

and one in New Brunswick. There were 3 Snowy Egrets in Nova Scotia and a late individual at Grand Barachois, SPM 25 Nov (*fide* RE). All 4 of the Region's Little Blue Herons were in Nova Scotia. There was a light mid-Nov influx of Cattle Egrets, with 5 in Nova Scotia and one landing on a ship 240 km s. of Cape Race, NF. The only Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were late single birds, presumably identified with care, at Sable I., NS 17 Oct (ZL) and Castalia Marsh, G.M.I., NB 31 Oct (BD). Single Black Vultures were in n. New Brunswick at Val-Comeau 26 Sep (ph. Ella Robichaud) and Menneval, *Restigouche* 25 Oct (Pat Emond). The Turkey Vulture

roost at Midland, Kings NB peaked at 44 (including 3 juvs.) on 1 Oct (JWi). Not to be outdone, Brier I., NS, which typically has the biggest autumn totals, recorded 50+ migrants on 12 Oct (EM).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Two Greater White-fronted Geese were in Nova Scotia: one near Windsor 2 Oct—late Nov (m. ob.) and one at Pembroke Pond, *Yarmouth* 17-30 Nov (MN). A Brant at Miquelon, SPM 31 Oct (PD) and 3 singles near St. John's late Sep—late Nov (m. ob.) were rarities in the e. extremities of the Region. A Gadwall was a rare at St. Pierre, SPM 12 Nov (Philippe Hacala). Eurasian Wigeons were reported in somewhat low numbers, with one in New Brunswick, 4 in Nova Scotia, and 3 in Newfoundland. The annual Tufted Duck flotilla at St. John's, NF began with the arrival of 4 on 20 Oct, quickly rising to 10 by early Nov and remaining steady to the end of the period (m. ob.). The only other report in the Region was at Pembroke L., *Yarmouth*, NS 26 Nov (MN). Hooded Mergansers numbers are virtually exploding as an autumn migrant in the Region. Numbers unheard of just five or 10 years ago are being reported throughout New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Oct and Nov. Selected totals from Nova Scotia were: 125 at Haliburton Gut, *Pictou* 26 Oct (KM), 49 at Eel L., *Yarmouth* 9 Nov (Paul Gould), and 200+ at Lanark, *Antigonish* 23 Nov (RL). It was not a big year for Ruddy Duck in the Region, but 10 at the Caraquet, NB sewage lagoon 20 Aug (BS) and 7 at Memramcook L., NB 1 Sep (Alian Clavette) were significant counts late-summer counts.

Carefully identified Cooper's Hawks were at Brier I., NS 15 Sep (WP) and 15 Oct (EM). Scarce any where in the Region, a Red-shouldered Hawk was out of place on Seal I., NS 18 Sep (AL). One thousand Broad-winged Hawks over Brier I., NS 18 Sep is one of the highest counts ever in the Region (MW). New Brunswick's first Swainson's Hawk was a beautifully photographed dark-morph bird at Waterside, *Albert* 10-11 Oct (ST et al.). A well-documented Crested Caracara roamed around Maltempec, *Gloucester*, NB during the last two weeks of Oct eating earthworms and grubs in farm fields (Frank Branch et al.). It was judged to be a subad. bird, perhaps adding credibility to it being a genuine

vagrant. However, it is generally conceded that Crested Caracaras far out of range are escapees. There were more than the usual Oct reports of Gyrfalcon in s. parts of the Region, none with details as per usual. Two imm. white-morph birds were on separate oil drilling platforms 200+ km ese. of St. John's, NF in late Nov.

The only Sandhill Cranes reported were one at Aylesford, Kings, NS 24 Aug (Mike Boudreau) and one in *Yarmouth*, NS in late Oct (*fide* MN).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

The largest concentration of American Golden-Plover was 350 resting on gravel bar at St. Vincents, NF beach in late Sep (DP). Semipalmated Plover is an abundant migrant through the Region, but astronomical counts were reported from Nova Scotia shorebird surveys, with 3850 at The Cape, C.S.I., NS 11 Aug (BS, SS), 2850 at Crescent Beach 18 Aug (SF), and 3000+ at Cole Harbour 29 Aug (HT). The C.S.I. American Oystercatchers fledged 3 young, but one lost a wing, possibly due to collision with overhead wire; the others remained until 6 Oct (MN). The first American Avocet for St. Pierre et Miquelon was photographed at St. Pierre 11-12 Aug (PB, PA, LJ). A late Upland Sandpiper was at The Hawk, C.S.I., NS 26-28 Sep (MN et al.). An impressive 4500 Sanderlings were at C.S.I., NS 26 Sep and 27 Oct (JN). Most of the 200,000 shorebirds roosting near Grand Pré, NS 8-9 Aug were Semipalmated Sandpipers (Donald Sam). It was a good season for Baird's Sandpipers, with flocks of up to 6 in New Brunswick and at least 32 individuals in Nova Scotia. Only 2 made it to Newfoundland. An ad. Curlew Sandpiper was at Daniels Head, C.S.I., NS 1 Aug (JN et al.). It was a good season for Stilt Sandpipers, with 17 in Nova Scotia and one as far e. as Newfoundland. It was also a fairly good season for Buff-breasted Sandpipers, with at least 4 in New Brunswick, 10 in Nova Scotia, and 14 in Newfoundland. Four Ruffs Regionwide was a little above recent autumn averages: singles were at Daniels Head, C.S.I., NS 8 Aug (JN), Dartmouth, NS 23-30 Nov (SF et al.), Cape Freels, NF 8 Sep (Kevin Butler), and St. John's, NF 23-25 Sep (Mike Parmenter et al.). There was a peak of 6125 Short-billed Dowitchers at C.S.I., NS on 31 Jul (BS, SS). Long-billed Dowitcher reports were one on the Eel

SA The saga of **Gray Heron** in the Region, and North America, has been a fascinating one. In October 1999, ago a "Great Blue Heron" was picked up alive but in a weakened state on the Newfoundland coast and brought to a rehabilitation center, where it died a few days later. The specimen was sent to the Memorial University of Newfoundland for students to use as a practice specimen for making study skins. In late 2002, Martin Renner was looking through the university bird collection, noticed the heron, and was immediately suspicious of the identity. Measurements and plumage confirmed it as a Gray Heron. Details on this first specimen record for North America will be published elsewhere.

A week after Renner's discovery of the specimen, we received word of three heron-like birds that landed on an oil tanker 1750 km east of Newfoundland 28 September 2002. When the tanker arrived five days later and anchored 4 km offshore of Conception Bay, NF, two of these birds had died—one thrown over board at sea and the other into a garbage bag. The third, a Gray Heron, was still alive and feisty, but it expired two days later.

Gray Heron has not previously been documented by specimen or photograph in North America. In Alaska, there is a sight record of the species on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs 1 August 1999 (Barton, K. M., and S. D. Smith. First report of the Gray Heron in the United States. *Western Birds* 32: 88-90). At the other corner of this journal's reporting area, Gray Herons are "routinely" seen on Barbados by local birders (*fide* Floyd Hayes; up to 3 in one location in 1998/1999), where the first record comes from 1963 and where at least seven records are documented. There are otherwise records of the species from Montserrat, Trinidad (2), Tobago, and Martinique, as well as from Brazil and French Guiana. In the North Atlantic, Gray Heron is a regular and common vagrant to Iceland, where annual, and there is a handful of records from Greenland as well. We might therefore expect a few more Gray Herons to arrive on our shores, assisted or otherwise.

SA A **Corn Crake** was flushed twice from close range at Cape Race, NF 2 Nov (BMT, KK) and then once again three hours later by three more lucky observers (PL, DP, C. Brown). This represents the 21st record for North America. Recent records from the Region (and North America) are from Shelburne, NS 28-30 Nov 1997 and St. Pierre, SPM 22 Oct 1989. Relatively recent records from Bermuda (which lies about 12 degrees west of Cape Race's longitude) in 1978, 1981, and 1982 suggest that the species could be a more frequent trans-Atlantic vagrant than current records indicate. The only other Old World crake known from the New World is Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*), also a long-distance migrant, collected at St. Martin in the Caribbean in 1956.

River Bar, NB 7 Oct (ST et al.), 2 at Malbaie Nord, Miscou I., NB 13 Oct (MD), 3 at C.S.I., NS 26 Sep (JN, MN), one on Brier I., NS 30 Sep (EM et al.), and 2 at Morien Bar, Cape Breton I., NS 13 Oct (SM).

Skua reports were numerous. Single South Polar Skuas were reported off Grand Manan I., NB 20 Aug and 5 Sep (Durlan Ingersoll), while reports of Great Skuas were more widespread: one 30 Aug (LM) and 17 Sep (Peter Wilcox) off Grand Manan I., NB; 2 on 4 Sep (JC) and one 15 Sep (WP) off Brier I., NS. Six unidentified skuas were noted flying past Cape Spear, NF in a gale 21 Sep (BMT). Single Laughing Gulls were at Brier I., NS 17 Sep (MW), on Sable I., NS 29 Sep (ZL), and at Gaskiers, NF 7 Sep (IJ). Probably 3 Little Gulls, 2 first-winter birds and 2 ads., were seen around G.M.I., NB Oct—Nov (v. o.). The peak of Black-headed Gulls at St. John's was a typical 80 in Nov (BMT). Ad. Mew (Common) Gulls were at Barrington Passage, NS 2-3 Nov (JN, MN) and St. John's, NF 3-30 Nov (BMT). A white-headed ad. Yellow-legged Gull was photographed at St. John's, NF landfill 12 Nov (BMT). Fourteen Lesser Black-backed Gulls found in Nova Scotia is a measure of the gradual increase of the species in the Region. At least 25 were in St. John's NF Sep—Nov (PL, BMT). The only location in the Region where Sabine's Gull occurs with some regularity is Grand Manan I., NB where an ad. was present 11-16 Sep (ST et al.).

Two Forster's Terns appeared at Conrads Beach, Halifax, NS 25-30 (Terry Paquet); the winter report will have more Forster's Terns. An exhausted Black Skimmer was found on a beach in Richmond, NS on 12 Sep, immediately after the passage of Hurricane Gustav (Billy Digout, *vide* BMy). High counts of Atlantic Puffin off Brier I., NS—e. g., 321 on 4 Sep (JC)—reflect the species' growing breeding population in the Bay of Fundy (*vide* BMy).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Twenty-five Mourning Doves at Wabush 30 Sep was a very high count for Labrador (CD). The season's White-winged Dove was at North Head, G.M.I., NB 29 Aug (Gilles Roux et al.). A big influx of Yellow-billed Cuckoo began in the 3rd week of Sep and continued through Oct, with 30+ in New Brunswick and at least 32 in Nova Scotia but only 3 in Newfoundland. It was a poor autumn for Snowy Owl, with only 6 reported across the Region. A fresh dead Long-eared Owl was a vagrant on Sable I., NS 9 Nov (ZL). Another dead owl of note was a Boreal Owl found at Soldiers Cove, Richmond, NS in mid-Nov (*vide* IM). The Region's 2nd Black-chinned Hummingbird was an imm. male at Dave Christie's feeder at Mary's Pt., NB 26-31 Oct. It was well documented with photographs and observed by 90 people! For the first time in recent memory, not a single Red-

headed or Red-bellied Woodpecker was reported in the Region.

There were 5 Western Kingbirds Region-wide between late Aug and 12 Oct, with 2 each in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and one in Newfoundland, all typical totals. An ad. Fork-tailed Flycatcher was photographed at Grand Barachois, NB 19-20 Sep (ST et al.), and the first for St. Pierre et Miquelon was an ad. at Langlade 7-30 Oct (Denis Detcheberry et al.). Virtually extirpated from the Region as a breeder and migrant, a Loggerhead Shrike, nicely documented with photographs, was remarkable at Daniels Head, C.S.I., NS 19 Sep (JN et al.). A surprising 8 White-eyed Vireos visited the Region, 3 in New Brunswick, 5 in Nova Scotia, all but one 1-23 Oct and all on southern coastlines except one at Miscou I., NB 12 Oct (RD). There were no reports of Yellow-throated Vireo. Unexpected was the late arrival of 30 Tree Swallows at both Halifax, NS (HT) and C.S.I., NS on 15 Nov, with some staying to the end of the month. An unprecedented autumn flock of 7 Purple Martins flew in off the ocean at Cape Spear, NF fighting a strong wind 21 Sep (BMT). Carolina Wrens were present through the season at the North Head, G.M.I., NB breeding site. Another was present late Aug to Oct at Maders Cove, Lunenburg, NS (*vide* AH). More noteworthy were 2 at a Campbellton, NB feeder in mid-Oct (Méline Maltais) and one at Fredericton, NB 7 Sep—5 Oct (PP). Surprising were 2 ad. and 2 recently fledged Sedge Wrens at Seal I., NS in early Sep, possibly representing a first breeding record of the province (FL et al.). Newfoundland's 5th Marsh Wren was near Cape Spear 15-20 Sep (DP). Totals for the under-reported Blue-gray Gnatcatcher—8 in New Brunswick, 8 in Nova Scotia, and one in Newfoundland—were not too far off the former highs of the days before the mid-1990s.

It was a fairly good autumn for Northern Wheatear: singles were on Sober I., Halifax, NS 23 Sep (KM), at Shag Harbour, Shelburne, NS 13-15 Nov (Terry Crowell et al.), and at Crystal Crescent Beach, Halifax, NS 24 Nov (very late; HT), while 2 were at St. Pierre, SPM 27 Sep (LJ). Nova Scotia's 4th Mountain Bluebird was a well-photographed female at C.S.I., NS 14-15 Nov (JN et al.). Small flocks of Bohemian Waxwings began appearing in mid-Nov at scattered locations in the Region.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Although most complained about the lack of s. warblers straying to the Region, a respectable list was nevertheless achieved. Single Blue-winged Warblers were at Bancroft Pt., G.M.I., NB 10 Oct (BD) and Pointe-du-Chêne, NB 8 Nov (ST), while a male Golden-winged Warbler was found at Miscou I., NB 12 Oct (RD). Yellow-throated Warblers graced Cocagne, NB 4 Nov (*vide* DC), Riverview, NB

in late Nov (ST et al.), Manuals, NF 31 Oct (PL), and St. John's, NF 17 Nov (DP), with a different bird at St. John's 23 Nov (AH). Prairie Warbler totals came to 5 in New Brunswick, 14+ in Nova Scotia, one in St. Pierre et Miquelon, and 6, including one until 28 Nov, in Newfoundland. Cerulean Warbler was represented by a lone bird at Bear Cove Pt., NF 15 Sep (PL). Two Prothonotary Warblers turned up, one on Bon Portage I., NS 18 Aug (Joan Czapalay) and one at St. Lawrence, Burin Pen., NF 27 Jul (Gail & Norm Wilson). A Kentucky Warbler was found by a birding tour group on Kent I., NB 5 Sep—only the 4th for province (Barry Zimmer, Marshall J. Iliff). Hooded Warbler was unusually numerous, with 5 in Nova Scotia (12 & 21 Sep, 13, 21 & 22 Oct) and 3 in Newfoundland (15 Sep, 2-3 & 14 Oct). Yellow-breasted Chats were numerous and under-reported, with rough totals of 20+ in New Brunswick, including the first in the n. *Madawaska*, 20+ in Nova Scotia, and 7 in Newfoundland.

The only Summer Tanager was banded on Bon Portage I., NS 14 Oct (*vide* BMy). A female Eastern Towhee was rare in at Mobile, NF 10 Nov (TB, DB). Clay-colored Sparrows were in average numbers, with totals of 6 in New Brunswick, 5 in Nova Scotia, and 3 in Newfoundland. Lark Sparrow totals were 3 in New Brunswick, 6 in Nova Scotia, and 2 in Newfoundland. An imm. Le Conte's Sparrow was captured and photographed in the hand at the banding station on Bon Portage I., NS 13 Sep for the 4th provincial record (*vide* BMy). An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow spent three days at a feeder at Little Harbour, Shelburne, NS in the 3rd week of Oct (David Young). Blue Grosbeaks were scarce this season, with 4 in Nova Scotia and one in Newfoundland. Nova Scotia's 9th Painted Bunting was a male photographed at a Clarke's Harbour feeder 22-25 Nov (m. ob.). A low 14 Dickcissels were reported across the Region. The only Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Seal I., NS in early Sep. Finches were in low to moderate numbers, with no irruptions of any species.

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