

# Atlantic Provinces Region

## BRUCE MACTAVISH

Only Newfoundland commented on the fall weather by reason of a prevailing north-east wind instead of the normal warm southwest breezes welcomed during the autumn. The frequent northeast winds in Newfoundland were probably the cause of the reduced number of southern warblers found, but the bonus was extra numbers of the regular and not-so-regular birds straying from Europe and Iceland. There was no obvious weather pattern to describe the long and varied list of outstanding vagrants that were found in the Region. There were no less than four additions to the Regional list: Bewick's Wren in New Brunswick, Eurasian Blackbird in Newfoundland, Virginia's Warbler in both Labrador (!) and Nova Scotia, and an eastern North American first in the form of a Sage Sparrow in Nova Scotia. It was encouraging to see that most reports of rarities were accompanied by convincing supporting evidence.

Abbreviation: G.M.I. (*Grand Manan I.*); S.P.M. (*St. Pierre et Miquelon*)

## Loons to Waterfowl

The highest counts of Red-throated Loons on migration as usual came from the Gulf of St. Lawrence shoreline of New Brunswick, with 50 Oct. 4 at Miscou I. lighthouse and 45 Nov. 4 at Cape Tormentine (ST). Six-thousand Greater Shearwaters in G.M.I. channel, NB Aug. 26 was the only large number reported in the Region (JE). New Brunswick's 4th sighting of American White Pelican this century produced two at Long Pond., G.M.I., Aug. 29–Sept. 7 (PJ *et al.*). A bird thought to be one of this pair turned up at Saint John, NB Sept. 14–Oct. 2 (*vide* CJ). No details were received on a report of two frigatebirds from Brier I., NS Sept. 14.

Southern herons were present in slightly below-average numbers. Great Egrets sightings included singles Aug. 21 at Atholville, NB (MG); Nov. 27 (late) at Canning, NS (*vide* RS); and Nov. 9–30 (late) at Bonavista, NF (JJ). Snowy Egrets sightings included singles Aug. 2 at Brier I.,

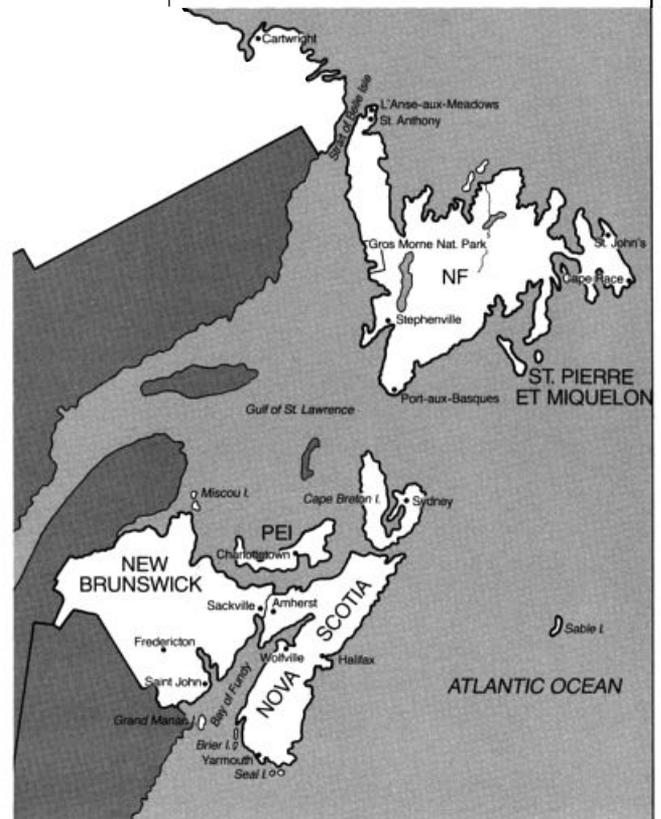
NS (KM) and Nov. 19 (late) Rainbow Haven, NS (*vide* IM). The only Cattle Egret reported was one Nov. 10–24 (late) at Dartmouth, NS (JT). Little Blue Herons included singles Sept. 26 at Mary's Pt., NB (BC, RE); Aug. 24 at Seal I., NS (WA, MN); and Sept. 25 & 26 at Sable I., NS (ZL). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons included one in the rarely seen ad. plumage July 16–Sept. 12 at Cape Sable I., NS (WA, MN *et al.*); more routine immatures were one Aug. 20–21 at Sable I., NS (ZL) and one Sept. 10–28 at St. John's, NF (m.ob.).

**SA** Three ad. Whooper Swans were at Cape North, Lab., 25 mi e of Cartwright, Aug. 18–20 (BMT, PR, ST). They were exceedingly wary and in a beautifully remote wilderness setting. There is, however, much debate—and for good reason—on the wild state of these birds. Many thanks to Dick Forster from Massachusetts for compiling the complex story of ≤six Whooper Swans on Long I., NY and Massachusetts for various periods between March 1993–August 1994. Though there was no known source, these birds were strongly suspected of being escapes. They accepted food handouts with tame Mallards. Four Whoopers Swans were still present in Massachusetts during June 1994. Only two were left July 23. But then three appeared 550 mi NE at Forillon N.P., Quebec July 28–Aug. 4 (*vide* Yves Aubrey). Cape North, Lab. is an additional 550 mi NE. The overwhelming coincidences in both numbers and timing support the argument that the Cape North birds were the same birds that occurred in Quebec and Massachusetts. However, unlike the Massachusetts swans, both the Quebec and Cape North birds were very wary. One must also consider that Whooper Swan is a common breeder in Iceland, with a lengthy record of straying to Greenland. And Newfoundland experienced one of its best springs ever for Iceland-type vagrants in 1994.

Less than annual in the Region, a Greater White-fronted Goose was at Spring Valley, PEI Nov. 16 (CC). An average number of Eur. Wigeons was reported, with a male Oct. 8 at G.M.I., NB (*vide* BD); one female-type Nov. 4 at Cape Jourmain, NB (ST), and four female-types during November at St. John's, NF (KK, BMT). Newfoundland's 2nd Redhead of the year, only the 3rd ever, was a male at St. John's Aug. 29–Sept. 8 (MP *et al.*). A record-high number of Tufted Ducks accumulated at St. John's, NF, starting with one Nov. 7 and gradually building to seven (one imm. male and six females) by Dec. 12 (KK, BMT). An impressive flock of 1200 Greater Scaup occupied the traditional staging location of Middle R., Pictou, NS as early as Sept. 26 (*vide* BS). A massive flock of Oldsquaw carefully estimated at 11,000 birds was off Pt. Escuminac, NB Nov. 17 (ST). A hybrid ♂ Barrow's x Common goldeneye was at Shediac Bridge, NB Nov. 25 (ST).

## Diurnal Raptors

The season's Black Vultures included singles at East Point, PEI during August and September (*vide* DM) and Saint Leolin, NB Nov. 10–30 (*vide* RD). A far-flung Turkey Vulture on the mid-Labrador coast at the Hopedale garbage dump Sept. 3 represented the farthest north record ever in the Region, and perhaps the 2nd for Labrador (PR). Seven reports of Cooper's Hawk from Brier I. and Seal I., NS during September was well





**Three adult Whooper Swans at Cape North, Labrador, Aug. 19, 1994. Despite the wild and remote setting of this occurrence, there was question as to the wild status of these birds; see text for details. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.**

above average (*vide* IM). A maximum count of seven Turkey Vultures was obtained Sept. 10 at Brier I., NS, where surely they are breeding (EM). A movement of Broad-winged Hawks was noted Sept. 15 & 16 on both sides of the Bay of Fundy, with concentrations of 300 Sept. 15 at Digby, NS (ML) and 127 Sept. 16 in one kettle over Alma, NB (DR). An imm. Red-tailed Hawk at the St. John's, NF dump Nov. 16–Dec. 12 was the 5th for insular Newfoundland (BMT *et al.*). A Golden Eagle at Chebucto Head, NS Nov. 11 (FL, MA) was the single individual for the season. The only Gyrfalcon was Oct. 21 at Miquelon, S.P.M., a surprising first record for the French Islands (LJ). Peregrine Falcon reports were as numerous as recent years.

#### Rails to Shorebirds

Single Clapper Rails were at Hartlen Pt., NS Sept. 25 & 26 (FL *et al.*) and Cape Sable, NS Nov. 17–27 (JN *et al.*). A large rail went unidentified Sept. 14 at Miquelon, S.P.M. (DD). A rare annual fall visitor to the Region, solitary Sandhill Cranes were at Fundy N.P., NB Sept. 2 (GP) and then nearby Mary's Pt., NB Sept. 14 (MM); one was at Donkin, NS Oct. 31–mid-November (CM *et al.*).

A Northern Lapwing was well described by a non-birder on the roadside at Daniel's Harbor, NF Nov. 23 (*vide* HD). Impressive concentrations of southbound Lesser Golden-Plovers were seen at traditional locations on the s. Avalon Pen. of Newfoundland, with 724 at Cape Race (PL *et al.*) and 500 at Cape Pine (MP) September 3. A Bar-tailed Godwit Oct. 21–24 at Cape Sable I., NS was well documented as a provincial 2nd and a 3rd Regional sighting (JN *et al.*). Very rare

in the Region, single Marbled Godwits were reported from Big I., NS Aug. 22 & 23 (CGB, KM) and Cape Sable I., NS Sept. 3–18 (CGB, KM *et al.*). Single W. Sandpipers were at G.M.I., NB Aug. 23 (BD) and Sept. 4–9 at Mary's Pt., NB (DC). It was an above-average fall for Baird's Sandpipers, with 20 from Nova Scotia and two from coastal Labrador. A Curlew Sandpiper at Grand Barachois, S.P.M., Oct. 4 provided a 2nd island record (REt). Stilt Sandpipers were in fair numbers with seven in Nova Scotia and two in Newfoundland. Buff-breasted Sandpipers came in numbers reminiscent of the 1970s, with 30 in Nova Scotia and 26 in Newfoundland. Single Ruffs were at Tracadie, NB Aug. 9 (RD) and at Fox Harbor, NS Aug. 12 (CD, BW). The Sackville, NB waterfowl park is the Long-billed Dowitcher capital of the Region, with two Aug. 14 (JE) and five Oct. 2 (RD). The only other was a single Sept. 11 at Cherry Hill, NS (SC).

#### Jaegers to Terns

Fascinating were 4 separate encounters with juv. Long-tailed Jaegers running about like plovers, picking berries in coastal s.e. Labrador Aug. 23–Sept. 5 (BMT, ST). There were 3 reports of Great Skua near Grand Manan I., NB Sept. 16–Oct. 8 (*vide* BD). The peak number of Com. Black-headed Gull at St. John's, NF was again low with 36 Nov. 7 (BMT). Single Little Gulls were seen Aug. 26 at Tracadie, NB (RD); Sept. 24 and Oct. 23 at G.M.I., NB (*vide* BD), and early November at Pictou, NS (C. Brennan). An early ad. Mew Gull was at Lawrencetown, NS Sept. 14 (IM), while three adults were at separate locations on the Avalon Pen., NF mid-October–November (KK, BMT).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls numbers held steady with four in New Brunswick and seven in Newfoundland. A Sabine's Gull Aug. 20 off G.M.I., NB was the only sighting of this pelagic rarity (JE).

Three Royal Terns flying off North Pt., G.M.I., NB Aug. 26 was remarkable for both the number and being non-storm related (JE). A Forster's Tern Nov. 14 at Kelligrew's, NF provided a 4th provincial record (TB).

#### Cuckoos to Starling

A low total of eight Yellow-billed Cuckoos thinly spread over the Region included a late bird Nov. 10 at Dartmouth, NS (JT). The only Snowy Owl was Oct. 24–Nov. 12 at Cape Sable I., NS (JN). A very late swift at St. John's, NF Nov. 5 & 6 was carefully identified as a Chimney Swift (TB, BMT). Red-headed Woodpeckers strayed in average numbers, with singles Oct. 22 G.M.I., NB (BD); Sept. 22 Frazerville, NS (KS), and Nov. 17–30 at Dartmouth, NS (EB). The great flurry of Red-bellied Woodpeckers experienced in recent autumns returned to a sensible one bird Oct. 2 at Bon Portage I., NS (JZ). New Brunswick's 2nd Say's Phoebe was photographed Sept. 15 at White Head I., NB (ST *et al.*). The above-average numbers of W. Kingbirds; six in New Brunswick, 13 in Nova Scotia and one in Prince Edward Island, occurred mainly during the first half of November. New Brunswick, already having the lion's share of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher records for the Region, had its 20th or so Oct. 29–Nov. 5 at Rexton (B. Martin *et al.*).

Almost unheard of on the Atlantic coast of North America, the Region's first Bewick's Wren was well observed Sept. 22 at Mary's Pt., NB (DCh *et al.*). Very scarce in the Region, the first "accessible" Sedge Wren in Nova Scotia in 10 years was at Conrad's Beach Sept. 18–21 (*vide* BMy). Newfoundland's 2nd Marsh Wren was at Renew's Oct. 8 (KK, BMT). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are now too frequent to keep track of in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

**SA** For the 2nd consecutive year Northern Wheatears showed up in ground-breaking numbers. New Brunswick had one Sept. 4 at Saint John (A. Robichaud). Nova Scotia had singles Oct. 3–6 at Seal I. (SF *et al.*), Oct. 7–13 at Wolfville (JTU *et al.*), and Oct. 29 at Hartlen Pt. (S&JC). Insular Newfoundland had singles Aug. 19 at Cape Norman (KK), Sept. 3 & 26 at Cape Race (JW, BMT), Oct. 9 at St. John's (JS), and Oct. 9–11 at St. John's (JW *et al.*).

Possibly connected to the well above long-term norms for wheatear in the Region was the exciting discovery that N. Wheatear was a fairly common breeder as far south as the s.e. corner of Labrador in 1994. During an extensive shorebird survey Aug. 17–Sept. 4 of the coastal islands along the 70 km stretch of coastline between Cartwright and Black Tickle, Lab., funded by the World Wildlife Fund and Newfoundland Wildlife Division, Mactavish, Ryan, and Tingley encountered a total 43 wheatears. Included in this number were groups of two, three, three, and five bob-tailed, downy headed, just-fledged juveniles. The area had not previously been explored by knowledgeable persons, but the species was known to breed in small numbers on the Labrador coast.

**SA** An ad. ♂ Eurasian Blackbird was picked up dead in front of a house in Bonavista, NF Nov. 16 (JJ, *vide* BMT). The specimen was preserved. The orange-yellow orbital ring and relatively shorter, thicker bill eliminate the possibility of melanistic American Robin. The 2 or 3 previous records from North America bear the possibility of being imported birds escaped from captivity. There can hardly be a more validated record of a truly wild vagrant Eur. Blackbird in North America than one on the e. coast of Newfoundland in November during a season of much NE wind. A N. Lapwing, three Tufted Ducks, and two Eur. Wigeons were found in the province during the same time period. See the winter report for other species in Newfoundland that made fall 1994 a good one for European strays.



Apparently providing the first record ever east of the Great Plains was this Sage Sparrow at Brier Island, Nova Scotia, Nov. 13, 1994. Photograph/Bernard Forsythe.



Juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger eating berries on the ground on Grady Island, Labrador, Sept. 2, 1994. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.

Rob Walker reported incredible numbers of Cedar Waxwings taking advantage of the bumper crop of mountain ash berries in New Brunswick. Very few Bohemian Waxwings made it to the Region before the end of the November.

#### Vireos to Warblers

The only White-eyed Vireo was at St. John's, NF Nov. 13–19, where it represented the 3rd for the province and one of the latest ever in the Region (BMT *et al.*). A Warbling Vireo at St. John's, NF Nov. 1 was one of the latest ever in the Region (BMT).

— There was the usual good showing of Blue-winged Warblers in September with five in New Brunswick, and three each in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Golden-winged Warbler remains consistently rare with one, a late bird, Oct. 12 at Pt. Lepreau, NB (D. McCurdy). The most outlandish warbler ever found in the Region has to be the Virginia's Warbler photographed at Goose Bay, Lab., Sept. 21 & 22 (GE). Not to be outdone, Nova Scotians turned up a Virginia's Warbler at White's Lake near Halifax Nov. 19 & 20 (PM, BS *et al.*). The only previous e. coast records are 2 from New Jersey. An "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen Sept. 18 at E. Petpeswick, NS (RF).

— Other southern warblers included: one Yellow-throated Warbler Oct. 18–Dec. 4 at St. John's, NF (BMT *et al.*); Prairie Warbler: 10 in New Brunswick, 10 in Nova Scotia, one in Prince Edward Island, one in St. Pierre et Miquelon, and three in Newfoundland; Prothonotary Warbler: one Aug. 18 at Salisbury, NB (R. Steeves), one Sept. 3 at Bon Portage I., NS (J. Czapalay *et al.*), and

one Aug. 23–25 at Sable I., NS (AM); one Kentucky Warbler Sept. 30 at Seal I., NS (BMy *et al.*); one Hooded Warbler Oct. 15 at Fundy N.P., NB (D. Doucet), and one Sept. 1 at Hartlen Pt., NS (PM); Yellow-breasted Chat: six in New Brunswick, eight in Nova Scotia, and six in Newfoundland.

— A Connecticut Warbler Aug. 20 was a good find at North Head, G.M.I., NB (PP). A Black-throated Blue Warbler Oct. 26 at Isthmus, S.P.M. (LJ), and single Chestnut-sided Warblers Sept. 11 at Blackhead, NF (KK, JP) and Oct. 10 near St. John's, NF (PL, JP) were well e. of the breeding range in the Region. Most interesting of the 10 species found by "warbler hounds" during November in St. John's, NF were five Yellow Warblers present to the end of the month (BMT *et al.*).

#### Tanagers to Finches

The only Summer Tanager was at Bon Portage I., NS Sept. 3 (JC *et al.*). Four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in St. John's, NF during mid-November were late (BMT *et al.*) Nova Scotia had the only Blue Grosbeaks with seven individuals in September and October (*vide* D. Currie). It was a fairly good season for Dickcissel, with at least 20 reported across the Region. Most noteworthy of the 10 Clay-colored Sparrows found in the 3 most-birded provinces was a high count of five Oct. 1 on Seal I., NS (BMy *et al.*), and one Nov. 27 at St. John's, NF (IJ). It was a near-average autumn for Lark Sparrow, with six in New Brunswick, three in Nova Scotia, and one in Newfoundland

— The bird of the season was a Sage Sparrow feeding in a roadside ditch on Brier I., NS Nov. 13 (BF). The one-observer record

is accompanied by shockingly explicit photographs. This appears to be the first Sage Sparrow in e. North America!

The only reports of Grasshopper Sparrow were singles Oct. 24 at Cape Sable I., NS (BMy *et al.*) and Nov. 6 at Broad Cove, NS (SF). A description of a sparrow most closely resembling that of a Henslow's Sparrow in juv. plumage was at Seal I., NS Sept. 26 (BMy *et al.*). A Seaside Sparrow at Economy, NS Oct. 20 came as little surprise from this location, which has a peculiarly long history of sightings (FS). A Golden-crowned Sparrow was found on Seal I., NS Sept. 26–30 for the 2nd consecutive autumn, providing the 4th provincial and Regional record (BMy *et al.*). Three Yellow-headed Blackbird sightings is consistent with autumn totals over the past 2 decades: one Sept. 2–4 Castalia, G.M.I., NB (BD), one Sept. 7–10 at Dartmouth, NS (JT), and one Oct. 14 at Canning, NS (S. Allday).

Both Red and White-winged crossbills were common in New Brunswick, where there was a bumper cone crop. White-winged Crossbills, including many juveniles, were enjoying a very heavy cone crop at Cartwright, Lab., in mid-August (BMT). Elsewhere in the Region crossbills were in low to moderate numbers. In general all other species of finches were uncommon to scarce across the Region.

Observers (subregional contributors in boldface): Mike Almon, Wilfred Atwood, Elaine Black, Todd Boland, Calvin G. Brennan, C. Chappel, David Christie, John & Shirley Cohrs, B. Curlew, David Currie, Brian Dalzell, Hank Deichmann, David Detcheberry, Coen Dexter, Robert Doiron, Jim Edsall, R. Elliot, Roger Etcheberry, Graham Etherington, Bernard Forsythe, Roger Foxall, Sylvia Fullerton, M. Gallant, Laurent Jackman, Cecil Johnson, Ian Jones, Paul Jones, Jon Joy, Keith Keddy, Ken Knowles, Paul Linegar, Fulton Lavender, Mark Libby, Zoe Lucas, Andrew MacFarlane, Bruce Mactavish, Blake Maybank, Mike Majka, Dan McAskill, Ken McKenna, Ian McLaren, Peter McLeod, Eric Mills, Cathy Murrant, Murray Newell, John Nickerson, Mike Parmenter, Peter Pearce, Gordon Pringle, Doreen Rossiter, Pierre Ryan, Bev Sarty, Jytte Selno, Francis Spalding, Kathleen Spicer, Ron Steeves, Richard Stern, Jim Taylor, Stuart Tingley, Judy Tufts, Rob Walker, John Wells, Brenda Wright.

—Bruce Mactavish, 37 Waterford Bridge Rd., St. John's, NF, A1E 1C5.

# Quebec Region

## YVES AUBRY AND PIERRE BANNON

August and September had near normal temperatures and precipitation. October was very dry, with sunny days and mild temperatures. November remained mild, but with more frequent precipitation. A destructive storm that hit the province November 6–7 downed millions of trees in *Charlevoix* and Gaspé Peninsula. More winter-like conditions prevailed in the last week of November.

The fall migration proved variable; the shorebird and hawk flights were poor, while gulls and passerines had a good season. The province had its largest incursion ever of Northern Wheatears.

## Grebes to Waterfowl

The Eared Grebe present at L. Malbaie since July 23 enjoyed the site until at least Sept. 24 (m.ob.). A winter-plumage Horned Grebe puzzled observers Aug. 23, while the Eared Grebe was temporarily unnoticed; another early individual at Saint-Gédéon, *Lac-Saint-Jean*, Aug. 21 was still in summer plumage (CC, GS).

Single N. Fulmars were detected from the Matane-Godbout ferry Sept. 12 (CM, J.F. Rousseau) and Nov. 3 (GB), and from the Trois-Pistoles ferry Sept. 23. Only three Manx Shearwaters were sighted, singles from the Cap-aux-Meules-Souris ferry, *Magdalen Is.*, Aug. 1 (PB); off the Gaspé Pen., Sept. 4 (JRL *et al.*); and off I. Brion, *Magdalen Is.*, in early September (LD *et al.*). Single Wilson's Storm-Petrels were at Beauport, *Quebec City*, Sept. 29 (LM) and Oct. 22 (FD, RD), while one at Rivière-Ouelle, *Kamouraska*, Nov. 3 (CA) provided the Region with its latest-ever record.

The Am. White Pelican is straying into the province with increasing frequency; a remarkable four individuals were found: singles at Baie d'Urfé, *Montréal*, Sept. 5–6 (*fide* D. Bird) and Rivière-du-Loup, Sept. 12 (GG *et al.*), and two at St-Ignace-de-Loyola, *Berthier*, Sept. 3 (P. Désy, *fide* JB). One was later found exhausted, but soon rehabilitated at the St-Hyacinthe College of Veterinarian Medicine and flown to w. Canada.

**SA** The Brown Pelican was at the center of the most fascinating story of late summer and early fall. A dozen or so reports were received from an extensive territory along the St. Lawrence R. All reports listed below in chronological order refer to a single ad. bird. How many individuals were involved is anyone's guess, but we feel that two birds at the most may have created this commotion. Indeed, any highly visible birds such as pelicans that rely on the St. Lawrence R. for finding food would rarely escape notice. The case of the Eur. Pelican that escaped from the Montreal Zoological Garden and wandered E to the Gaspé Pen. and back to Montreal during summer and fall 1988 [see AB 43:1 (70)] clearly illustrated this assertion. Only two sightings of Brown Pelican were known before this year. Sightings included:

- L. Témiscouata, late July (D. Thériault, *fide* M. Beaulieu, ph) and early August (A. Du mont, R. Beaulieu); the only record away from the St. Lawrence R.
- Off Rimouski, Aug. 25 (L. Morisset, *fide* J. Larivée, ph)
- Ile-aux-Grues, *Montmagny*, Sept. 5. (J. Landry, †)
- Cap Bon Désir, *Saguenay*, Sept. 8 (N. Maltais)
- Cap Granite, *Saguenay*, Sept. 8 (*fide* N. Maltais)
- Grandes Bergeronnes, *Saguenay*, Sept. 9. (ph J. Lemyre)
- Cap-Rouge, *Québec*, Sept. 13 (observers unknown)
- Ste-Croix, *Lotbinière*, Sept. 17–25 (L. Roy & A. Desrochers, video taped, m.ob.); reported by local fishermen to be present since the beginning of September
- St-Romuald, *Lévis*, Sept. 24 (AC, †)
- Pointe-au-Pic, *Charlevoix*, Sept. 25 (J.-L. Marcoux)
- Repentigny, *L'Assomption*, Sept. 30 (J.-G. Lépine, *fide* J. Brisson)
- Boucherville Is, near Montreal, Oct. 14–15 (ph B. Brault in *La Presse*)
- St-Ignace-de-Loyola, *Berthier*, Oct. 18+ (R. Carignan, J.-L. Boutin, ph in *Journal de Montréal*, Oct. 31)

An imm. Great Cormorant lingered at Rivière-Ouelle until Sept. 18 (CA). Great Egrets were widely reported, including birds that strayed E to the Gaspé Pen. for the first time in autumn: singles at Cap-Chat from mid-August until at least Sept. 6