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Although winter 2005-2006 was not nearly as warm in Québec as it was in western Canada, Québec also experienced above-normal temperatures, with most of the province being at least 2° C above normal. Overall, the province also experienced above-normal precipitation, a significant part of it falling as rain in the south. As a result, some rivers of southern Québec had more open water than usual, prompting waterfowl to winter farther north. A prolonged spell of mild weather in early February lured some early migrants into the Region.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Two Greater White-fronted Geese were located at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 5 Dec (LG). A first for the Saguenay region, a Snow Goose wintered at Saint-Fulgence (C. Cormier), while a flock of 40 very early migrants showed up at Elgin 5 Feb (C. Lemoine). Canada Geese also appeared early in the Upper Richelieu valley, with counts of 100 on 4 Feb (E. Samson, A. Lacasse) and 250 on 5 Feb (MG); farther n., 2 wintered at La Baie (M. Tremblay, S. Tremblay et al.), while one was noted at Cap-d'Espoir 12 Feb (ML, C. Tremblay) and 2 at Barachois 12-24 Feb (JW). The number of wintering Wood Ducks was up significantly: a female survived at Beauport (JF. Rousseau et al.), as did 2 at Boisbriand (LS, PS); elsewhere, a male turned up at Noyan 1 Feb (MG, PB), a female at North Hatley 19 Feb, and a female at Victoriaville in Jan (J. Ducharme). A group of 23 Gadwalls wintered successfully at the bottom of the Lachine rapids, Montréal (PB), but singles at Chandler 15 Dec-21 Jan (AC, m.ob.) and at Sherbrooke 19 Feb (SR, FG) were more exceptional. A fe-

male American Wigeon was totally unexpected at Lac-Beauport 25 Dec-25 Feb (PL, J. Labrecque). A Northern Shoveler lingered at Gatineau until 18 Dec (R. Schreyer), but single imm. males at Sherbrooke 31 Dec (L. Germain) and Beauport 27 Jan-28 Feb (C. Chevalier, N. Hallé) were unprecedented. A Northern Pintail at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 12 Feb represented a first Feb record for the Gaspé Pen. (DM, R. Garrett). An apparent Mallard × Northern Pintail hybrid, a male, was photographed at Sherbrooke 19 Feb (SR, FG). A Green-winged Teal wintered at Bécancour (fide RB), while 3 at Barachois 18 Dec were late (JW); 22 at Lachenaie 18 Dec (SD et al.), increasing to 34 on 25 Dec (S. Robert), topped this exceptionally late influx.

A Redhead at Chandler 9 Dec-3 Jan (JRL, m.ob.) and 2 at Cabano 18 Dec-1 Jan (M. Beaulieu) were late. A wintering Ring-necked Duck was reported at Sherbrooke 3-19 Feb (B. Turgeon), while up to 95 Greater Scaup spent the winter at Tadoussac (RP). A Surf Scoter at Cap Bon Ami 11 Feb was a first for Feb in the Gaspé Pen. (D. Jalbert, T. Bernier). It was an excellent winter for the Bufflehead in the Gaspé Pen., as evidenced by sightings from six different municipalities (fide PP). An apparent Hooded Merganser × Common Goldeneye hybrid, a male, was reported at Sainte-Catherine 4 Jan (PB); this hybrid combination is seldom reported.

Single Common Loons lingered at I. Sainte-Hélène until 5 Jan (S. Guimond) and on L. Memphrémagog until 3 Feb (BT). Pied-billed Grebes were well represented, with singles at LaSalle 4 Jan-7 Feb (P. Lamontagne, m.ob.), Sherbrooke 19 Feb (SR, FG), Boucherville 15 Feb (P. Joly), and Magog 8-15 Jan (SR). The 125 Red-necked Grebes at Gascons 1 Dec represented a very high count for the date (AC, Y. Cyr). A Northern Fulmar at Les Escoumins 9 Dec was noteworthy (RP, V. Plante). A dozen Great Blue Herons spent the month of Jan at Bécancour, with one remaining until 16 Feb (RB).

## VULTURES THROUGH OWLS

The last Turkey Vultures of the season were singles at Hébertville 4 Dec (J. Gauthier, D. Larouche, M. Savard) and Hemmingford 27 Dec (D. Ouellette), but migrants soon reappeared with the onset of mild weather in early Feb: one at Saint-Armand 4 Feb (PB, GZ), one at Orford 9 Feb (S. Bergeron), and a few feeding on a carcass at Bécancour in early Feb (fide RB). A very late Osprey was spotted at Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix 13 Dec (R. Saint-Jean). Bald Eagles were thriving this winter in the Region; among many sightings, 11 delighted observers at Eardly 26 Jan (D. Dal-

laire). An ad. Cooper's Hawk wintered e. of its range at Rimouski (fide RS, m.ob.), and a Red-shouldered Hawk spent most of the winter at Québec City (P. Otis, m.ob.); a Red-shouldered at Boisbriand 4 Feb was thought to be an early migrant (LS, PS). Gyrfalcons were widespread, including 2 birds roosting nightly at Mont-Saint-Hilaire (m.ob.).

A record-late Virginia Rail at Rimouski 25 Dec was astounding (R. Pitre), while a Common Moorhen at Gatineau 18 Dec was very late, although previous winter records are known for the Region (fide M. Aubé). A Killdeer at Lachenaie 17-18 Dec was also late (G. Cyr, J. Perras), as were 2 Sanderlings reported on the Magdalen Islands C.B.C. 10 Dec (C. Roy, B. Vigneault). A Wilson's Snipe spent the winter at Val-d'Or, Abitibi for the 7th consecutive winter (C. Siano et al.), and 2 were at La Pocatière, a locality where the species has wintered previously (C. Auchu, C. Girard).

An ad. Franklin's Gull at Tadoussac 3 Dec (RP) and a Bonaparte's Gull at Cap-des-Rosiers 8 Jan (M. Côté, MC. Rancourt) were both record late. An ad. Ivory Gull at Cap-aux-Meules, Magdalen Is. 21-22 Feb was certainly one of the best finds this winter (A. Richard, DGG, CA. Gaudet et al.). A very late Forster's Tern was a surprise at Barachois 6 Dec (AC). A peak of over 3000 Dovekies was counted at Les Escoumins 9 Dec (RP). A Thick-billed Murre stopped at Chandler 28 Jan (AC, JRL).

Eastern Screech-Owls are capable of reaching high densities in suitable habitat, as evidenced by a high count of 15 at Mont-Saint-Grégoire 28 Jan (MG et al.). Though not present in epic proportions, Snowy Owls were more numerous than in most winters, almost throughout the Region. An impressive count of 23 came from the Hébertville plain, Lac-Saint-Jean 7 Jan (fide GS). Northern Hawk Owl reports were few and scattered, while Boreal Owls went virtually unnoticed, with only two reports from the Québec City area. Great Gray Owls staged a strong post-invasion appearance over most of the Region, with an interesting concentration of up to 8 birds at Cap Tourmente (fide JL).

## KINGFISHER THROUGH WARBLERS

Six Belted Kingfishers were seen in Jan and Feb in s. Québec, but singles at Notre-Dame-du-Laus in the Laurentians 11 Feb (D. Tremblay) and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 14-27 Jan (ML et al.) were most surprising. A single Red-bellied Woodpecker wintered at Saint-Godefroi on the Gaspé Pen. (MA), and a pair was observed at Châteauguay 4 Feb onwards (DD, m.ob.). A late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

was at Sainte-Pétronille 10 Dec (OB). A hardy Eastern Phoebe was at Carignan 12 Dec (SD).

A total of 11 White-breasted Nuthatches in Abitibi was unprecedented (*vide* LI); an individual at Tadoussac was the first to winter successfully on the North Shore (RP). Both Carolina Wren, with 16 individuals across the Region, and Winter Wren, with multiple wintering birds, were well in evidence this winter. Townsend's Solitaires made solo appearances across the Region: at Pointe-Platon 1 Dec (PL, MR et al.), at Charlesbourg 18-21 Dec (JF Bédard), at Beauport 20 Jan+ (JMG), and at Chicoutimi 22 Feb (C. Imbeau). A Hermit Thrush made it through the winter at Sherbrooke (P. Dulude, M. Garneau, *vide* BT). Three Varied Thrushes were reported at different ends of the province: at La Ferme, Abitibi 25 Nov-18 Dec (AG. Bernier et al.), at Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville 30-31 Dec (P. Bouchard), and at Grande-Rivière 18 Jan+ (JC. Hallé, *vide* AC, m.ob.). Two Gray Catbirds in winter was a remarkable event: singles were at Boucherville 3 Dec-28 Jan (S. Picard, m.ob.) and Hudson 12 Feb (A. Bentley), the latter establishing a new record-late date. Brown Thrashers were unusually well represented, with singles at Saint-Gédéon 1 Dec-18 Feb (G. Saint-Pierre et al.), Val d'Or 4 Dec+ (C. Siano, R. Ladurantaye), Trois-Rivières 15-20 Dec (S. Saint-Louis), Montréal 17 Dec-17 Jan (*vide* F. Hilton), and Maria early Feb+ (L. Audet, R. Saint-Onge, *vide* CL).

A welcome diversity of warbler species complemented the clement weather in early Dec, with some surviving the first harsh cold snaps. An Orange-crowned Warbler was at I. Sainte-Hélène, Montréal 1-4 Dec (DD), and most probably the same was at nearby I. Notre-Dame 17 Dec (GZ et al.). The female Black-throated Blue Warbler at Sept-Îles was present until 9 Dec (H. Hamel, G. Hamelin). The male Audubon's Warbler at I. Sainte-Hélène remained in the area until 6 Dec (DD, m.ob.). Multiple Pine Warblers were seen across the Gaspé Pen., with one at Gaspé through 30 Dec (O. Deruelle, DJ et al.), 2 at Pabos Mills 9 Dec (JRL), and one at Matapédia 6-7 Jan (C. Pitre, G. Gallant, G. Bélanger).

A record-late Palm Warbler was a surprise at Percé 11 Dec (DM, PP). Late Common Yellowthroats included singles at Châteauguay 1 Dec (PB) and LaSarre, Abitibi 4 Dec (J. Aubé).

## TOWHEES THROUGH CROSSBILLS

The Spotted Towhee at Les Escoumins found last Nov stayed put throughout the winter into Mar (JG. Beaulieu). Single Eastern Towhees were reported exclusively to the n. and e. of the province, with feeder-dependent birds at Moisie 4-20 Dec (JFL et al.), at Sept-Îles until at least 2 Jan (BD et al.), at Rivière-Brochu 17 Jan (J. Blais), at Roberval 6 Dec-12 Jan (J. Rousseau et al.), and at Gaspé 29 Jan+ (D. Gagné et al.). Always one of the rarer sparrow species in winter, Chipping Sparrows were notable finds at Sainte-Pétronille 14 Dec (MR), Penouille 17 Dec (J. Fournier, D. Attendu), Lachenaie 26 Dec (F. Rousseu), and Saint-Laurent, Montréal 24-25 Jan (F. Riou). The spate of rare winter sparrows continued with a Field Sparrow found at Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon 2 Jan-12 Feb (JL), on the heels of a Savannah Sparrow at the same location 25 Dec-7 Jan (MR). Other Savannah Sparrows were seen at Saint-Alexandre 17 Dec (D. Dessureault et al.) and Moisie until at least 2 Jan (BD). Two Fox Sparrows were reported from Anse-au-Griffon 15 Dec (J. Lacasse), and singles were at Maria 3-26 Dec (CL), at Chambord 28-31 Dec (M. Poitras), at Chelsea until at least 24 Jan (R. Godbout, *vide* D. Saint-Hilaire), and at Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon 2 Jan-11 Feb (JL). A tough Lincoln's Sparrow was at Québec City 8 Dec-6 Feb (PL, m.ob.), and a Swamp Sparrow was at Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois 5 Feb (A. Quenneville). An unusually high number of wintering White-crowned Sparrows was recorded, including 3 of the subspecies *gambelli*: an imm. at Sainte-Pétronille 14 Dec (JMG), another imm. at the prolific cattle farm in Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon 28 Dec+ (OB, I. Lechasseur), and one at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 1 Jan (LG).

Single male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Sherbrooke 26 Dec (D. Lebreux), Saint-Georges-de-Beauce 1 Jan (M. Poulin, D. Pa-

quet), and Orford 12-23 Jan (J. Tougas) were quite surprising. The Region's first winter records of Indigo Bunting were established by singles at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 4 Dec (C. Gariépy) and Sept-Îles 11 Dec (J. Blais). Among the scattered reports of wintering Rusty Blackbirds came a stunning group of 12 at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré 26-28 Feb (JL, m.ob.). Single Baltimore Orioles were at Saint-Godefroi 3 Dec (MA), Cap-aux-Os 10 Dec (DJ), and Sept-Îles 3-22 Dec (JFL, M. Letourneau). Winter finch numbers, particularly those of White-winged Crossbills, were very low this winter across almost all regions of the province.

**Corrigendum:** The report of a Harris's Hawk at Gatineau 27 Apr 2005 (N:A.B. 59: 402 should be deleted; the identification was correct, but the bird was not photographed in the wild.

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