

Atlantic Canada



Bruce Mactavish

The summer weather was cool and overcast in Newfoundland and Labrador but near normal in the rest of the Region. Preliminary results of the first field season of a new breeding bird atlas for the Maritime Provinces revealed a substantial increase in breeding Pine Warblers in New Brunswick, more Northern Cardinals breeding in Nova Scotia, and a significant decline of Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks in Nova Scotia. As usual, the summer season produces some of the most exciting rarities of the year. This summer's booty included a Fea's/Zino Petrel and Pacific Golden-Plover in Newfoundland, a Red-billed Tropicbird in Nova Scotia, a Royal Tern in New Brunswick, and male Eurasian Siskin in Labrador.

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

The long-standing southerly outpost of breeding Red-throated Loon continues on St. Pierre; a nest containing two eggs was found on the Isthmus 21 Jun (LJ). Northern Fulmars were in exceptionally high numbers in the Bay of Fundy, with the highest of several high counts se. of Grand Manan I., NB being 250 on 27 Jun (DI). On the other side of the bay, 30 were observed off Brier I., NS during a whalewatching cruise 17 Jul (Edward Raynor). Kim Eckert of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours has taken the North Sydney, NS to Argentia, NL ferry for 15 consecutive years in early Jul. On the 9 Jul 2007 crossing, he reported hundreds instead of the typical scores of fulmars, plus a well-described Fea's/Zino's Petrel s. of the Burin Pen. (†BMu, †KE). Other records of Fea's Petrel in Regional waters include singles 170 km s. of the Burin Pen. 13 Aug 2000 and e. of Sable I., NS 7 Jul 1997. An imm. Red-billed Tropicbird found alive in a

driveway at Three Fathom Harbour on 16 Jul died three days later in rehabilitative care (Dominic Cormier). This exceptional record falls on the heels of 2 found dead on Sable I., NS in summer 2006.

Overshooting herons were in typical numbers. Nova Scotia was the only province to report any egrets—8 Great, 3 Snowy, and one Cattle. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and St. Pierre et Miquelon reported one Little Blue Heron each. Rarest of the American herons in the Region, a Tricolored Heron was Baie-du-Petit-Pokemouche, NB 3 Jun (*vide* BD). Single Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were at Annapolis Royal, NS 12-13 Jun (*vide* UH)) and Langlade, SPM 26 Jul (Jean Edwards). Single Glossy Ibis were in New Brunswick at Cormierville Marsh 12 Jun and at Val Comeau 20 Jun (*vide* BD). A well-described ad. blue-morph Snow Goose at Fogo I., NF 11-14 Jun was both unseasonable and rare for the province (*vide* Bmt). Gadwall remains a scarce and local breeder in the Region, but numbers are slowly increasing. Newfoundland's first confirmed breeding came with the discovery of a female with 2 ducklings in the Grand Codroy R. 10 Jul (TH, PP). In addition, pairs of ads. were at St. John's 13-18 Jun (JWe) and Renewes 6 Jun (DSH). Two pairs of Gadwall for most of the period at Pond Cove, Brier I., NS raised suspicion of breeding (IM). Proving the breeding of Eurasian Wigeon in the Region will be nearly impossible, as the males have no role in incubation or rearing of the young, and the female wigeons are difficult to identify. However, sightings of males during the post-breeding period for waterfowl have been annual for more than a decade and are showing a slow increase. This summer's sightings of male Eurasian Wigeon were: 2 at Marsh Creek, NB 26 Jun (Merv Cormier), one at Kouchibouguac N.P. 13-18 Jul (Shawn Craig), one at Antigonish, NS 17 Jun (*vide* UH), and one at St. Pierre 22-23 Jun (PA). An imm. male Harlequin Duck was late at Seal I., NS 1 Jun (IM).

A well-described Red-shouldered Hawk at Cherry Hill Beach, NS 23 Jun provided a rare summer record for Nova Scotia (SF). There was a rash of unsubstantiated Swallow-tailed Kite reports, with one in New Brunswick and three in Nova Scotia.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

An ad. Pacific Golden-Plover at Trepassey, NL 27 Jun-15 Jul was a well-documented first for the Region (JH, DS et al.); the bird fed on residential lawns closer to houses, buildings, and people than would be expected for an American Golden-Plover. Piping Plovers continue to do well at the e. edge of the breeding range,

with two pairs nesting at Stephenville Crossing, where they have not nested for years (*vide* Bmt) and six pairs at Miquelon (RE). Two pairs of American Oystercatchers had young by early Jul at the only breeding location in the Region, The Hawk, Cape Sable I., NS (MN et al.). A pair of Willets remained at Renewes, NF mid-May-mid-Jul, with no evidence of nesting (Bmt et al.). Five White-rumped Sandpipers at Sand Pt., Big Washbush L., Labrador on 3 Jun was rare for inland Labrador (GP). Prince Edward Island's 7th Curlew Sandpiper at St. Eleanor's 26 Jul was described as a male (DSe). Early Stilt Sandpipers were at Covehead, PEI 12-14 Jul (DSe) and Cape Sable I., NS 17 Jul (MN). Wilson's Phalarope has reverted to being a rarity in the Region; singles were reported at Borden, PEI 10 Jun (Dwayne Oakley) and Cape Sable I., NS 3 Jul (JN et al.).

Skuas in inshore waters continue to be reported. South Polar Skuas were identified off Flint I., Cape Breton I., NS 28 Jun (CM, AM), off Brier I., NS 17 Jul (Edward Raynor) and off Grand Manan I., NB 9 Jul (DI et al.). Laughing Gulls returned to normal summer levels after an unprecedented influx in summer 2006. Totals were 3 in Nova Scotia and 2 each in St. Pierre et Miquelon and Newfoundland. Late spring migrant Lesser Black-backed Gulls often spill over into the summer period. Adult-like birds present in early Jun are rarely present in late Jun or Jul. An apparent ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull at the dump at Goose Bay, Labrador late May-late Jun did not appear to be paired (Bmt et al.). There is still no evidence to support the surmise that Lesser Black-backed Gulls breed in the Region. A Royal Tern photographed at Mary's Pt., NB 7 Jun furnished the 4th record for that province and one the earliest for the Region (DC).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

The summer's quota of White-winged Doves was met with singles at Cape Sable I., NS 5 Jun (JN, MN) and Red Indian L., NF 22 Jun (Bill Curran, *vide* Bmt). The latter, attracted to an isolated log cabin in the cen. Newfoundland wilderness, was only the 5th recorded in Newfoundland and one of the very inland and non-feeder related sightings for the Region. Summer Yellow-billed Cuckoos are rare. There was one at Cape Sable I., NS 24 Jun (JN, MN) and one at Debec, NB 18 Jun (DSa). A Boreal Owl nest in a bird box at Bay St. Lawrence, Victoria, NS was rare provincial event (Randy Lauff). In Newfoundland, where Boreal Owl is the common small owl species, 2 Northern Saw-whet Owls were heard calling and viewed with flashlights near Corner Brook

SA A male Eurasian Siskin was present at feeder in St. Lewis, Labrador on and off over the period 27 Jun–15 Jul (EL, PL, ph.). St. Lewis is small isolated community located at the end of a long saltwater inlet in se. Labrador. The provenance of Eurasian Siskins in North America will always be suspect, especially with a recent rash of European finch sightings in the Great Lakes area. The possibility that this bird came from the Great Lakes region cannot be ruled out. However, the possibility of a genuine stray from Europe is supported by the isolated wilderness aspect of the St. Lewis and that Eurasian Siskin is one of the more regular European finches that strays to Iceland. It should also be noted that a male Eurasian Siskin was photographed at Langlade, SPM 23 Jun 1983.

7 Jun (Louis Bateman et al.). A Red-headed Woodpecker at Shamrock, PEI 4 Jun made just the 6th record for the province (Molly Colburn). Rare Jun sightings of Red-bellied Woodpecker were Nova Scotia singles at Waverley 21 Jun (Linda & Peter Payzant) and Sucker L., Lunenburg (James Hirtle). There were a few Willow Flycatchers reported in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and one at St. Eleanor's, PEI 20 Jun (DO). A female Purple Martin at Portugal Cove South, NF 20 Jun was a vagrant (DSh). A juv. Carolina Wren was on Grand Manan I., NB 25 Jul (Jim Leslie).

A female Northern Wheatear at Eddies Cove East, NF 4 Jun (Ivy Gibbons) was considered a late spring migrant, while another female at Taylor Head P.P., NS 20-25 Jun (James Cameron et al.) furnished an odd summer record. For the 2nd consecutive Jun, a silent Gray Catbird was observed at Goose Bay, Labrador, this time on 16 Jun (BMT). A Brown Thrasher at St. Paul's, NF 9 Jul was a summer vagrant (David Milson), while there was breeding evidence for three pairs in New Brunswick, where the species is a scarce nester (*fide* BD).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Cape May Warbler, normally considered a scarce and local breeding species in s. Labrador, was common in the vicinity of Goose Bay during the last two weeks of Jun, for the 2nd consecutive year (BMT). The breeding bird atlas work in the Maritime Provinces has revealed an increase in territorial Pine Warblers throughout New Brunswick (*fide* BD). Territorial Pine Warblers were also found in the Halifax, NS area, which suggests that breeding will soon be confirmed in that province (*fide* KM). A suspected male Blackpoll Warbler × Bay-breasted Warbler hybrid was singing in Goose Bay, Labrador 16 Jun (BMT). The song was similar to a Bay-

breasted Warbler, but the bird looked much like a male Blackpoll except for a broad rufous streak on the flanks and sides of breast. A female Bay-breasted Warbler, a species rare in Labrador, seemed to be associating with the hybrid male. The birds could not be relocated in the subsequent week. A Yellow-breasted Chat singing near Sussex, NB 26 Jun was well n. of the breeding range (JWi).

A Clay-colored Sparrow was singing in n. New Brunswick at St. Leonards 24 Jun (Roy LaPoint). The extraordinary Le Conte's Sparrow found singing at Mercer Settlement, near Sussex, NB 13 May (Richard Blacquiere) kept right on singing, apparently unmated, until early Aug (m.ob.). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow singing in suitable breeding habitat in the Grand Codroy R. estuary 10-11 Jul adds to speculation that small numbers breed in sw. Newfoundland (TH, PP). A singing male Dickcissel at Grates Cove, NF 2 Jun provided a rare spring sighting in the Region (JC).

This summer's atlas work in Nova Scotia agrees with recent B.B.S. data that Bobolinks are breeding at fewer localities and that Eastern Meadowlark has disappeared as a breeder from the Annapolis Valley (*fide* IM). There was a virtual influx of Yellow-headed Blackbirds—males were reported at Jolicure, NB 15 Jun (Ivy Austin), at Penobsquis, NB 23 Jun (Glen Foster), and at West Pubnico, NS 5 Jun (Clyde Stoddard). Three Red-winged Blackbirds at Labrador City 29 Jul were well n. of the species' known breeding range (GP).

A handful of American Goldfinches at the same feeder as the Eurasian Siskin in St. Lewis resulted in Labrador's first confirmed breeding, when food-begging juvs. were brought to the feeder by ads. (EL). During Jul, large numbers White-winged Crossbills descended on the Avalon Pen. of Newfoundland, and in response to a large developing cone crop began singing and nested, with an abundance of begging juvs. observed in Aug.

Contributors: Pascal Asselin, David Christie, Jared Clarke, Brian Dalzell, Kim Eckert, Roger Ectheberry, Sylvia Fullerton, Jeff Harrison, Tom Hince, Durlan Ingersoll, Ulli Höger, Laurent Jackson, Paul Lineger, Eva Luther, Bruce Mactavish (BMT), Blake Maybank (BMy), Ken McKenna, an McLaren, Brennan Mulrooney, Cathy & Allan Murrant, Murray Newall, Johnnie Nickerson, Gordon Parson, Paul Pratt, Dwayne Sabine (DSa), David Seeler (DSe) David Shepherd (DSh), John Wells (JWe), Jim Wilson (JWi).

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STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS

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| * | specimen collected |
| + | bird(s) seen through end of period |
| † | written details on file |
| A.F.B. | Air Force Base |
| acc. | accepted by records committee |
| A.R.C. | Avian Records Committee |
| b. | banded |
| B.B.S. | Breeding Bird Survey |
| B.O. | Bird Observatory |
| B.R.C. | Bird Records Committee |
| C.A. | Conservation Area |
| C.B.C. | Christmas Bird Count |
| C.P. | County Park |
| cm | centimeter(s) |
| Cr. | Creek |
| Ft. | Fort |
| G.C. | Golf Course |
| G.P. | Game Preserve |
| Hwy. | Highway |
| I. (Is.) | Island(s), Isle(s) |
| imm. (imms.) | immature(s) |
| Jct. | Junction |
| juv. (juvs.) | juvenile [plumage]; juvenile(s) |
| km | kilometer(s) |
| L. | Lake |
| mm | millimeter(s) |
| m.ob. | many (or multiple) observers |
| Mt. (Mts.) | Mount/Mountain (Mountains) |
| N.A. | Nature Area, Natural Area |
| N.F. | National Forest |
| N.M. | National Monument |
| N.P. | National Park |
| N.S. | National Seashore |
| N.W.R. | National Wildlife Refuge |
| p.a. | pending acceptance |
| P.P. | Provincial Park |
| Pen. | Peninsula |
| ph. | photographed (by + initials) |
| Pt. | Point (not Port) |
| R. | River |
| R.A. | Recreation(al) Area |
| R.B.A. | Rare Bird Alert |
| R.P. | Regional Park |
| R.S. | Regional Shoreline |
| Res. | Reservoir |
| Rte. | Route |
| S.B. | State Beach |
| S.F. | State Forest |
| S.G.A. | State Game Area |
| S.P. | State Park |
| S.R.A. | State Recreation Area |
| S.R. | State Reserve |
| S.W.A. | State Wildlife Area |
| S.T.P. | Sewage Treatment Plant/Pond |
| subad. (subads.) | subadult(s) |
| Twp. | Township |
| v.r. | voice recording (by + initials) |
| vt. | videotape (by + initials) |
| W.A. | Wildlife Area |
| W.M.A. | Wildlife Management Area |
| W.T.P. | (Waste)water Treatment Plant/Pond |

Italics indicate name of county, parish, or municipality.