

# Atlantic Provinces Region

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The weather stayed generally mild prior to the Christmas Bird Count period, after which record-cold days prevailed. When the weather improved in February, it had already taken a toll on straggling passerines and sent most waterfowl elsewhere. Efforts to sustain half-hardy species at feeders were particularly frustrating. There was a noteworthy invasion of Bohemian Waxwings and, finally, the Region had a great redpoll winter. Use is made of "unofficial" Christmas counts from all provinces. In interpreting patterns, note that the ice-choked southern Gulf of St. Lawrence (Prince Edward Island and the New Brunswick northern shore) and the Head of the Bay of Fundy is largely inhospitable to waterbirds in winter, while the Atlantic coasts of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia usually remain more open. These latter coastal areas also usually sustain

more half-hardy landbirds. Noteworthy lag-gards included a record-late Black-crowned Night-Heron, a White-eyed Vireo, more warblers than ever, and an Indigo Bunting. The most unusual vagrants were Nova Scotia's first California Gull and Fieldfare, and Newfoundland's first Harris' Sparrow.

Abbreviations: S.P.M. (Saint-Pierre et Miquelon).

## Loons to Waterfowl

A Red-throated Loon Dec. 18 off Miscou I. was the latest ever for n. New Brunswick (DSC). An unprecedented 251 Horned Grebes were recorded on the Annapolis Royal, NS CBC, and they were "above average" on CBCs in New Brunswick (DSC). Horned and Red-necked grebes were subsequently "sparse" in Nova Scotia (BS), although 155 of the latter were off Grand Manan I., NB Jan. 22 (BD). A very late Red-necked was at Grande-Anse, NB Dec. 21 (RD). A N. Fulmar off S.P.M., Dec. 13 was unusual (RE); 20 off Grand Manan, NB Dec. 11 (BD) was less so. Unwise juv. N. Gannets lingered until Dec. 19 off n. New Brunswick (RD); the unusual hundreds on CBCs at Port l'Hebert and Brier I., NS were more free to leave. A Double-crested Cormorant was most unusual at S.P.M., Feb. 16 (RE); one wintering off Brier I., NS Feb. 20 (RS) was more routine. The latest noted Great Blue Heron was a "rather tatty" bird Jan. 2 in Yarmouth, NS (H. Hall). A Black-

crowned Night-Heron was record late for the Region on Grand Manan, NB Jan. 8 (BD).

Mute Swans in recent years have been known or assumed to be local escapes; could one wintering on Grand Manan, NB (present since spring 1993, BD) have dispersed from New England? Eight Snow Geese during late December on Cape Sable I., NS were certainly wild, but two Barnacle Geese Feb. 5-10 near St. Martin's, NB were dubious. Most Canada Geese were rebuffed by ice from usual sites in Nova Scotia, not reappearing in numbers until late February. A Wood Duck on Prince Edward I., Jan. 1-3 (RC) was very late. Elsewhere, only a handful of unremarkable, mostly urban dabblers (other than Mal-

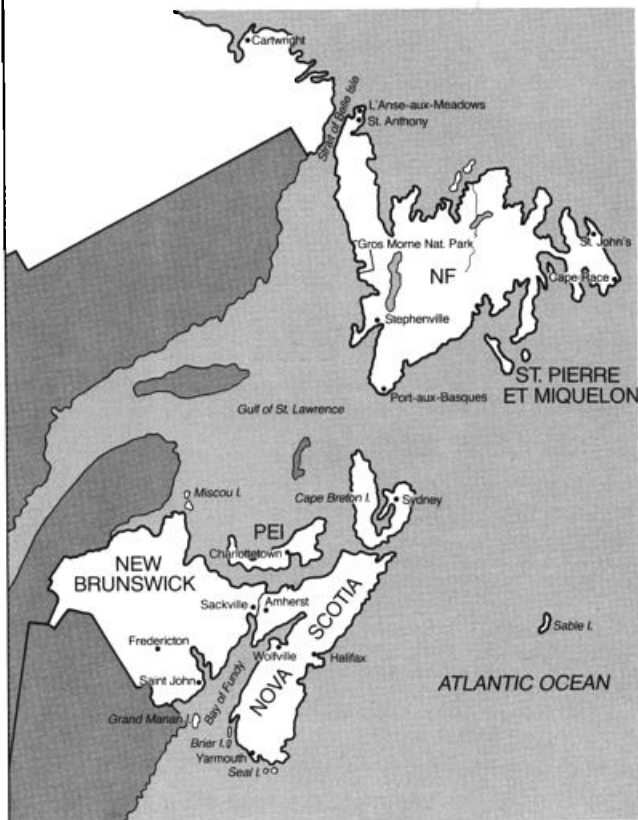
lards and Am. Black Ducks) braved the Maritimes winter, although 60 bread-fed N. Pintails and another ♀ Eur. Wigeon stayed at St. John's, NF (BM et al.). Also noteworthy were a Canvasback during late December at St. Peters, NS (fide BS), five Ring-necked Ducks Dec. 29 at S.P.M. (fide RE), and two of the latter at St. John's, NF, supplying a first provincial wintering (BM). Heartening reports of the recently protected Harlequin Duck included record groups of 28 and ≥40 at 2 sites in Nova Scotia (BS, v.o.). Although no other widespread trends were noted among sea ducks, Oldsquaw were "above average" on CBCs in New Brunswick (DSC) and through winter in Nova Scotia (BS).

## Raptors to Alcids

A Turkey Vulture was at Lamèque I., NB Jan. 3-7 (J. Laroque et al.), and six evidently survived winter around Brier I., NS (RS). This year's Bald Eagle count Jan. 30 in King's, NS produced a near-record 183 adult and 216 immature (fide JWW). An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk near Wolfville, NS Feb. 8-17 (v.o.) was the third to have wintered in that locality. The King's, NS eagle surveyors also counted 84 Red-tailed Hawks, perceived as average (JWW), while Rough-legged Hawks were more widely rated as average or lower. A Golden Eagle Dec. 18 on the Avalon Pen., NF was very rare (C. Brown et al.). The traditional wintering adult at Shepody Marsh, NB was found dead in late February (DSC). Once again, Am. Kestrels and Merlins remained scarce. The Peregrine Falcon on the Cape St. Mary's CBC is "almost annual" there (BM), and one of the Saint John, NB nesters again wintered (D. Smith). Two January birds in Nova Scotia were less expected. In Newfoundland, surprisingly, no Gyrfalcons turned up in St. John's, although there were some as usual around l'Anse-aux-Meadows (BM), and two in the southeast (fide HD). Elsewhere (v.o.), two were reported from Prince Edward I., two from Nova Scotia, and three from New Brunswick, where closing of the Moncton landfill ended years of traditional wintering.

There was a hint of closed-season recovery of the Gray Partridges in King's, NS (v.o.). Ruffed Grouse were rated as down from last year, but still above average on CBCs in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A Yellow Rail Dec. 15 in coastal Pictou, NS (†C. Brennan) was a rarity for any season. A Purple Gallinule on the Port l'Hebert CBC (fide DAC) was the sixth found in winter in Nova Scotia. No Am. Coots were noted beyond December in Nova Scotia.

A record-late Hudsonian Godwit on Cape Sable I., NS through mid-December was, not surprisingly, injured. Otherwise, only



the usual shorebirds persevered full winter, including two Ruddy Turnstones on Sable Island (ZL). Up to 120 Sanderlings stayed on Sable I., up to 20 were reported elsewhere in Nova Scotia, and 20 were seen on Grand Manan I., NB (BD). Especially hardy were three Sanderlings on S.P.M., Jan. 22 (JCH) and another Jan. 15 at Cape Race, NF (BM). Purple Sandpipers seemed "much reduced" (DSC) in New Brunswick. A Dunlin was with the Purples at Mary's Pt., NB Feb. 14 (DSC). A Com. Snipe Jan. 17 on S.P.M. (*vide* RE) repeated last year's occurrence.

An apparent Pomarine Jaeger was spotted during the Brier I., NS CBC (†FL, E. Mills). A Little Gull was at Crescent Beach, NS Dec. 4 (S. Cohrs). Only 10 Com. Black-headed Gulls wintered at St. John's (>50-75 during the 1980s, BM) and, while reports from Nova Scotia were spotty, they seemed scarcer there as well. A Bonaparte's Gull was unusual Jan. 3-6 at St. John's, NF (K. Knowles). In mid-February, an ad. Mew (Common) Gull appeared briefly at St. John's, NF (BM), and a 2nd-winter bird at Dartmouth, NS (FL *et al.*). The gull of the season was a first-winter California Gull found freshly dead in early December during a beach survey on Sable Island, NS (ZL, N.S. Mus. Nat. Hist.). This follows last spring's first Regional occurrence in New Brunswick. An estimated 1500 Iceland Gulls Dec. 3 at the Shippigan, NB wharf (RD) was surely a Maritime Provinces record. Three Lesser Black-backed Gulls in St. John's, NF and four in Nova Scotia were as expected, while one wintering in Moncton, NB was not (v.o.). A Black-legged Kittiwake Dec. 18 at Miscou I., NB (RD), and another in late December near Montague, PEI (*vide* RC), were the latest ever for those areas. Alcid spectacles included 10,000 Dovekies and >500 Thick-billed Murres per hour flying N past Cape Spear, NF Jan. 2 after 3 days of NW wind (BM), and 259 Razorbills on the Grand Manan I., NB CBC (BD).

### Doves to Shrikes

Mourning Doves were commoner than ever on CBCs in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but suffered losses from February cold. Snowy Owls were "very scarce" in both s.e. Newfoundland (BM) and S.P.M. (RE), and numbers were generally average in the Maritimes (v.o.). Perhaps some settled after crossing the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as  $\geq 20$  were reported in extreme n. New Brunswick (RD) and six on Prince Edward I. (RC). Only one Belted Kingfisher in Nova Scotia was reported to have survived through January. More impressive were individuals until Jan. 25 near Cornerbrook, NF (*vide* HD) and at Oyster Bed, PEI (*vide* RC). Only two Red-bellied Woodpeckers

were reported this winter, both in Nova Scotia. Despite the weather, some 18 post-CBC N. Flickers were reported from Nova Scotia, three from New Brunswick, and two from Prince Edward I.

Black-capped Chickadees remained well above average in New Brunswick (DSC), where they may enjoy the young deciduous aftermath of the spruce budworm outbreak (DSC). However, the ratios of Black-capped to Boreal chickadees on CBCs in Nova Scotia (21:1) and New Brunswick (42:1) surely reflect our unwillingness to penetrate deep spruce forests. White-breasted Nuthatches were well above average in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The Regional beachhead of Carolina Wrens consisted of one through December in Fredericton, NB, another through winter in Saint John, NB, and another briefly in Halifax during January (v.o.). Single Marsh Wrens survived to late December near Dartmouth, NS and to mid-January at Moncton, NB. The latter appeared pale and buffy, and was perhaps an inland bird, rather than one of the usual coastal races (DSC). A Townsend's Solitaire discovered in early January near Halifax, NS (FL, v.o., ph.) was erratic through mid-February. "Low hundreds" of Am. Robins stayed around St. John's, NF "until the berries ran out in early January" (BM). They also stayed in below-average numbers elsewhere, and largely disappeared in later winter. Nova Scotia's first acceptable Fieldfare (two undocumented in the early 1970s) was discovered Feb. 1 near Granville Ferry (†RS). It was probably present a week earlier, and remained until at least Feb. 10 (v.o., ph.). A Brown Thrasher stayed at a feeder until late January at Hopwell Hill, NB (*vide* DSC), and three feeder birds wintered in Nova Scotia. On S.P.M. an exceptionally hardy N. Mockingbird stayed until at least Jan. 13, and an equally brave Am. Pipit was present Jan. 14-22 (both *vide* RE). Bohemian Waxwings staged their most dramatic invasion in memory. Only a few tarried in s.w. Newfoundland (HD) and S.P.M. (RE) and, although only rated "above average" on New Brunswick CBCs in contrast to the last two years, they were more common in the south than in the north (DSC). Huge numbers piled up at the limits of incursion: flocks of 2500 and 2800 Jan. 3 in St. John's, NF (BM *et al.*), >1000 Jan. 19 in Dartmouth, NS (J. Taylor), and >500 Jan. 20 in Wolfville, NS (J. Tufts). They suffered from cold and shortage of berries, and no large flocks were noted after January in the Maritime Provinces. Bruce Mactavish suspected the worst, since they almost disappeared from St. John's, NF after NW gales Jan. 6-8. Northern Shrikes were rated as slightly

more numerous this year than last, although still below average in the Maritimes. They passed through s.e. Newfoundland in "good numbers" (BM), but did not stay.

### Vireos to Finches

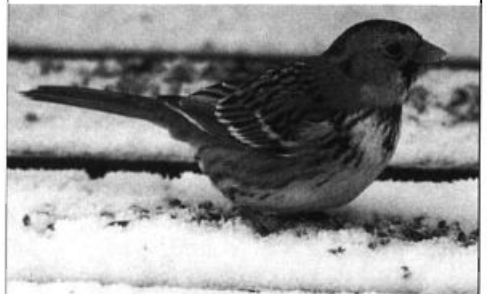
A White-eyed Vireo on the Port L'Hebert CBC (*vide* DAC) was the latest on record in the Region. Laggard and vagrant warblers were more evident than ever in the Region (none on Prince Edward I.), but almost none lasted into January (Table 1). Pine Warblers regularly persist until spring at feeders on mainland Nova Scotia, but this year the only survivor was in even more win-

Table 1. Warblers appearing or remaining after Dec. 1

Species	Province <sup>1</sup>	Number	Latest
Orange-crowned	NF	3	Dec. 11
	NS	6	late Dec.
Nashville	NF	1	Dec. 5
	NS	1	Dec. 18
Yellow	NF	1	Dec. 11
Cape May	NF	1	Dec. 26
Yellow-rumped <sup>2</sup>	NF	$\pm 6$	Jan. 19
Townsend's	NF	2	Dec. 26
	NS	1	Dec. 24
Yellow-throated	NF	1	Jan. 27
	NS	2	Dec. 4
Pine	NF	4	>Jan. 31
	NS	12	>Mar. 1
	NB	7	mid-Jan.
Prairie	NF	1	Dec. 26
	NS	1	Dec. 22
Palm	NF	2	Dec. 9
	NS	7	Dec. 26
Blackpoll	NF	1	Dec. 9
Black-and-white	NF	6	Dec. 26
Am. Redstart	NF	1	Dec. 4
Com. Yellowthroat	NS	12	Dec. 26
Wilson's	NF	4	Dec. 11
Yellow-breasted Chat	NS	4	Jan. 26
	NB	1	Dec. 20

<sup>1</sup> All Newfoundland reports from St. John's area (BM *et al.*); Nova Scotia reports per KK plus v.o. None stayed on Prince Edward I. (RC).

<sup>2</sup> Winters routinely in NS and NB.



Notable numbers of lingering warblers were found in the Atlantic Provinces early in the winter, although few could cope with the harsh weather later in the season. Among the few warblers to make it past December was this Yellow-throated Warbler at St. John's, Newfoundland, January 15, 1994. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.

tery Sydney R., Cape Breton I.

Last fall's record incursion of N. Cardinals produced 57 CBC birds in New Brunswick,  $\geq 25$  through winter in Nova Scotia, and two on Prince Edward I. An Indigo Bunting Dec. 17–26 at an Alma, NB feeder (JW) was the province's third and latest in winter. Of four Dickcissels in Nova Scotia, none was reported after December. Feeders hosted a Rufous-sided Towhee Dec. 6–late-January at Alma, NB, and three through winter in Nova Scotia.

Both brush and grassland sparrows were generally rated as below average in numbers in New Brunswick (DSC) and Nova Scotia (DAC). A few Chipping Sparrows occurred in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and a more unusual Field Sparrow was at Trudel, NB Jan. 3 (M. David). A Lark Sparrow stayed until Dec. 18 at Newport, NS (†F. Woolhaver). Savannah Sparrows were rare on Nova Scotia beaches, and 40 "Ipswiches" staying on Sable I. (ZL) were fewer than usual there. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow Dec. 18 near Cape St. Mary (BM *et al.*) was Newfoundland's fifth. A Seaside Sparrow lasted until Dec. 28 at Economy, NS (FS, ph.). Single White-crowned Sparrows survived at feeders until Jan. 30 at Cambridge Narrows, NB (E. Inch), and through winter near Wolfville, NS (v.o.); the latter was immature but yellow-billed, suggestive of *gambellii*. A Harris' Sparrow at a feeder at Manuels, NF Dec. 23+ was the province's first and the Region's fifth (v.o., ph.). A Lincoln's Sparrow Dec. 29 at Cape Broyle (P. Linegar) was the only one reported of this now-expected laggard in s.e. Newfoundland. Among the year-round sparrows, only Dark-eyed Juncos seemed to maintain their numbers in both New Brunswick (DSC) and Nova Scotia (DAC). Good numbers of Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia may have reflected concentration (some at feeders) rather than abundance.

An E. Meadowlark survived at a feeder at Pubnico to Jan. 30 (R d'Entremont), and individual meadowlarks (sp.) were present Jan. 3 at Mary's Pt., NB (DSC), and in early January at a feeder near Woodstock (D. Myles). The black icterids, including (gratifyingly) Brown-headed Cowbirds, did not fare well. A Com. Grackle at Brackley, PEI to Jan. 26 was exceptional (RC). Of the "many" N. Orioles in Nova Scotia (DAC) that attempted to winter—perhaps four in New Brunswick (DSC) and "several" in St. John's, NF (BM)—only one, at Economy, NS (FS), evidently succeeded.

Although Pine Grosbeaks were "abundant" until mid-January in St. John's, NF (BM) and staged a moderate flight in New Brunswick (DSC), they were below average

on CBCs in Nova Scotia (DAC). Purple Finches were generally uncommon, especially in Nova Scotia. The seemingly stalled spread of House Finches was evident in at least 90 birds seen on CBCs in New Brunswick, but only  $\geq 7$  wintering in Nova Scotia. Although not matched elsewhere, an apparent increase in Red Crossbills (small-billed when noted) occurred in Nova Scotia in late winter (v.o.). After years of dearth, Com. Redpolls appeared in large numbers throughout the Region, although New Brunswick CBCs reported higher numbers per party-hour in 1968–1969, 1986–1987, and 1991–1992 (DSC). Most were not at first found at feeders, but came to depend on them. Inevitably, there were reports of (and disputes about) Hoary Redpolls among them. None were noted in Newfoundland. Four on Miquelon Dec. 19 (JCH) were the first ever on S.P.M. About ten were reported (3 ph.) in New Brunswick (JW) and  $\geq 7$  in Nova Scotia (v.o.). Only two were noted as possibly of the larger *hornemanni*. Although "common" in s.e. Newfoundland (BM), Pine Siskins were scarce elsewhere. American Goldfinch numbers also varied within the Region. More than usual wintered on S.P.M. (RE); they were in "record-smashing numbers" in s.e. Newfoundland (BM), "well down" in New Brunswick (DSC), and "common" in Nova Scotia (DAC).

**Contributors and observers (subregional summarizers in boldface):** Richard Brown, Ray Cooke, David S. Christie, David A. Currie, Brian Dalzell, Hank Deichmann, Robert Doiron, Jim Edsell, Roger Etcheberry, Jackie and Christine Hebert (JCH), Keith Keddy, Fulton Lavender, Zoe Lucas, Bruce Mactavish, Beverly Sarty, Francis Spalding, Richard Stern, Jim Wilson, James W. Wolford (JWW).

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# Quebec Region

## YVES AUBRY AND PIERRE BANNON

The 1993–1994 winter will be remembered as the coldest ever for the Region, with temperatures below normal from the end of December through mid-February. The Region experienced the coldest January in history, with many record-low maximum temperatures, while its mean temperature was 6–8°C below normal. Total precipitations were below normal in December, near normal in January, and below normal in February. In contrast, the mild conditions of the first three weeks of December enabled some passerines to remain in southern Quebec, delighting winter listers.

## Loons to Waterfowl

Most of the late geese and ducks were gone from the province by Christmas. An unidentified swan flew over Delson Jan. 12 (S. Larson), while a wintering ♀ Wood Duck shared food with a flock of domestic geese at Beauharnois Jan. 19+ (DD, FG). A ♀ Blue-winged Teal at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Dec. 18 provided a record-late date for the Region (B. Weeds). Three Hooded Mergansers were observed at Dégelis Jan. 30 (M. Beaulieu, m.ob.).

## Raptors to Gulls

Bald Eagles were reported by many observers along the St. Lawrence R. and from Laurentides, Lanaudière, and Eastern Township regions. Only a few Cooper's Hawks were reported: one at Saint-Narcisse, Lotbinière Feb. 12 (JL) and four or five in the Montreal area. Red-tailed Hawk was the most widespread hawk in the Montreal area; ten were counted in the Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, Beauharnois area Jan. 30 (PB). For the 4th consecutive winter Gyrfalcons were found in higher-than-average numbers, with >15 individuals reported along the St. Lawrence R.

An early Killdeer was located at Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Chambly Feb. 28 (C. Lépine), while a Greater Yellowlegs at Saint-Jean Dec. 5 was the latest ever by 7 days (PS). Single Black-headed Gulls were observed at Saint-Romuald, Lévis Dec. 4 (LM), and at Bonaventure Dec. 14 & 22 (J.-M. Pitre). The only Lesser Black-backed Gull sightings this season involved one adult and one immature at Côte-Sainte-Catherine, Laprairie Dec. 11–18 (B. Barn-