

The spring of 2004 was cooler than normal for most of the Region except the extreme southern part. In addition, the Region experienced a wetter-than-normal spring, except the extreme southern part that was favored by the weather once again. In contrast with spring 2003, the migration was beyond doubt more exciting and brightened up by several fallouts and a substantial number of rarities, particularly in May.

LOONS THROUGH NIGHTJARS

A first-winter Red-throated Loon at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 4 Mar was most probably a very early migrant (PB). A count of 2600 at Rivière-Ouelle 22 May was the highest ever for this locality (CG, C. Auchu). A Pacific Loon in alternate plumage seen in flight from the Rivière-du-Loup/Saint-Siméon ferry 29 May was well described (CG). Although a flying Arctic Loon could not be technically eliminated in this case, this last species has never been reported in the Region. The only inland Great Cormorant was found at L. Magog 30 Mar (G. Gilbert, L. Simard). Single Great Egrets at Saint-Fulgence 6 May (CC, GS et al.) and Sept-Iles 22–29 May (JF Laporte et al.) were far off their s. Québec breeding range. A Tricolored Heron graced Havre-aux-Basques 10 May (P. Poirier, A. Richard). Six single Glossy Ibis were detected between the Outaouais R. and the Lower St. Lawrence.

One of the most exciting finds of the period was a Pink-footed Goose discovered at Plaisance 17 Apr (JD), seen and photographed by many through 28 Apr. Two Ross's Geese at Sainte-Hélène-de-Mancebourg 5 May represented the 2nd record for the Abitibi region (R. Deschênes). Single Barnacle Geese visited Baie-du-Febvre 29 Apr (F. & R. Dion) and Trois-Pistoles 14 May (LD-S, JM). Single Mute Swans appeared at Granby 28–31 May (M. Maheu, MB) and at Berthier 29 May (R. Piché, N. & R. Veillette). Seven Tundra Swans were scattered throughout the Region (*vide* PB). Following last summer's numerous reports, another apparent Canada Goose x Chinese Goose hybrid was seen at Saint-Blaise 19 Mar (LD-S). A subad. male Harlequin Duck at LaSalle 13–31 May was surprisingly late for the Montréal area (JC. Sorel, m.ob.), while one at Destor 7 May provided the first spring record for Abitibi (SG).

An impressive 17 Golden Eagles at Godmanchester 11 Mar represented a new one-day high count for this locale (PB). Sandhill Cranes were widely reported. Notable sightings included a group of 7 birds flying over Montréal 29 Apr (M. Larouche) and 2 individuals at Étang des Caps, Magdalen Is. 11–19 Apr (DGG, CA. Gaudet, C. & S. Roy).

There was a notable grounding of shorebirds in May, although it was not as extensive as the fallout of landbirds. For instance, Semipalmated Plovers amounted to 650 at Saint-Vallier 27 May (JL) and 250 at Saint-Fulgence 30 May (CC, GS). A banded Piping Plover was totally unexpected at the Aylmer marina 13 May (JD). There are few records of this species for s. Québec. Port-Cartier hosted a rare American Avocet 18

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May (M. & R. Dumais). A Willet at Fabre, Témiscamingue 24 May was quite a surprise (JF), whereas one at Bic 30 May was more expected (V. Therriault-Proulx). Usually rare in spring, single Whimbrels were found at Rimouski 22 May (G. Gendron, RS-L) and at Sabrevois 25 May (M. Gauthier), while groups of 6 were at Saint-Hyacinthe (RG) and 11 at Fabre (JF), both 24 May. A Regional total of 18 Hudsonian God-

wits also represented a high count (*vide* PB). A Marbled Godwit at Baie-du-Febvre 29 Apr was record early for the Region (D. Houx, P. Nadeau, FG); 3 additional birds were reported in May. A rare spring visitor in the Region, a Silt Sandpiper was located at Baie-du-Febvre 22 May (FG). At least 5 Ruffs, all females, were reported (*vide* PB). Two *hendersoni* Short-billed Dowitchers were superbly photographed at Les Escoumins 30 May

SA There were several massive fallouts and longshore flights this spring in the North Shore and Lac Saint-Jean areas. Large numbers of landbirds, mainly sparrows, were seen migrating in a westerly direction by day during a snow storm at Saint-Fulgence 4 May (CC, GS). Moreover, thousands of warblers, mainly represented by Yellow-rumped Warblers, were migrating also in a westerly direction by day 15 & 29 May on the North Shore and at Lac Saint-Jean. The fallout of 15 May was most spectacular at Bergeronnes (SB et al.), Tadoussac (R. Pintiaux), Saint-Fidèle (M. Robert), Saint-Fulgence (CC, GS), and even Québec City (OB), as evidenced by estimates of over 10,000 warblers seen moving at treetop-level for the whole day in some localities. Following a similar fallout in 2002, we noted in this column that birds in these areas were migrating westward probably after drifting too far to the east during the night. It now appears likely that this westerly movement is the rule rather than the exception, as each spring, more and more observers on the North Shore and at Lac Saint-Jean are reporting landbirds moving westward rather than to the east or north. The pattern seems to be heightened by special weather conditions, particularly by strong westerly winds, but these winds probably just contribute to make the phenomenon more visible and more spectacular.

One explanation for this westward diurnal migration is that it compensates for eastward drift; such compensatory or corrective flights are commonly observed at coastal sites, both along the Atlantic and the Great Lakes, confirmed both by visual and radar studies. Another hypothesis to explain this movement is that these birds first move northward through the Atlantic coastal states toward the Maritime provinces and then make a westward turn towards the Québec North Shore—a dogleg pattern that could represent an ancestral pathway developed after the ice sheet withdrew to the north during the late Pleistocene. The climate was then surely milder on the coast, where the migrants perhaps first established themselves before progressing toward the interior of the continent. More research, particularly analysis of radar data, would be needed to confirm this pathway.

(SB), while a Long-billed Dowitcher stopped briefly at Baie-du-Febvre 16 May (FG). A Red-necked Phalarope at Montréal 2 May established a new Regional record-early arrival date (M. Dubuc, D. Demers).

Extralimital gulls were rather scarce and included an ad. Laughing Gull at Sainte-Foy 19 May (OB, M. Côté) and an ad. Franklin's Gull at Métis-sur-Mer 30 May (M. Larivée). Two ad. Little Gulls at Amos 16 May provided a 2nd record for Abitibi (LI), while 2 Black-headed Gulls were out of range: an ad. at Saint-Vallier 24 Apr (JL) and a first-summer bird at LaSalle 25 May (PB, D. Hughes). From 3 to 7 Arctic Terns at LaSalle 22–25 May (PB, GZ, SD) and 9 at Maple Grove 29 May (M. Raymond, P. Lane) were worthy of mention for the Montréal area. A rare Forster's Tern in first-summer plumage was a prize find at LaSalle 23 May (FG, N. Chauvette, PB).

At last, the Region got its first Eurasian Collared-Dove. This bird was identified and photographed at a feeder on Ile du Grand Calumet 25–26 May (M. Gervais). Worthy of mention for spring, single Yellow-billed Cuckoos visited Huntingdon 16–31 May (J. Beaulieu, F. Viau) and Ile Bizard 16 May (G. Leroux, A. Quenneville et al.). A Barn Owl made its way to Saint-Alexis-de-Matapédia 28–29 Apr, one of very few sightings for the Gaspé Pen. (G. Bélanger, L. Lyons). A female Chuck-will's-widow visited Ile Sainte-Marguerite (Boucherville) 10 May, providing only the 2nd record for the Region (Y. Gauthier, ph., m.ob.).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES

No fewer than 6 Red-bellied Woodpeckers showed up in the Region, a record number in spring. An Acadian Flycatcher was heard and seen at Québec City 29–30 May, providing the Region its 4th record (JM. Giroux, JP. Ouellet, M. Lafleur). An Eastern Phoebe at Pointe-aux-Loups 26 Apr and Ile de l'Est 29 Apr provided the first

spring record for the Magdalen Is. (DGG). A Say's Phoebe strayed to Baie-Comeau 16 May (B. Pelletier, L. Rousseau, J. Fortin). A Red-eyed Vireo at Summit Park, Montréal 30 Apr matched the earliest Regional spring arrival date (PB). The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher made its best showing ever in the Region, with a total of at least 26 individuals being reported. The easternmost birds were 4 in the Lower St. Lawrence (fide CD) and one at Pabos Mills, Gaspésie 7 May (JM. Smith).

Enriching our knowledge of the distribution of the Eastern Bluebird was a report of 3 individuals 100 km n. of Baie-Comeau 28–29 May (N.



This Pink-footed Goose at Plaisance 17 through (here) 28 April 2004 represented the eighth record for the Region. The populations of this species are increasing, and most records probably represent birds of wild provenance. Photograph by Pierre Bannon.

Faubert). Outstanding for spring, a Townsend's Solitaire was detected at Roquemaure, Abitibi 9 May (SG). A Wood Thrush at Rivière-Saint-Jean, lower North Shore 6–8 May was exceptional so far n. (C. Buidin, YR). While sitting in his living room, an observer spotted a Fieldfare outside the window at Baie-Comeau 13–14 Mar (ph. S. Martin). A Varied Thrush at Saint-Georges-de-Beauce

16 May was a good find (SL. Voyer, fide A. Beauchamp).

A male Blue-winged Warbler at Sainte-Foy 7 May was record early for the Region (S. Gosselin). The establishment of this species in the Region certainly took a step forward this spring with the discovery of 3 singing males in the Lake-Brome area 13 May+ (JPS, GP, F. Hamel-Surprenant, B. Hamel). Moreover, a male Lawrence's Warbler 22 May+, the 3rd only for the Region (ph. JPS, m.ob.), and a male Brewster's Warbler 11 May+ (GP, m.ob.) were also found on territory in the same area. A male Cape May Warbler at Saint-Hyacinthe 1 May was record early for the Region (RG). A male Prothonotary Warbler, the 12th for the Region, spent a day singing near a birdhouse in a swampy area at Venise-en-Québec 19 May (ph. P. Savoie, m.ob.). A Louisiana Waterthrush was singing on territory in the Gatineau Park 13 May+ (fide C. Lewis).

Tanagers also made the news. No fewer than 3 Summer Tanagers were discovered, a young male at Chandler 15 May (PP, G. Roy), a female at Summit Park, Montréal 22 May (PB, J. Luce, GZ, m.ob.), and another female again at Chandler 23–25 May (ph. R. Garrett, PP, D. Mercier, JRL et al.). Even more impressive was the discovery of 4 Western Tanagers, a male at Saint-Romuald 18 Apr (J. Grignon, J. Allard), a male at Penouille 27 Apr–4 May (G. Johnson), a young male at Chicoutimi 4–16 May (ph. L. Gagné et al.), and finally a female in Mount-Royal Park, Montréal 18–19 May (SD, PB).

A female Lark Bunting, the 16th for the Region, was photographed at a Sept-Iles feeder 24 May (B. Poulin, N. Chouinard). Providing the 8th record for the Region, a male Painted Bunting at Price 14–16 May also represented an outstanding record for the Lower St. Lawrence (ph. M. Poulin). Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported, a male at Thetford Mines 14 May (B. Paule, G. Rouleau) and a female at Baie-du-Febvre 16 May (LD-S, JM). The only Orchard Oriole, a male, was reported at Saint-Lazare 12 May (M. Dennis). Finally and not the least, a male Eurasian Siskin was filmed at a Chandler feeder 29 Apr (JRL, D. Lavoie). Despite the substantial flurry of European finches scattered across the Great Lakes through the Maritime Provinces this spring, its provenance still remains open to question, but the possibility that this bird was a genuine straggler from Europe cannot be ruled out in an e. location such as the Gaspé Pen.

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