

Atlantic Provinces



Bruce Mactavish

37 Waterford Bridge Road
St John's, Newfoundland A1E 1C5
(bruce.mactavish1@nf.sympatico.ca)

No news often means good news for breeding birds. There were no dramatic cold wet spells to inhibit survival of insectivore nestlings. There were no high tides to wipe out beach nesting species. There was ample rain. There were no stifling heat waves. It was a bog-standard breeding season in the Region. Rarities were on the light side, with Eared Grebe making a first appearance in New Brunswick. St. Pierre et Miquelon had their second Sandwich Tern.

Abbreviations: G.M.I. (Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick).

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

The southernmost nesting Red-throated Loons in North America were holding their own at Miquelon, SPM with two known nests and two others suspected (RE). A Pied-billed Grebe was sitting on a floating nest at Loch Lomond, NF 16 Jun where the species was first established as a breeding species in the province only recently (LB). New Brunswick's first **Eared Grebe** was a breeding-plumaged bird at Wilson Pt. Rd, Miscou I. on the unexpected date of 1 Jun (RD, FB). Unseasonable grebes in New Brunswick were a Horned Grebe in late Jun at Long Pond Bay, G.M.I.

(*vide* BD) and a Red-necked Grebe at Napadogan L. 23 Jun (DG). Manx Shearwater remains fairly common and is probably increasing in the summer in se. Newfoundland and St. Pierre et Miquelon, with several counts of 50-100+ individuals. The only known breeding colony is still the one near Lawn, Burin Pen., NF. A feeding frenzy of 20,000 Northern Gannets off Miscou I., NB on 3 Jun must have been a spectacular sight (RS et al.). The seven sightings of **American White Pelican** at widely spaced localities in New Brunswick between 13 Jun and 26 Jul were possibly all of the same bird (*vide* DC).

The only report of the very locally breeding Least Bittern was one heard at Amherst Point Bird Sanctuary 11 Jun (FL). It was an average year for s. herons in the Region. Great Egret was the most numerous, with 3 in New Brunswick and 2 in Nova Scotia. The only reports of the formerly more regularly straying Snowy Egret were 2 at Sambro Head, NS 12-25 Jul (*vide* IM). Four Cattle Egrets at Bay Bulls, NF 22-24 June was an unusual date for a sighting of multiple birds in the Region (*vide* PL). A Green Heron was well out of range at St. Shotts, NF 7 Jul (KK, JWe). An exhausted Yellow-crowned Night-Heron appeared offshore at Sable I., NS 14 Jul (ZL).

Turkey Vultures raised 2 young at the only known nesting locality in the Region, Quispamisis, NB (JWi). A Turkey Vulture at Brier I., NS on 21 Jun was considered unusual for early summer, yet the area receives the

largest concentrations of the species in the Region in autumn and early winter (EM).

A Brant at Wabush, NF on 5 Jun was an unusual sighting for w. Labrador (CD). Five Wood Ducks in the Gambo-Glovertown, NF area in early Jun was unexpected in a province where the species is not yet known to breed (GS). A male Eurasian Wigeon was paired with a female American Wigeon in a pond near Stephenville Crossing, NF on 9 Jun (PL). There were 2 male Eurasian Wigeon in the same pond in early Jul (ST). The first suggestion that Tufted Ducks might eventually remain behind to breed in the Region was a pair 16-19 Jun at pond near St. John's NF (KK). A male Redhead spent the first two weeks of Jun at Fig L. in s.-cen. Labrador, a first Labrador record (JS, IG). The only report of Ruddy Duck was a male on a sewage lagoon (typical) at St. Léonard, NB (*vide* DC). For the 3rd summer in a row, a Rough-legged Hawk summered on the Tantramar marsh, NB (KP). Another unseasonable individual was at Donkin, C.B.I., NS on 13 Jul (*vide* IM). A Yellow Rail was heard calling in late evening 22 Jun at Whale Cove Marsh, G.M.I., NB, where there are very few records at any time of year (*vide* BD). Sora is regularly reported in small numbers across s.-cen. Labrador, but the first actual breeding record discovered was an ad with a chick 26 Jul at Labrador City (CD). Sandhill Cranes continue to be present at widely scattered locations throughout the Region during the summer months. In New Brunswick, there was a pair at Havenlock for some time (*vide* DC), and an individual was near Bouctouche 10 Jul (ML). The island of Newfoundland had one at Upper Ferry 21 Jun (AG) and a banded individual at Joe Batts Arm 8-10 Jul (*vide* PL).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

The stalwart pair of **American Oystercatchers** raised 3 young at Cape Sable I., NS, as is now expected. There was one unmated ad. also present through the season (MN et al.). For the 2nd summer in a row, an ad. summered on the small islands off se. Grand Manan I., NB (BD et al.). The island of Newfoundland recorded its 5th American Avocet, one at Piccadilly 5-7 Jun (BW et al.). Six Willets in Newfoundland (*vide* PL) and 2 in Miquelon, SPM (*vide* RE) were ne. of the breeding range Southbound Whimbrel arrived right on cue, with the first individual 28 Jun at Conrad's Beach, NS (*vide* SF) and the first flock being 35 on 3 Jul at Isthmus, SPM (LJ). A slightly early Hudsonian Godwit was at Morien Bar, C.B.I., NS 28 Jun (SM). A cooperative Marbled Godwit frequented Maisonette Dune, NB 14

Jul to Aug (NB et al.). A dark Ruff was as Eel River Bar, NB 14 Jul (ML). An impressive 5000+ Short-billed Dowitchers 21 Jul at Cape Sable I., NS was called an "average" number for this locality (MN et al.). The only Wilson's Phalaropes reports were 3 (2 in early Jun, one in late Jul) in New Brunswick (*fide* DC). Four hundred Red Phalaropes on 6 Jun at Miquelon, SPM during stormy weather was an unusual spring concentration (RE). In late July "thousands" of both Red-necked and Red Phalaropes were seen on whale watching trips off Brier I., NS (*fide* SF).

There were just 2 reported skuas: one unidentified to species off Brier I., NS in late Jul (*fide* BMy) and a Great Skua at sea southwest of St. Pierre, SPM 26 Jul (LJ). The only Little Gull was at Eel River Bar, NB 8-14 Jul (m. ob.) There were 3 Laughing Gulls during the 3rd week of Jun on Miquelon, SPM (RE) and singles in Newfoundland at Cape Spear 29 Jun (CB) and Fortune 11 Jul (Gary Felter, Jack Hugus). The fluctuating colony of Black-headed Gulls at Stephenville Crossing, NF reached a new high of 16 nests with eggs or chicks (Greg Robertson). A report of a California Gull at Long Pond, G.M.I., NB in Jun was unfortunately not accompanied by details. A **Sandwich Tern** was photographed at St. Pierre, SPM on 25 Jul was the 2nd for the French islands (PA). Ten years of careful monitoring and protection of Roseate Terns at The Brothers, NS has resulted in a record 90 nests producing 62 chicks (Ted d'Eon). The impressive Common Tern colony at Kouchibouguac N P contained 6454 nests 14 Jun (Mike LeBlanc). Two **Least Terns** were unexpected early summer visitors at Little Sheep I., G.M.I., NB 21 Jun (BD). A rare summer Dovekie was at Miquelon, SPM 5 Jun (BL).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Mourning Doves are very slowly beginning to breed in e. portions of the Region. The first breeding record for St. Pierre et Miquelon was confirmed with an ad. and 2 juvs. at St. Pierre 12 Jul (DG). There were two broods of Mourning Doves at St. Lawrence, Burin Pen., NF (NW, GW). Both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick reported above-average numbers of Black-billed Cuckoos. One strayed as far e. as Miquelon, SPM 1 Jul (DD). Spring overshooting or scouting Eastern Wood-Pewees were at Upper Ferry, NF 9 Jun (PL, JP), Langlade, SPM 15 Jun (PA) and St. Pierre, SPM 22 Jun (PA). Least Flycatcher is increasing as a summer resident in sw. Newfoundland, where 11 territorial males were recorded in Jun (PL). Because Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are a highly attractive, the species is noticed more often off the

beaten track of birders than perhaps any other regular long-distance vagrant in the Region. This season's two sightings were both from tourist destinations, with one at the Grand Manan Island ferry dock at Blacks Harbour, NB 26 Jun (BS) and one near Peggy's Cove, NS 8 Jun (Kay Richardson). Purple Martins venturing ne. of the breeding range were one at Loch Lomond, NF 3 Jun (KK) and one at St. Pierre, SPM 12 Jun (RE).

A pair of Brown Creepers near Goose Bay, Labrador in Jul was n. of the known breeding range (IS). The first Regional breeding record of Carolina Wren occurred on Grand Manan I., NB with one pair producing two broods. With the increasing frequency of summer Carolina Wrens in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, breeding was anticipated. Nova Scotia came close to getting breeding House Wrens at Wolfville when a pair built a nest that was abandoned two weeks later (*fide* JT). Summer research in the lower Churchill River valley w. of Goose Bay, Labrador revealed that both Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet were more numerous than previously known (IS). Eastern Bluebirds were reported in good numbers in New Brunswick (DC). A Wood Thrush 3 Jun at Cheeseman P. P. in the sw. corner of the island of Newfoundland was one of only a handful of provincial records (KK). Northern Mockingbirds annually push the limits of pioneering by going to Labrador. This season there was one during Jun at Goose Bay (Betty Learning). The only known Brown Thrasher nesting of the season was at last year's site at The Hawk, Cape Sable, NS where three young were fledged from one nest (MN).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Five Nashville Warblers and 7 Northern Parulas in w. Newfoundland were typical numbers during the breeding season for these scarce breeders (PL et al.). A male Prothonotary Warbler 27 Jul in a backyard at St. Lawrence, Burin Pen., NF was an early but not unprecedented date in the Region for this flashy southern vagrant (GW, NW). An imm. male Summer Tanager lingered until 10 Jun at a Cape Sable, NS feeder (MN). Extralimital Scarlet Tanagers were at St. Pierre, SPM 2-7 Jun (LJ et al.) and Cupids, NF 2 Jun (PL). An Eastern Towhee singing in a forest clearcut on the Wolfville, NS ridge from late Jun to late Jul failed to attract a mate (JT). Chipping Sparrows were again recorded during the breeding season in the lower valley of the Churchill R., adding to the suspicion that the species is a regular breeder in small numbers in s.-cen. Labrador (IS). Field Sparrows were singing at two locations in New Brunswick,

with one 28 Jun at McCowans Corner (PP, DG) and another 28 Jul at Oromocto (*fide* DC). A well-seen Lark Sparrow in the sw. corner of Newfoundland at Searston on 20 Jun was a most unseasonable occurrence of this regular w. vagrant, which is usually found Aug to Oct in the Region (DP). First-year Indigo Buntings frequently sing n. of the species's breeding range, as was exemplified by individuals at Fredericton, NB 23 Jun (*fide* DC), Miquelon, SPM 18 Jun (*fide* RE) and St. John's, NF 5-11 Jul (MP et al.).

A small colony of breeding Common Grackles at St. Lawrence, Burin Pen., NF was an eastward extension of the breeding range within the province (G. & N. Wilson). Baltimore Oriole is prominent among the group of gaudy s. species with a strong spring presence that does not reflect its limited breeding population in the Region. A perfect example of this comes from the well-known vagrant trap, Brier I., NS, where 3 males and a female 1 Jun were down to one male on 2 Jun and none thereafter (*fide* DM).

Finches, especially White-winged Crossbills, often exhibit something like a sixth sense when it comes to knowing what part of the country has a good cone crop. Both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland reported a fairly good cone crop, but numbers of White-winged Crossbills were strangely low, and there no reports of singing birds. Pine Siskins were reasonably well reported from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Contributors (subregional editors in bold-face): Pascal Asselin, Louis Bateman, Nicole Benoit, **Todd Boland**, Frank Branch, Chris Brown, **David Christie**, **Brian Dalzell**, Denis Detcheverry, Robert Doiron, **Fred Dobson**, Denis Doucet, **Roger Etcheberry**, **Sylvia Fullerton**, Don Gibson, Ian Goudie, Alix Gray, **Sylvia Fullerton**, Laurent Jackman, Ken Knowles, Fulton Lavender, Mike LeBlanc, Bruno Letournal, **Paul Linegar**, Zoe Lucas, Mike Lushington, **Angus Maclean**, **Bruce Mactavish**, **Blake Maybank** (BMy), **Ken McKenna**, **Ian McLaren**, David McCorquodale, **Susann Myers**, Laurie Murison, Murray Newell, Peter Pearce, Doug Phelan, Kathy Popma, Greg Robertson, Isobel Schmelzer, Bev Schneider, Jytte Selno, Ron Steeves, Greg Stroud, Stuart Tingley, Judy Tufts, John Wells, Jim Wilson, Norman Wilson, Gail Wilson, Bill Winsor.

