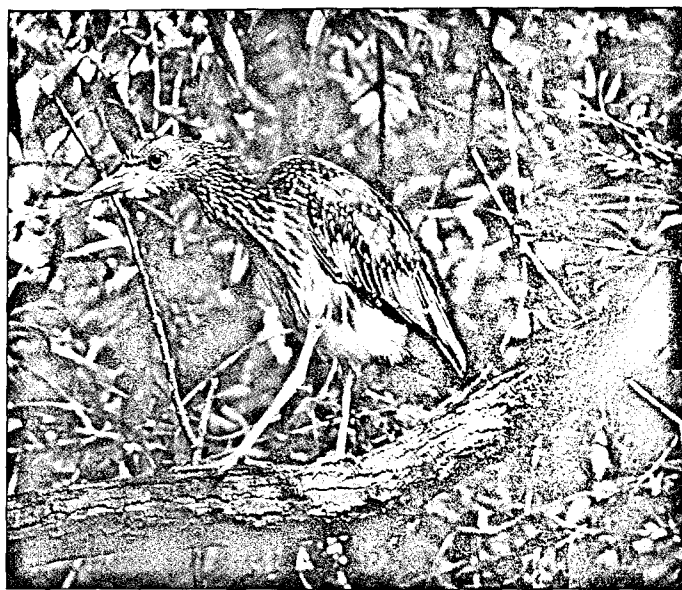
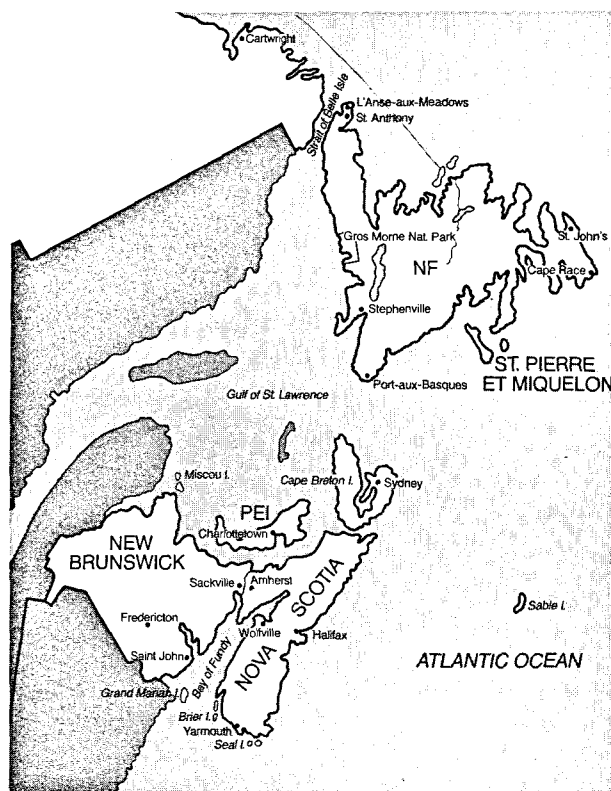


# atlantic provinces region



Stretching its status as a "southern" heron was this immature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at St. John's, Newfoundland, on August 27, 1997. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish

## BRUCE MACTAVISH

A paucity of fast-moving weather systems over the Region during the prime months of September and October was blamed for lackluster birding at the traditional vagrant hunting locations. The long periods of stable weather probably permitted birds to migrate with little impediment, therefore lessening the need of emergency refuge on coastal islands and headlands. Nevertheless, by season's end a long and fascinating list of vagrants had accumulated. Two outstanding birds were found in Nova Scotia. A Corn Crake was photographed (!) in a backyard garden. And perhaps the most unusual bird ever unearthed in the Region was an Asian stray in the form of a Brown Shrike at Halifax.

**Abbreviations:** CBI (*Cape Breton I.*); CSI (*Cape Sable I.*); GMI (*Grand Manan I.*); SPM (*the French islands of St. Pierre et Miquelon*).

## GREBES TO HERONS

Red-necked Grebes are arriving earlier each autumn. This year saw two Aug. 10 at Charlo, NB (ML, AW); two Aug. 18 at Long Pond Bay, GMI, NB (BD); two Aug. 21 at Moncton, NB (SH); and one Aug. 24 at Pictou, NS (KM). Single Cory's Shearwaters were off Brier I., NS, Sept. 26 (Bmy et al.) and freshly dead at Cape Sable I., NS, Oct. 31 (MN). Greater Shearwaters were reported in good numbers, with 20,000 Aug. 23 feeding near shore at Cappahayden, NF (PL, JWe); 7000 Aug. 20 off GMI, NB (FH); and 20,000 Oct. 1 flying past Brier I., NS (RS et al.). Manx Shearwaters were also reported in good numbers, with maximum counts of 100 at Brier I., NS, Aug. 22 (CH); Cappahayden, NF, Aug. 23 (PL, JWe); and at St. Pierre, SPM, Aug. 16 (RE). A very late Manx Shearwater was at St. Pierre, SPM, Nov. 12 (LJ). Wilson's Storm-Petrels lingered late in the Bay of Fundy after the high numbers in summer, with one record late at GMI, NB, Oct. 6 (ST), and 150 Oct. 1 and six Oct. 11 at Brier I., NS (*vide* Bmy). One

thousand Leach's Storm-Petrels were trapped by wind in a harbor at Holyrood, NF, Oct. 17 (PL, BMT). An **American White Pelican** caused quite a stir by appearing near Marystown, Burin Pen., NF, Oct. 30 (*vide* BMT), providing a 2nd provincial record; then hopping 30 mi w. to Miquelon, SPM, Nov. 1 for a 2-week visit, providing a first record for the French islands (m.ob.). Most unusual among the southern herons reports were one Least Bittern at CSI, NS, Oct. 17 (MN); one Tricolored Heron at CSI, NS, Aug. 3-20 (JN); one Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at St. John's, NF, Aug. 3-28 (AH et al.); and a late Glossy Ibis at Port William's, NS, Oct. 17 (LD).

## WATERFOWL TO RAILS

A Tundra Swan made a brief stop at Barrington R., NS, Nov. 19 (*vide* Bmy). An imm. Greater White-fronted Goose, with a bright orange bill typical of the Greenland race, showed up at Bonavista, NF, in late October and took up residence with farm ducks for several weeks (JJ et al.). A flight-

less molting **Barnacle Goose** on Funk I., 25 mi off the n.e. coast of Newfoundland, was thought to be wild despite the unseasonable date of Aug. 8 (WM). Eurasian Wigeons by province included one in New Brunswick, three in Nova Scotia, and 12 in Newfoundland. St. John's had four identifiable "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal by late November. A Canvasback at St. Pierre, SPM, Sept. 28 provided a 2nd local record. The only other was at Saints Rest Marsh, NB, Nov. 6–30 (*vide* ST). Tufted Ducks were slightly below recent autumn totals, with one imm. male Nov. 16 at Cap Brûlé, NB (MC), an early male Sept. 27 & 28 near Halifax, NS (PL), one male Oct. 26 at Pic-tou, NS (KM), and a female Nov. 23–30 on at St. John's, NF (KK). An early female King Eider was at Eel R. Bar, NB, Oct. 12 (RC). A wave of Ruddy Ducks hit New Brunswick with nine Oct. 23–30 at Great Pond, GMI (BD), 13 on Oct. 26 at Cap Brûlé (MC), and 42 Nov. 3 at Saint John, NB (JWi et al.).

Two dark-headed imm. Turkey Vultures Sept. 6 at Saint John, NB, where adults had been seen all summer, may bring us one step closer to a first Regional breeding record (JWi). Digby Neck, NS, has long been the Turkey Vulture capital of the Region, with this autumn's maximum count being 15 Oct. 11 (*vide* BMy). Two Black Vultures at Lamèque, NB, Aug. 12–Sept. 14 seemed almost routine (MD). A Red-shouldered Hawk returned Nov. 18 to the site of last year's wintering at Shemogue, NB (ST). Migrant Broad-winged Hawks were noted at Brier I., NS, with counts of 200 Sept. 12, 200 Oct. 4, and 400 Oct. 11 (DM). An albino Broad-winged was at CSI, NS, Oct. 5 & 11 (*vide* BMy). A rash of early Gyrfalcon reports did not materialize into a pronounced winter flight. Sightings largely without details included one Oct. 4 at Brier I., NS (*vide* BMy); one Oct. 26 and Nov. 2 at CSI, NS (MN et al.); one Nov. 8 at Mary's Pt., NB (DC); one Nov. 9 at Saint John, NB (*vide* DC); one Nov. 15 in Cumberland, NS (Jcz); and one Nov. 19 at St. John's, NF (TB).

A **Corn Crake** was amazingly well photographed at a coastal backyard in Shelburne, NS, Nov. 28–30 (J&DY). The only recent record of this European vagrant is of one killed on SPM Oct. 28, 1989. A lost Virginia Rail on the barrens of Cape Spear, NF, Nov. 27 furnished the first provincial sighting in many years (DB). There was an intriguing report of a possible Black Rail, described as a dark starling-size rail with chestnut in the upper parts, flushed twice Aug. 23 on Sable I., NS, where anything

seems possible (ZL). An imm. Purple Gallinule was at Alma, NB, Oct. 11–Nov. 17 (RW et al.), and another was picked up alive on the s. coast of Newfoundland in early November (*vide* BMT).

#### SHOREBIRDS

A **Northern Lapwing** was present briefly at Portugal Cove S., NF, Nov. 7 before flying off high to the west (KK, TB, PL). The success story of Canada's first nesting **American Oystercatcher** at Cape Sable I., NS, in July continued into early autumn. A 2nd nest was discovered Aug. 17, while three flying juveniles from the July nest were seen Aug. 24. The last adult was seen Sept. 29 (MN et al.). A **Spotted Redshank** at CSI, NS, Sept. 14 furnished a 7th provincial record (MN, SA). A Marbled Godwit was near Murray's Corner, NB, Nov. 2–6 (m.ob.). Nova Scotia's 4th **Bar-tailed Godwit** was at CSI, NS, Nov. 10–30 on (MN et al.). It appeared to be of the European race *lapponica*.

A peak count of Semipalmated Sandpipers was 200,000 Aug. 5 at Hopewell Rocks, NB (RFa). Western Sandpiper reports were one Aug. 22 at CSI, NS (JN et al.); one Sept. 10 at GMI, NB (PP); one Sept. 16 at Beresford, NB (PD); and one Sept. 21 at Miscou Lighthouse, NB (RC et al.). An apparent ad. **Little Stint** still in breeding plumage was closely observed at Brier I., NS, Aug. 21–24 (DMR, RFo et al.). Nova Scotia had the lion's share of Baird's Sandpipers with 13, while New Brunswick had three and Newfoundland two. Stilt Sandpiper totals were three in New Brunswick, nine in Nova Scotia, and two in Newfoundland. Buff-breasted Sandpiper totals were three in New Brunswick, six in Nova Scotia, and one in Newfoundland. The only Ruff was a female Aug. 10 at Cherry Hill, NS (S&JC). As usual, there was an ad. Long-billed Dowitcher at the Sackville, NB, waterfowl park Aug. 12–16 (UM). The only other report was two Oct. 22 at Cole Harbour, NS (FL et al.).

#### JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

McLaren, on a cruise to Western Bank, NS, Sept. 16–25, identified two Great and 12 South Polar skuas. Others labeled to species were two South Polar Skuas Aug. 30 off Brier I., NS (BMy et al.), and a probable Great Skua Oct. 22 off GMI, NB (JWi). Eight Laughing Gulls distributed across the Region August to October was average. An ad. Franklin's Gull was at Miscou I., NB, Sept. 6–Oct. 6 (m.ob.). The peak of Black-headed Gulls in St. John's was 93 on Nov. 19

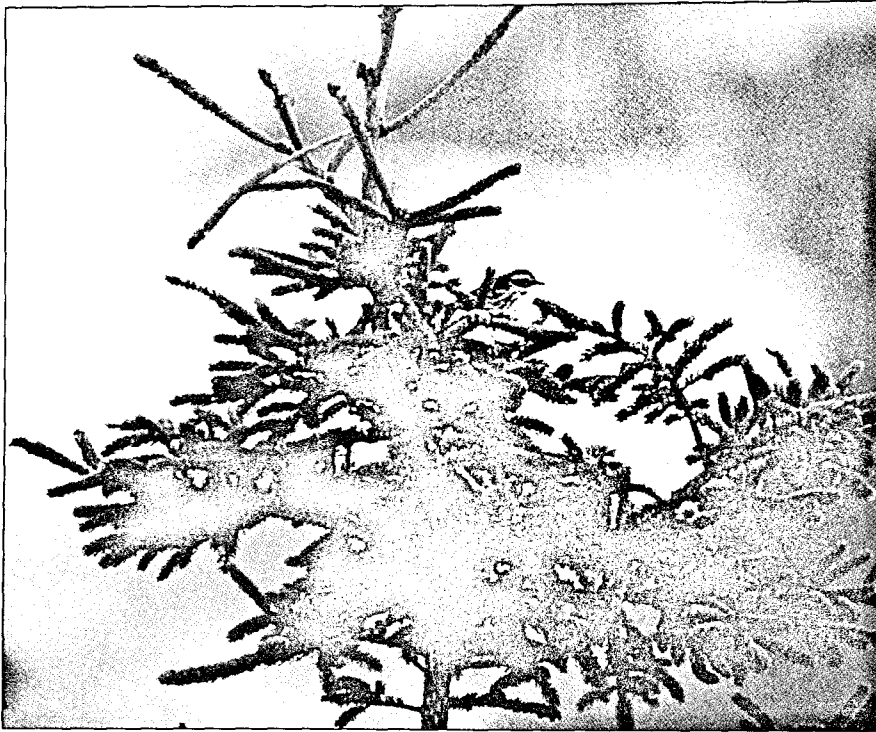
(BMT). Mew Gull reports were on the low side, with an early adult Sept. 15 at St. John's, NF (TB), and a 2nd-winter bird Nov. 11–30 at Yarmouth, NS (MN). A well seen juv. Sabine's Gull was off Brier I., NS, Sept. 10 (CH, DM).

#### DOVES TO SHRIKES

Nova Scotia's 15th **White-winged Dove** was at a W. Pubnico feeder Nov. 15–26 (R&M D'Eon). It was a very poor fall for Snowy Owl, despite a Sept. 30 harbinger at Louisbourg, NS (AD). Very late vagrant Chimney Swifts were in e. Newfoundland at Portugal Cove S. Nov. 7 (KK, PL) and St. John's Nov. 8 (*vide* BMT). It was an off year for the irruptive Red-bellied Woodpecker, with only 3 reports: one Oct. 24–26 at Kingston, NS (*vide* JT); one Nov. 3 at Economy, NS (FS); and the last Nov. 20–30 at Liverpool, NS (*vide* BMy). The nearly annual but always exciting **Say's Phoebe** was enjoyed by many at Brier I., NS, Sept. 6–10 (*vide* BMy). Immature **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** were seen at Schooner Pond, CBI, NS, Oct. 4 (JM, GM) and R. Bourgeois, Shelburne, NS, Nov. 16 (GD). Details were short on a yellow-breasted kingbird at CSI, NS, Oct. 16, thought to be a Couch's Kingbird.

Perhaps related to whatever caused the appearance of two early-November swifts on the Avalon Pen., NF, were a Cliff Swallow Nov. 7 at Patricks Cove (DP) and a Barn Swallow Nov. 9 at Cape St. Mary's (TB). Red-breasted Nuthatches were in high numbers in all areas. Carolina Wren remains rare, but keeps an annual presence with one in mid-August at Fredericton (CC); one Oct. 4 far east at Schooner Pt., CBI, NS (JM, GM); and one Oct. 19–Nov. 11 at Ketch Harbour, NS (DC, AV et al.). A rare migrant Sedge Wren was found at Brier I., NS, Oct. 1 (FL et al.). Northern Wheatear maintained the high numbers of the 1990s with six reported: one Aug. 30–Sept. 1 at W. Pubnico, NS (MN); one

**SA** Arguably the most unusual bird ever seen in the Region was the ad. **Brown Shrike** (*Lanius cristatus*) found by Foxall in Halifax, NS. During its stay Nov. 22–Dec. 1 it was photographed and viewed by 300+ admirers, even achieving television footage on the national news. This Asian native had been recorded 6 times in Alaska and twice in California. Racial identification was not solved.



The city of St. John's, Newfoundland, has gained fame as a "vagrant trap" for warblers (and other birds) straying in from the south or west. This Townsend's Warbler, photographed there on November 29, 1997, represented a seventh record for the province. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish

Sept. 26–29 at Bon Portage I., NS (RN); one Oct. 25 at Cherry Hill, NS (SC); one Sept. 3 at Gros Morne N.P., NF (NE); one Sept. 10 at Long Harbour, NF (TP); and one Sept. 13 at St. John's, NF (BMc). A significant Regionwide influx of Bohemian Waxwings began with a flock of 64 Nov. 1 at SPM. Flocks of 100+ were frequent across the Region in the last half of November. See Winter Report.

#### VIREOS AND WARBLERS

Yellow-throated Vireos were well reported with one Sept. 2 at Cap Brûlé, NB (RM); one Sept. 28 at First L., Halifax, NS (PL); one Oct. 4 at Schooner Pt., CBI, NS (JM, GM); and one Sept. 22 at Blackhead, NF

(BMT). There was a literal wave of the rare White-eyed Vireo in the first week of October, with five (two banded on GMI) in New Brunswick, three in Nova Scotia, and two in Newfoundland.

Sightings of the regular but rare "southern warblers" were as follows: Blue-winged Warbler, one at Sand L., CBI, NS, Sept. 3 (CM); one at Duncan Cove, NS, Oct. 5 (DC, AV); and one at St. John's Sept. 8 (DF). Golden-winged Warbler, one Sept. 27 at Bear Cove Pt., NF (JWe). Yellow-throated Warbler, one Aug. 28 and Oct. 4 at Sable I., NS (ZL), and one Sept. 19 at Hartlen Pt., NS (D&CM). **Cerulean Warbler**, one Oct. 1 at CSI, NS (D&CM), and one Aug. 26 & 27 at St. John's, a 4th record for Newfound-

land, photographed (JWe et al.). Prothonotary Warbler, one Aug. 28 at GMI, NB (TBe), and one Aug. 6 & 7 at Sable I., NS (ZL). Worm-eating Warbler, one Sept. 19 at Sable I., NS (ZL), and one Oct. 5 on St. Pierre, SPM, for a 2nd island record (PA). Kentucky Warbler, one Aug. 28 at GMI, NB, banded (BD); one Sept. 1 at Cappahayden, NF (JWe, JP); and one Sept. 20 at Bear Cove, NF (KK). Hooded Warbler, one Nov. 13 at Mary's Pt., NB (MM); one Aug. 26–Sept. 14 and one Oct. 4 at Sable I., NS (ZL); and one Aug. 31–Sept. 5 at Cape Spear, NF (BMt, PL).

A Connecticut Warbler was banded Sept. 14 on Seal I., NS (RN), and one was reported Aug. 26–28 from CSI, NS (*vide* BMy). Newfoundland's 7th **Townsend's Warbler** was at St. John's Nov. 9 into December (BMT et al.). The most strikingly late of the 18 species of November warblers found in the Region was a Tennessee Warbler Nov. 27–Dec. 3 at St. John's, NF (BMT et al.).

#### SPARROWS TO FINCHES

An ad. **Harris's Sparrow** was at Riverview, NB, Sept. 27 (JT). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in average numbers, with one Oct. 31 at Grande-Digue, NB (DD); one in late November at Sackville, NB (*vide* ST); one Nov. 22 at Cape Tormentine, NB (DRo); and one in late November at Buchans, NF (DRe). The only Orchard Oriole was at Little Harbour, NS, Aug. 23 (DY). Pine Grosbeaks were moving S in large numbers in e. New Brunswick in late October and November. Large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks moved E in New Brunswick in late October and November. Hundreds appeared in Newfoundland during November.

Despite a poor cone crop, White-winged Crossbills were common to abundant Regionwide from August to November. In Newfoundland they were flying high over-

#### TOTALS OF ANNUAL VAGRANTS BY PROVINCE

	NEW BRUNSWICK	NOVA SCOTIA	NEWFOUNDLAND	ST. PIERRE ET MIQUELON
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5	2	2	0
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	2	0	0
Western Kingbird	3	5	0	0
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9	5	3	0
Prairie Warbler	8	17	8	0
Yellow-breasted Chat	7	19	4	0
Blue Grosbeak	2	1	2	2
Dickcissel	10	10	6	1
Clay-colored Sparrow	6	5	2	0
Field Sparrow	3	5	0	0
Lark Sparrow	2	6	1	1
Grasshopper Sparrow	0	4	1	0

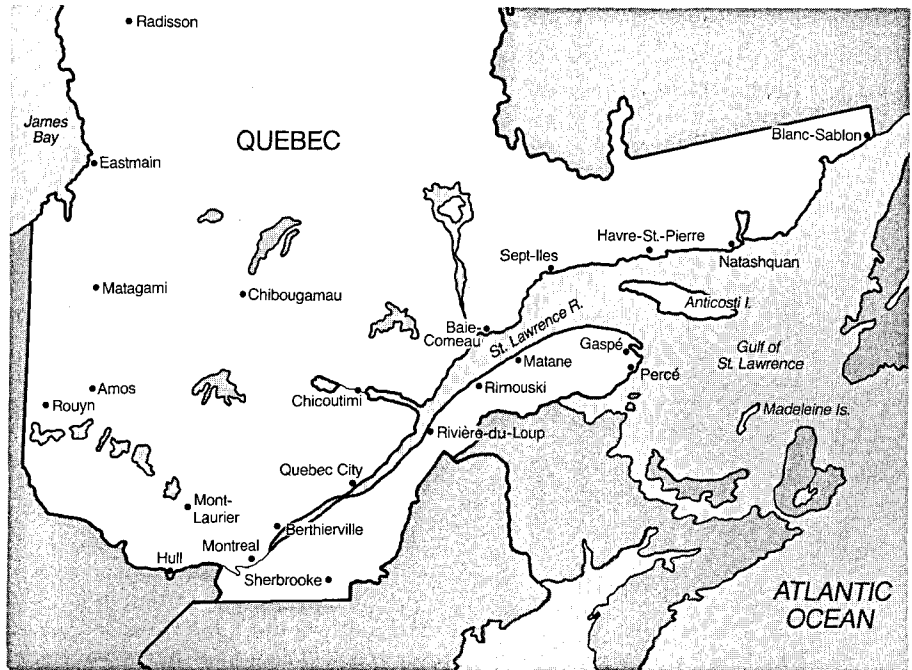
# québec region

head, rarely coming down to earth. When they did come down, they fed on alder catkins, a food source shunned in times of cone abundance. In New Brunswick, White-winged Crossbills visited feeders. Eleven birds banded on GMI in October were all "lean" (BD). An early and large influx of Com. Redpolls in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia started in mid-October. Three-hundred redpolls per day flew over the GMI banding station in late October. Ninety percent of 250 banded were hatch-year birds (BD). Pine Siskins were also common everywhere.

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## PIERRE BANNON and NORMAND DAVID

The weather was pleasant from August through most of October, with temperatures and precipitation close to normal. This pattern changed abruptly in late October with the early arrival of our first snowfalls. November continued cold, with snow covering the ground in most areas by the second half of the month. The season was uneventful, with few rarities. The passerine migration was disappointing, waterfowl counts were down in comparison to last year, and the shorebird flight was weak. An early and strong flight of winter finches was the only highlight.

### GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL

A grebe of the genus *Aechmophorus* was seen far from the shore at Lévis Nov. 28–30 (JL, A. Couture). Manx Shearwaters included singles from the Matane/Godbout ferry Aug. 4 (J.P. Ouellet, M. Lafleur), from the Trois-Pistoles/Les Escoumins ferry Aug. 14 (AR, D. Ruest, G. Gendron), off the Magdalens Is. Aug. 28 (A. Poirier), and four individuals from the Matane/Baie-Comeau ferry Aug. 11 (F. Bédard).

The Great Egret has never been so common in the Montreal area, as evidenced by

almost daily reports of single birds or flocks of two to six individuals throughout August and September. Southern herons were otherwise scarce, and included single Snowy Egrets at Cacouna Sept. 14 (D. Bérubé, J. Després) and at Carillon Sept. 7 (R. Levrett, *vide* B. McDuff) and single Cattle Egrets at Sainte-Marcelline-de-Kildare Nov. 7 (G. Desrochers) and at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Nov. 13 (*vide* MM). An ad. Glossy Ibis in basic plumage, carefully identified at Saint-Laurent-de-Gallichan Nov. 1–4, was not only a first for the Abitibi region but also established a new record late date for the province (Y. Leclerc, v.o., ph.).

An imm. Tundra Swan was enjoyed by several observers at Sainte-Martine Nov. 24–30 (B. Leboeuf, v.o.), while a Mute Swan visited Bonaventure Aug. 31–Sept. 1 (JM. Pitre). For the 2nd consecutive year, an ad. **Pink-footed Goose** stopped at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague Nov. 8–11, providing our 4th Regional record (PB, JCS, LS). A Greater White-fronted Goose encountered at Carleton Sept. 7 represented the only record this fall (L. Desjardins, A. Grenier).

A remarkable nine Canada Geese of small size, apparently of the *hutchinsii* race, were found: two at Cap Tourmente Oct. 15 (ND), singles at Chambly Oct. 18 (SD, F. Gariépy) and Victoriaville Oct. 25 (MG et