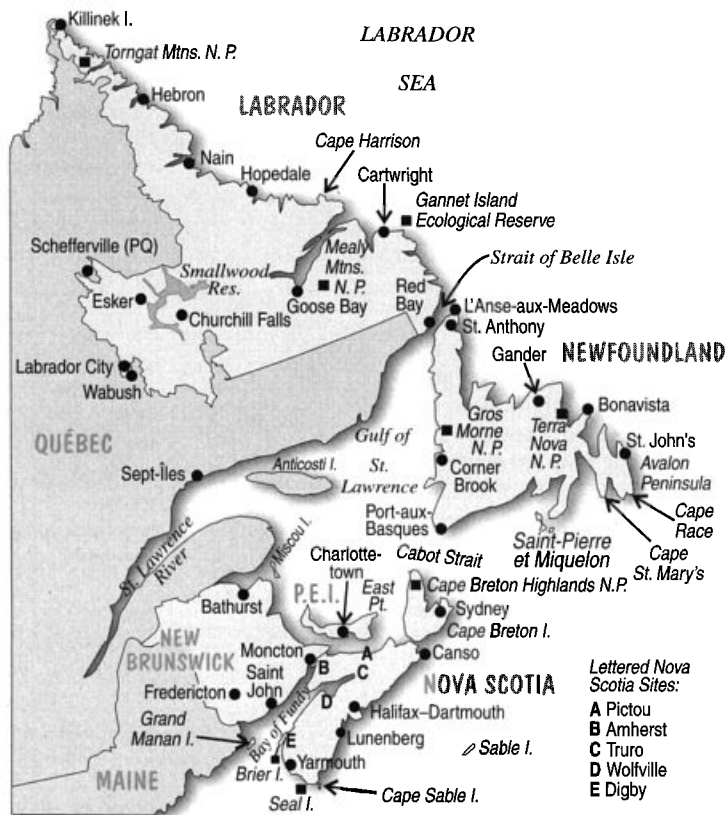


Atlantic Provinces & St. Pierre et Miquelon



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The very cold winter with its record snowfall faded gradually into a long, lingering, cool spring, one of the coldest in many years. There would seem to have been little reason for any birds to arrive ahead of schedule, but a number did so, setting record-early dates in the process. There was little stormy weather, although late May frosts must have taken a toll on insectivores, and Brian Dalzell reported from Grand Manan that "between 25–28 May, significant mortality occurred due to strong easterly headwinds combined with cold rain and fog. Lobster fishermen from Saint John to Grand Manan reported many weak birds coming aboard their boats during this pe-

riod, and many floating dead on the ocean. I conservatively estimate 10,000+ birds died during these forced landings, principally warblers (Magnolia, Blackburnian, Yellow, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's, Blackpoll) and flycatchers (Alder and Least). A stark reminder that nature still rules..." Coverage was good to excellent from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Saint Pierre et Miquelon, while mostly reports of rarer species came from Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

Abbreviations: A.B.O. (Atlantic Bird Observatory); B.I. (Brier I., NS); B.P.I. (Bon Portage I., NS); C.B.R.M. (Cape Breton Regional Municipality, NS); C.S.I. (Cape Sable I., NS); G.M. (Grand Manan archipelago, NB); H.R.M. (Halifax Regional Municipality, NS), N.A.M.C. (North American Migration Count, 10 May); N.S.B.S. (Nova Scotia Bird Society).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

At Saint Pierre, very early arrivals by both Greater Shearwater (4 on 7 Apr, a week earlier than the previous record) and Sooty Shearwater

4 Apr (five days earlier than the record) were noted (LJ; BL). Also there, 4 Northern Gannets 7 Apr were two weeks ahead of their average arrival date, while an unprecedented 2500+ streamed into Chaleur Bay 4 May, perhaps in pursuit of smelt (Mike Lushington). It was an average spring for s. herons, egrets, and ibis (Table 1), with Great and Snowy Egrets arriving in numbers, along with a sprinkling of Little Blue Herons but no Tricolored Herons reported.

Turkey Vultures seem to be gradually exploring areas away from their small strongholds in the Maritimes. In Nova Scotia in Apr and May, away from Digby and Yarmouth, there were 12 in *Queens* (Paul Gould), 5 on C.S.I. (MN), 2 each in *Annapolis* and *Cumberland*, and singles in *Lunenburg* and far-flung *Canso*, *Guysborough*. Turkey Vultures are now routine in se. New Brunswick, but farther n. they are still scarce; in early May, 3 were reported, one in *Madawaska* and 2 in *Gloucester*.

WATERFOWL

A *flavirostris* Greater White-fronted Goose was noted 21 Apr near Canning, Kings, likely the same bird seen in the area in previous years, either in migration or overwintering. Snow Geese are increasingly using the Restigouche R. estuary in nw. New Brunswick as a spring staging area; first noted there a decade ago, 2000–3000 were present between Atholville and Dalhousie in late Apr and early May this year. By contrast, there were just three flocks totaling 19 birds spread across three Nova Scotia counties in Apr and May, and a single bird on St. Pierre 20–25 Mar. The overwintering Snow Goose at Sullivan's Pond, H.R.M. was last noted 12 Apr. Brant numbers continue to grow on C.S.I., with a peak of 12,000 on 6 Apr (MN). Eurasian ducks are too routine in spring in Newfoundland to warrant reporting, but a pair of Gadwall 10 May in St. John's was considered noteworthy (Todd Boland), as was a Wood Duck in Stephenville 19 Apr (Bill Winsor). St. Pierre et Miquelon had 4 Wood Ducks, 2 males and a pair. Old World ducks are still carefully tabulated on the mainland; there were 7 Eurasian Wigeons and one Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal reported from Nova Scotia, while New Brunswick had the only Tufted Duck (very scarce of late) in *Kent* on the e. coast, from which there are very few records. Green-winged Teal arrived two weeks late on Miquelon, and by the end of the period there were but a half-dozen reports from that island, and none at all from St. Pierre. Elsewhere in the Region, the species was observed in normal numbers. Four pairs of Redheads at a Shediac sewage lagoon 10 May (Louis-Émile Cormier) was one of the largest spring Regional groupings. A stunning male King Eider on B.P.I. 28–31 May was seasonally late and s. of usual (A.B.O.). Around the Restigouche R. estuary, which is the principal spring staging area in e. North America (and likely the continent) for Black Scoters, Mike Lushington estimated 58,000 present 26 Apr. Susann Meyers counted 11 Barrow's Goldeneye on the Sydney R. 19 Mar, an excellent provincial concentration.

SA Marcel David has been undertaking painstakingly precise shorebird surveys from the Acadian Peninsula, NB, especially Maisonette Dune near Caraquet, a premier spring shorebirding site in Atlantic Canada, perhaps surpassing even C.S.I., itself well known as the finest winter shorebird site in e. Canada. Some counts (record highs in bold) from the Maisonette Dune this spring include: 149 Black-bellied Plovers 22 May; **220** Semipalmated Plovers 24 May; 127 Semipalmated Sandpipers 3 Jun; 151 Least Sandpipers 22 May; **10** White-rumped Sandpipers 31 May; 23 Dunlin 24 May; and **313** Short-billed Dowitchers 22 May. In light of some of these record-high totals, it is perhaps relevant that the number and variety of spring shorebirds was also higher than normal in neighboring P.E.I.

Ruddy Ducks made their first-ever spring arrival in Newfoundland, with a drake in Wabush, Labrador 18 May (Lee Preziosi) and a pair in St. John's 22 May (TB et al.). On the mainland, a group of 8 was at the Saint-Joseph sewage lagoon 13 May (Alain Clavette).

OSPREY THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

An Osprey on St. Pierre 12 Apr was record early by nine days (FPA). There were two sightings of Sharp-shinned Hawk on St. Pierre et Miquelon in May, at a time of year when they are not expected. The only Red-shouldered Hawk report came from Blackville, *Northumberland*, NB, 23 Apr (BS); this is the ne. limit of the species' range in the province, where only rarely encountered. A report of 2 from P.E.I. was not accompanied by details. Golden Eagles are rare in spring in s. New Brunswick, so a year-old bird near St. Stephen 15 May was a good find (BS). The species, while still rare, is a bit more expected in Cape Breton, so two sightings in the first half of May in *Victoria* were expected. American Kestrels remain rare on St. Pierre et Miquelon in spring, but LJ noted single tiercels on both Langlade and Miquelon in the 2nd week of May. On 21 May at Cape Spear, NL, Paul Linegar observed an unfamiliar falcon fly by as close as 10 m. His description, still before the provincial Bird Committee, strongly suggests a *Eurasian Hobby*. At about the same time, a hobby appeared on Iceland (where very rare). It is worth bearing in mind that a *Eurasian Hobby* spent a week on a research vessel 550 km e. of Newfoundland in early May 1989. On 29 May, Ray Cooke and party found 2 Peregrine Falcons in Prince Edward Island N.P.; spring sightings in P.E.I. have been quite rare, but perhaps the falcons may be attempting to breed, as the species' population is expanding in the Region.

An ongoing debate in New Brunswick regarding the advisability of introducing Wild Turkeys may soon be superfluous, as birds from the burgeoning Maine population are crossing the border into *York* and *Charlotte*, and breeding cannot be far off. News of a *Purple Gallinule* in the town of Yarmouth, NS 10–12 May was suppressed at the request of the landowner. Sandhill Cranes will be breeding in the Region before long; you read it here first. They are now routine in New Brunswick, where there were 5 in May, 4 of which lingered into Jun. One bird was seen in *Colchester*, NS, and there were three

separate sightings of a pair in C.B.R. in Apr and May; more than one pair may have been involved. A pair over Saint Pierre 8 May (FPR) was filmed by a television crew the next day and furnished only the 2nd record for St. Pierre et Miquelon. Yet another pair was at Deer Lake, NL 16 May, in a horse pasture (Ruth Story).

An American Golden-Plover on St. Pierre 24 May provided the 2nd spring record for the islands. When Etcheberry was preparing the St. Pierre et Miquelon data for this spring's report, he was astonished to discover that there had been not one single report of Semipalmated Plover from anywhere on St. Pierre et Miquelon in spring 2004—an unprecedented absence. At least one Upland Sandpiper is ex-

Table 1. Records of "southern" herons, egrets, and ibis in Atlantic Canada, Spring 2004.

	NS	NB	NF	SPM	PEI
Great Egret	9	6	1	0	2
Snowy Egret	10	5	1	0	0
Little Blue Heron	4	1	0	1	1
Cattle Egret	3	0	0	0	0
Green Heron	2	0	0	0	0
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	1	0	0	0	0
Glossy Ibis	2	0	1	0	2

pected in Nova Scotia each spring, and this year it was seen on C.S.I. 17 Apr (MN). A Hudsonian Godwit at C.S.I. 11 May (MN) furnished the first spring record for the province, although there have been two early Jun birds on Sable I. Two unusual inland New Brunswick shorebird sightings include a White-rumped Sandpiper 28 May at St. Hilaire, *Madawaska* (fide Roy LaPointe) and a Dunlin at Lower Jemseg, *Queens* 21 Apr (Don Gibson). The only Ruff reported this season was at Mavillette Beach, *Digby* 17 May (MN), while the only Wilson's Phalaropes were a female at Bloomfield, *Kings*, NB 5 May (Ian Cameron), and 2

the same day at Lower Jemseg (Merv Cormier).

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

There was a scattering of Laughing Gulls Regionwide in May: an ad. in St. John's 15–16 May, one or 2 ads. at St. Pierre et Miquelon 15–16 & 23 May, and a second-summer at White Pt., *Victoria* 26 May. For the first time in many years, observers on St. Pierre et Miquelon did not observe a single Black-headed Gull all winter and spring. Don McAlpine discovered a colony of Ring-billed Gulls (six pairs) on Manawagonish I., off Saint John, NB, the first such provincial nesting on the cold Bay of Fundy's shore. The species has yet to be found nesting in neighboring Nova Scotia, the only Canadian province not so blessed. A well-described third-year California Gull at Eel R. Bar, *Restigouche* 5 May (ML) was but the 3rd provincial sighting. On P.E.I., where there are only a few previous records, DS and RC independently reported an ad. *Thayer's Gull* in the Charlottetown Harbour area around 11 Mar. The hybrid Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull at Lockeport, *Shelburne*, NS, during the winter stayed at least until 27 Apr. The only reported Lesser Black-backed

Gulls were from Nova Scotia, where 9+ were noted from *Cumberland*, *Kings*, and H.R.M. A first-winter Ivory Gull at East Pt., P.E.I. 17 Apr was remarkably late and at an unexpected location (RC). The Regional stronghold of Black Terns is at Black Duck Marsh, Lower Jemseg, NB, where a 150 were estimated in late May, the highest count there to date. The 2 Atlantic Puffins found by Jeff Ertle and Floyd

Kent in Baddeck Bay, *Victoria*, NS 25 Mar were unusually far from the open sea; the date and location suggest that they were late-winter strays rather than spring arrivals. Puffins are rarely noted from P.E.I., but there was one off East Pt. 14 May (RC).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

A White-winged Dove made a brief visit to a feeder in Barrington, *Shelburne*, NS 21 Apr, after which 2 arrived 31 May at George Crowell and Bev Sarty's feeders in Glace Bay, C.B.R.M. (where one occurred in Aug 1991). Nova Scotia's White-winged Dove total now stands at 28, probably



Both remarkably late and remarkably far south, this male King Eider was at Bon Portage Island, Nova Scotia on 30 May 2004. Photograph by Ross Baker.

the largest of any state or province well beyond the fringes of the species' normal breeding range. A Snowy Owl lingered in the Rustico area of P.E.I., with sightings by different observers 8–25 May. On 27 Apr, a Long-eared Owl perched obligingly on a fence post in Labrador City, NL, allowing Gary Peckam a chance to document only the 3rd record for the province and the 2nd in Labrador. A Common Nighthawk over Mt. Uniacke Estate, Hants, NS 20 Apr was almost record early (Hans Toom), but there were few subsequent sightings, a worrisome trend. A lone Chimney Swift made it n. to St. Pierre et Miquelon 23 May (FPA), where they are decidedly rare. The 4 Red-bellied Woodpeckers in Nova Scotia and 2 in New Brunswick were thought to be holdovers (more accurately survivors) from the large incursion of last autumn and winter, but the status of one at Tryon, P.E.I. 21–27 May was uncertain (Betty Howwat).

A Willow Flycatcher seen and heard near Paquetville, Gloucester, NB 9 May (Roger Dumaresq, Frank Branch) was apparently the first record for the Acadian Peninsula. Eastern Phoebes remain scarce on P.E.I., despite apparently suitable habitat. This spring, however, 2 were at Greenwich 23 Apr (Arja Page et al.), followed by singles in Charlottetown 29 Apr (Dwayne Oakley) and East Pt. 29 May (Dan Mcaskill et al.). A Say's Phoebe was a one-day wonder near Sainte-Antoine, Kent, NB 1 May (Denis Doucet), only the 2nd spring record for the province, on the heels of the one a year ago. Out-of-range vireos were limited to s. Nova Scotia—2 Warbling Vireos on C.S.I. 19 May, a single there 30 May (both MN), and a Philadelphia Vireo on B.P.I. 21–23 May (N.S.B.S.). A Purple Martin was quite far n. at St. John's 24 May (Dave Brown), while a Northern Rough-winged Swallow at the Goose Cr. Marsh, Yarmouth 27 Apr was out of range (Paul Gould). Etcheberry notes that Black-capped Chickadee is now a very rare bird on St. Pierre et Miquelon, so one on Saint Pierre 16 May was appreciated.

New Brunswick's 10th Tufted Titmouse was at Breadalbane, Charlotte 25 Apr (Hugh Parks). The only Carolina Wren reported was one singing at St. Andrews, NB 23 May (TD). A House Wren singing at Scoudouc, Westmoreland, NB 22 May+ (Norm Belliveau) provided one of very few county records at any season, and there was but one Nova Scotia House Wren, 17 May in Wolfville (Bernard Forsythe). It was a quiet spring for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, with only 3 detected, at St. Andrews, NB 2 May (TD), at White Head, G.M.A. 14 May (Marco Scichilone et al.), and at Canso, Guysborough, NS 9 May (Tom Cavanaugh). Winds did not favor Northern Wheatears' arrival, with a single at Cape Spear, NL 27 May (Dave Brown, Jared Clarke) being the only one reported. A Wood Thrush was well described from St. Pierre et Miquelon 7 May (Dominique

Gouverne); there are very few records from the n. side of the Cabot Strait. In light of this species' apparent vanishing act from Nova Scotia, the 4 sighted this past Apr and May give a slight sense of hope, although three sightings were from coastal locations and surely per-

Table 2. Records of "southern" tanagers and cardinalids in Atlantic Canada, Spring 2004.

	NS	NB	NF	SPM	PEI
Summer Tanager	7	1	2	0	0
Scarlet Tanager	10	2+	3	0	0
Blue Grosbeak	5	1	0	1	1
Indigo Bunting	30+	30+	12+	4	1

tained to migrants, not to prospective local breeders. Brown Thrashers have had one successful nesting in Nova Scotia, and this year, more attempts might be made, as 9 birds were noted, almost all in May in the s. half of the mainland. A pair of Bohemian Waxwings at North Head, G.M.A. 15–25 May (Jim Wilson et al.) was record late for so far s. in the Region and raised the possibility of breeding.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

There were few vagrant warblers this spring, but a Blue-winged Warbler on B.P.I. 21 May was appreciated (N.S.B.S.). An Orange-crowned Warbler was both extralimital and quite late at New Harmony, P.E.I. 29 May (RC et al.). A Nashville Warbler well seen by PB on Saint Pierre 18 May was record early by one day, and another appeared in the village of Miquelon two days later (RE); the species has been seen in spring in St. Pierre et Miquelon eight years out of 31. A Yellow-throated Warbler just made into the period by appearing 31 May on C.S.I. (MN). Pine Warbler is the most likely s. warbler to be added as a new nesting species in Nova Scotia, and there were 3 noted this spring 3–10 May, including 2 singing males. Black-throated Blue Warblers are scarce in St. Pierre et Miquelon, but there was one on Langlade 22 May (MD). Two American Redstarts in St. Pierre et Miquelon 16 May (MD) were record early by one day (MD). A rare male Hooded Warbler was at Fundy N.P., NB 22 May (Sheila Pugsley). Yellow-breasted Chats are expected in autumn and early winter, but spring sightings are scarce, so one in Lunenburg 4 May was noteworthy (Dave Watson).

Each spring, certain colorful, feeder-friendly passerines overshoot their more southerly breeding ranges to arrive in Atlantic Canada. And they seem to arrive in tandem: Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings and Baltimore Orioles. The Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles breed somewhat widely on the mainland, so they tend to be notable only on St. Pierre et Miquelon and Newfoundland. Scarlet Tanagers are very scarce breeders in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and so are noted when seen. This annual "Rainbow Arrival" varies in intensity each year, but it is always

welcome. Table 2 shows that numbers of Blue Grosbeaks were low, and that Prince Edward I. needs more birders: the lone Indigo Bunting found there actually occasioned a bit of a "twitch," something that would not happen elsewhere in the Maritimes.

It was an average spring for Eastern Towhees, with 4 reported from Nova Scotia and 3 from New Brunswick, all between 23 Apr and 10 May. The 3 overwintering Clay-colored Sparrows in Canso lingered into late Apr and early May, and there were 2 other Nova Scotia sightings in May, one of which lingered most of the month at a C.S.I. feeder. There were 3 Field Sparrows at Nova Scotia feeders in May, while New Brunswick had a larger influx, with 5 in the s. half of the province; this is a species that could be expected to increase in the Region as climate warms. An Ipswich Sparrow was photographed on St. Pierre et Miquelon 16 May (Pascal Asselin), the first documented record for the French islands. Five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reached St. Pierre et Miquelon, and a "few more than normal" reached Newfoundland. Several of Nova Scotia's overwintering Dickcissels survived and departed by mid-Apr; 3 overshoots were found at coastal migrant traps in May in s. Nova Scotia.

It was a fairly good spring for Orchard Orioles, with seven May sightings in Nova Scotia (all on s. and w. coastlines) and 11 in New Brunswick, 10 of which were on G.M.A. Birders on St. Pierre et Miquelon had to settle for a lone imm. Baltimore Oriole 22 May (PB). Purple Finches staged a massive flight into the s. half New Brunswick 3–5 May, with feeder reports of 25–100 or more being commonplace (fide BD). Both crossbills continue to be present in low numbers across the Region. After their extensive winter incursions, the last small flocks of Common Redpolls had departed by early May. Dalzell reports from New Brunswick that "there is a possibility that an imm. male Eurasian Siskin at a Lorneville, Saint John feeder 31 May–3 Jun (fide Jim Wilson) was a genuine vagrant, given the other records in Québec and Michigan this spring."

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