

Atlantic Provinces Region

IAN A. MCLAREN

Weather was rated "average" by meteorologists in the Region, but varied much in time and space. Newfoundland and northern New Brunswick were very snowy, but coastal Nova Scotia and southeast New Brunswick were often mild with little accumulating snow. A late-January ice storm coated trees for weeks from southeast to central New Brunswick. Although it was periodically very cold in February, so that waterfowl were locally frozen out, large crops of wild fruits, seeds, and cones sustained robins, waxwings, sparrows, and finches. Again, Christmas Bird Count summaries included many "unofficial" counts from all provinces. Outstanding among several rarities were a Yellow-legged Gull and a Hermit Warbler.

Abbreviations: S.P.M. (*Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*), G.M.I. (*Grand Manan I., NB*).

Grebes to Waterfowl

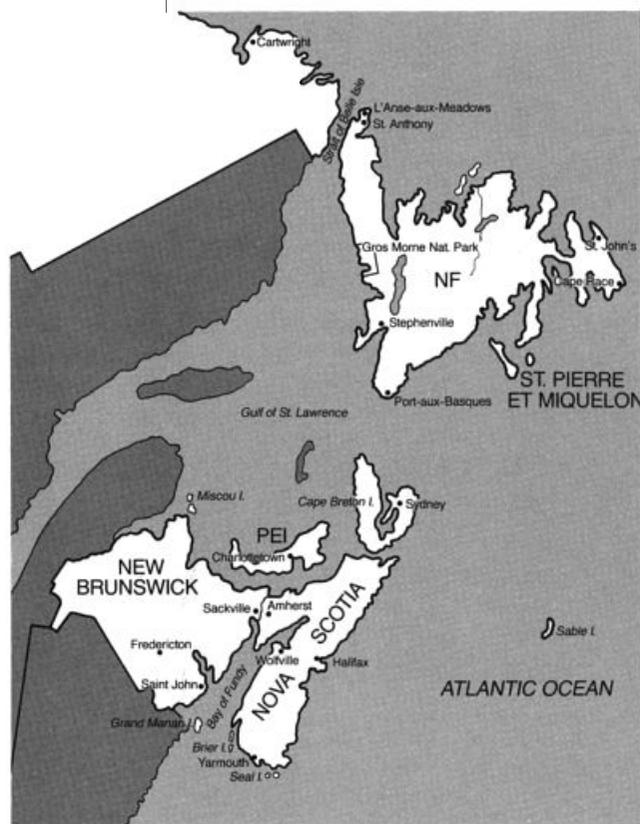
A Pied-billed Grebe lingered on G.M.I., NB Jan. 12 (P. Pearce). Exceptional counts of grebes included ≥ 420 Horned on a CBC at Annapolis Royal, NS (*vide* DAC), 135 Red-necked Jan. 5 off G.M.I., NB (BD), and 200–300 of the latter in late January off S.P.M. (DD). A Greater Shearwater was late Dec. 17 off G.M.I., NB (P. Wilcox). Wintering Double-crested Cormorants continue to increase, with 103 on CBCs and ± 20 later in Nova Scotia, eight on New Brunswick CBCs, three in late December at S.P.M., and one latest ever for G.M.I., NB Jan. 19 (BD). Six late N. Gannets were off G.M.I., NB Jan. 15 (BD). Five Great Blue Herons wintered in Nova Scotia, and one Jan. 29 on G.M.I., NB produced a late provincial record (BD). In Nova Scotia, a Great and a Snowy egret lingered to Dec. 5, and an Am. Bittern stayed to Dec. 17 (v.o.). A late flock of 29 Snow Geese, including a "Blue," was over Aulac, NB Dec. 13 (K. Popma). Brant arrived early and in unusual numbers at G.M.I., NB (120 Jan. 23, 1000 by Feb. 8; BD), and Cape Sable I., NS (300 in late January, 3000 by late February, MN *et al.*). American Black Ducks were 50% above av-

erage on New Brunswick CBCs (DSC) and in record numbers on S.P.M. (RE). An extralimital Wood Duck was shot on S.P.M., Dec. 13. A ♂ "Eur." Green-winged Teal wintered Jan. 6+ at Cape Broyle, and another Jan. 7+ at St. John's, NF (BMct *et al.*). A Eur. Wigeon was at Covehead Bay, PEI early December (*vide* DM). Of three in St. John's, NF in mid-December, one male stayed through winter, and a female wintered in Dartmouth, NS (m.ob.). Two Gadwall Dec. 31 at Saint John and one Jan. 1 at Waterside, NB, were unusual; three wintering in Nova Scotia were less so. There were a ♂ and five ♀ Tufted Ducks by mid-December in St. John's, NF, three of the latter staying through winter. In Nova Scotia (v.o.), a ♀ Tufted was at Yarmouth Dec. 18 (J. Graves), two females stayed in Bedford-Dartmouth Jan. 10+ and a male was in that area from Feb. 11 (v.o.), and a male was at Bayport Feb. 19. Numbers of Greater Scaups were thought noteworthy in Nova Scotia (BS), totaling ± 3000 after mid-February; at least 16 Lessers also wintered. Common Eider numbers were above average on New Brunswick CBCs, and ± 3000 wintered around S.P.M. (RE). Gratifying numbers of Harlequin Ducks included ± 45 in New Brunswick and ± 35 in Nova Scotia. Scoters remained generally below average, perhaps deflected by Zebra Mussels in the Great Lakes.

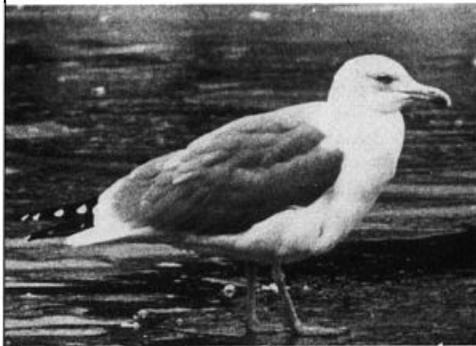
Raptors to Alcids

A Black Vulture at the St.-Léolin, NB dump in December was later fed butcher scraps at a nearby cottage (*vide* DSC). The annual census Jan. 22 in King's, NS produced 405 Bald Eagles (*vide* JW). One was at the limit Feb. 7 at L'Anse aux Meadows, NF (BB). Northern Goshawks were back up to average on Maritime CBCs; 15 wintered at the St. John's, NF dump (BMct). A Red-shouldered Hawk was at Riverside, NB Dec. 17–18 (*vide* DSC), and an adult again wintered around Gaspeau, NS (m.ob.). A very tame ad. Broad-winged Hawk was closely studied at Tusker, NS Jan. 19 (RD). Goshawk aggression kept Newfoundland's 5th Red-tailed Hawk skulking in woods at the St. John's dump through

winter (BMct *et al.*). Two albino Red-taileds again appeared in their traditional wintering sites in King's, NS. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were below average on CBCs in New Brunswick and slightly above in Nova Scotia, but few were noted anywhere subsequently. An imm. Golden Eagle was over Cape Sable I., NS Dec. 3 (MN *et al.*). American Kestrels and Merlins continued to be scarce. Single Peregrine Falcons wintered in Saint John and Riverside, NB (*vide* DSC), and two were on Sable Island, NS (ZL, AM). One Gyrfalcon was noted in s.w. Newfoundland, another in Nova Scotia, two on Prince Edward I., and three in New Brunswick. Ruffed Grouse were above average on Maritimes CBCs; the January ice storm in s.e. New Brunswick led to "an unusually high number" of roadkills (DSC). The Clapper Rail found earlier on Cape Sable I., NS was last seen Dec. 7 (MN, *et al.*). A freshly dead, near-ad. Purple Gallinule Feb. 5 on Sable Island, NS (S. Ambs, * NS Museum), was initially tantalizing because of its small size and reddish legs, reminiscent of Allen's Gallinule, known as a winter vagrant from Africa in N. Europe, but that identification was precluded by measurements and plumage details. "Ochre" legs of young Purples are mentioned in some literature. The latest of four Am. Coots in Nova Scotia was on Sable I., Jan. 5 (AM); one to Feb. 12 in St. John's, NF was the latest ever in Newfoundland. An injured Black-bellied Plover Dec.



17 at Maces Bay supplied a first CBC record for New Brunswick; 13 wintered on Cape Sable I., NS (MN *et al.*). A late Ruddy Turnstone was on S.P.M., Feb. 6 (DD). Some 150 Sanderlings overwintered on Sable I. and ± 60 on Cape Sable I., NS. A Long-billed Dowitcher on Cape Sable I., NS (MN *et al.*) was the first to winter in the Region. Individual Com. Snipe were at Gros Morne N.P., NF Feb. 21 (*vide* HD), and S.P.M., Jan 20 (DD), and four remained on



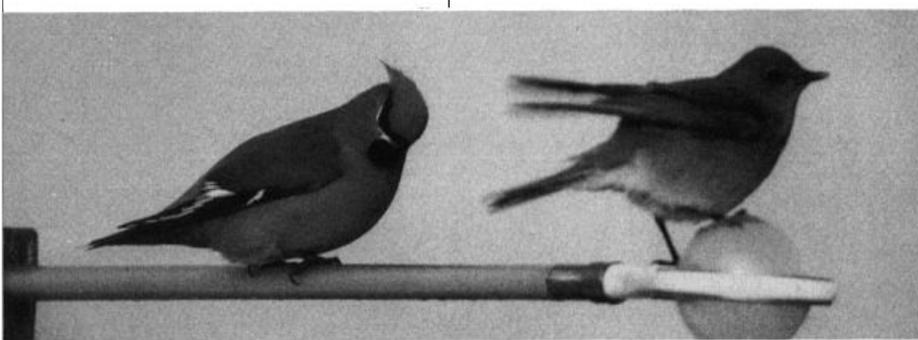
This Yellow-legged Gull excited birders in St. John's, Newfoundland, through winter 1994-1995. Although its darker back is not evident here without comparisons with Herring Gulls, its bulky shape, large head, and extensive [red] gonys spot all mark it as this European species. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.



This very contrasty, "checkered" first-winter Herring Gull in St. John's, Newfoundland, in January 1995, was evidently of the west European race *argenteus*. This form has been found to be regular there during recent winters. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.



Adult Ivory Gull at St. John's, Newfoundland, December 12, 1994. Most individuals occurring so far south are immatures, not immaculate adults like this one. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.



On remote Sable Island, far off the coast of Nova Scotia, a Mountain Bluebird [one of two there this season] and a Bohemian Waxwing posed on a weather instrument February 1, 1995. Photograph/Andrew Macfarlane.

G.M.I., NB into February (BD). A Little Gull was a CBC prize Dec. 26 at Campobello I., NB (L. Lawson). Wintering Mew (Common) Gulls (m.ob.) included an ad. and a first-year bird in St. John's, NF, an adult in Halifax, and an adult in Saint John, NB; a first-year bird appeared early February in Glace Bay, NS (CM). Some 2600 Iceland Gulls were in St. John's, NF Jan. 13 (BM). An ad. Yellow-legged Gull spent Dec. 26-Feb. 26 in St. John's, NF (BM *et al.*), where the first North American sighting was made by Mactavish in 1985. He notes that Newfoundland is only 1200 mi from the nearest possible source in the Azores.

At least two ad. and five imm. Lesser Black-backed Gulls wintered at St. John's, NF, an adult was sporadic around Halifax, NS, another was near Barrington, NS during February, and an adult stayed in Moncton, NB into early January. An ad. Ivory Gull was at G.M.I., NB Jan. 8-Feb. 2 (B. Fudge, v.o.), another at St. John's, NF Dec. 10-26 (m.ob.), and a first-winter bird at Killigrews, NF Dec. 25-28 (T. Boland *et al.*). An ad. Sabine's Gull was late off G.M.I., NB Dec. 3 (A. Daggett). Dalzell was persuaded that there were "in the range of 10,000" Razorbills around G.M.I., NB, most leaving after January; other alcids seemed unexceptional.

Doves to Shrikes

Mourning Doves have stabilized in Nova Scotia CBCs (DAC), but 17 of 39 CBCs in New Brunswick reported all-time highs (DSC). Of a record eight on S.P.M., only one survived to mid-February (DD). Both Newfoundland (BMct) and Prince Edward I. (DM) had "few" Snowy Owls, and only four were noted elsewhere. Deep snow sent five Boreal Owls to backyards in St. John's, NF Feb. 10-18 (v.o.), and two more to St. Pierre, S.P.M., Jan. 18 and Feb. 18 (RE). Three Short-eared Owls wintered in King's, NS, and up to four near Riverview, NB. There were reports of a N. Hawk Owl and one-two Great Grey Owls in New Brunswick (*vide* DSC). At least seven post-CBC Belted Kingfishers were in Nova Scotia, but only one in New Brunswick. A Red-

bellied Woodpecker at Miramichi City, NB, and two Red-headed Woodpeckers in Nova Scotia and one in New Brunswick (v.o.) all wintered. A Three-toed Woodpecker Jan. 28 at Dorchester Cape (J. Landry) was a rarity in s. New Brunswick. Northern Flickers reached all-time highs in Maritimes CBCs, and a record 35 were reported through later winter in Nova Scotia; one survived on S.P.M. to at least Jan. 12 (RE). A Western Kingbird survived to Dec. 22 in Halifax, NS (v.o.).

A Eurasian Jackdaw in St. John's Dec. 2+ (BMct *et al.*) was a Newfoundland first. No wide trends were noted among forest insectivores, but cone-dependent Red-breasted Nuthatches were rated as especially abundant in both Nova Scotia (RS) and New Brunswick (DSC). Nova Scotia's 6th Carolina Wren wintered in Truro (v.o., ph.). An unprecedented 17 Ruby-crowned Kinglets on Maritime CBCs included a well-described bird in wintery Dalhousie, NB (*vide* DSC); four were seen later in Nova Scotia (v.o.). A late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was in Lower Sackville, NS Dec. 20-23 (BA). An E. Bluebird at St-Pierre Dec. 8 was new to S.P.M. (RE, ph.). Another was near Hopewell Cape, NB Dec. 21 (JE), and they again wintered in Nova Scotia: six near Port Latour Jan. 18 and one through the season on Cape Sable I. (MN *et al.*). Newfoundland's first Mountain Bluebird was in St. John's Dec. 1-Feb. 20. Just as surprising were a first-year female appearing on Sable I., NS Jan. 10 (ZOL, ph.), and a first-year male there Jan. 30-Feb. 24 (AFM *et al.*, ph.); where had they been wandering? A Fieldfare was present Jan. 14-Feb. 14 at St. Anthony, NF (BB *et al.*, ph.). Mountain ash berries kept large flocks of Am. Robins in the Maritimes, but "only a few hundred" were in St. John's, NF (BMct). A Varied Thrush was around Miramichi City, NB Dec. 21+ (v.o.). Lingering flocks of Cedar Waxwings initially

outnumbered Bohemians in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, although the "highest numbers ever" of the latter were in Gros Morne N.P., NF in December (HD). Bohemians became common in the s. Maritimes and St. John's, NF during January, but not in last year's huge numbers. Northern Shrikes were rated fairly common in New Brunswick (DSC), Nova Scotia (RS), and s.e. Newfoundland (BMct).

Vireos to Finches

A late Solitary Vireo was at W. Chezzetcook, NS Dec. 14–18. (*fide* F. Lavender). Including the routine Yellow-rumped, the winter list of 13 warblers almost matched last year's. At least three Orange-crowned survived past mid-January in Nova Scotia. A well-described Nashville Warbler was at Broad Cove, NS Dec. 29 (SJF *et al.*). Four Yellow Warblers were in St. John's, NF (JW, BM) in early December. In Nova Scotia, a ♂ Black-throated Blue was at Caledonia Dec. 18 (*fide* KK), and another was at a feeder in Dartmouth to Jan. 12 (J. Taylor *et al.*). An ad. ♂ Hermit Warbler found Dec. 29 at Green Bay, NS (JSC *et al.*, ph.) was savored by many until Jan. 27; it provided the province's 3d and the Region's 5th record. A Yellow-throated Warbler attended a Glace Bay, NS feeder through December (CM), and individuals were sustained to Dec. 4 and from Dec. 28+ in St. John's, NF (BM *et al.*). At least six Pine Warblers in Nova Scotia and two in St. John's, NF survived into January or February, but four in New Brunswick disappeared in December. There were four post-CBC Palm Warblers in Nova Scotia (v.o.), and a "western" to Jan. 1 on G.M.I., NB (*fide* BD). An Ovenbird Dec. 25 in Halifax (JSC) was Nova Scotia's second latest. A N. Waterthrush Jan. 27–29 on Cape Sable I. († JC *et al.*) was the latest ever in the Region. Wilson's Warblers were at Baccaro, NS Dec. 17 (JC *et al.*), and Cape Sable I., Dec. 23 (MN *et al.*). Of four Yellow-breasted Chats in Nova Scotia, only one was seen through January. Northern Cardinals stalled somewhat, with CBC totals of 26 in New Brunswick and 12 in Nova Scotia. A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak lingered at Port L'Hebert, NS Dec. 18–20 (v.o.). An imm. Blue Grosbeak with House Sparrows at Donnelly Settlement, NB Jan. 1–21 (v.o.), provided a provincial first (and Regional 5th) for winter. Eleven Dickcissels were noted in Nova Scotia, two in New Brunswick, and two on S.P.M.; two survived winter at feeders in Pubnico, NS (RD). Two Rufous-sided Towhees wintered at feeders in Nova Scotia, and two more in New Brunswick; one of the latter, at Taymouth through January, was of a western, "spotted" race (M. Pacey *et al.*). Among the usual sparrows, only Am. Tree Sparrows were rated as

"common," or "abundant" in the Maritimes, although not in S.P.M. or Newfoundland. A Field Sparrow was at Alma, NB Jan. 13–21 (v.o.). Clay-colored Sparrows were in *Pictou*, NS Dec. 1 (†C. Brennan); Chezzetcook, NS early January (v.o.); and Sackville, NB Jan. 22+ (A. Smith *et al.*, ph.). A Vesper Sparrow was at Alma, NB Dec. 11–Jan. 3 (RW *et al.*). A Lark Sparrow wintered at Malpeque, PEI (v.o.). At least 225 "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrows stayed on Sable I., NS; many became victims of a wintering Am. Kestrel (ZOL). Grasshopper Sparrows appeared Dec. 27 at Economy, NS (FS), and Jan. 1–5 on Sable Island, NS (ZOL, ph.). A healthy Lincoln's Sparrow was found Feb. 12 in St. John's, NF (BMct). New Brunswick's 4th Harris' Sparrow, an immature with juncos, was well documented Dec. 20 in Fundy N.P., NB (DSC, P. Martin). Single "Oregon" Dark-eyed Juncos were detected in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Two imm. White-crowned Sparrows wintered in Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia, a notable 250 Lapland Longspurs were at Grand Pré Jan. 30 (JCT), and >1000 Snow Buntings wintered at the Halifax airport. Wintering meadowlarks (v.o.) included two Easterns and one unidentified in Nova Scotia, two Easterns in s.e. Newfoundland, three Easterns and two unidentified in New Brunswick, and an Eastern in P.E.I. Of >10 N. Orioles in December, two survived through February in Nova Scotia; another appeared briefly Feb. 15 in St. John's, NF (BMct). A "Bullock's" was in St-Pierre, S.P.M., Dec. 27 (RE). All winter finches except Pine Grosbeaks were scarce in or absent from s.e. Newfoundland (BMct). Elsewhere, Purple Finches were initially numerous in n. New Brunswick (DSC), becoming so later in Nova Scotia. House Finches continued to increase in New Brunswick (a record 330 on CBCs; DSC) and Nova Scotia (about 20 through winter). White-winged Crossbills and Am. Goldfinches were numerous in the Maritimes, especially by later winter in Nova Scotia. Other winter finches were average or scarce, with redpolls virtually absent.

Contributors and observers (subregional summarizers in boldface): Brad Amirault, Bruce Bradbury, David S. Christie, John & Shirley Cohrs (JSC), David A. Curry, Joan Czapaly, Brian Dalzell, Hank Deichmann, Jim Edsell, Raymond D'Entremont, David Detcheverry, Roger Etcheverry, Sylvia Fullerton, Keith Keddy, Zoe Lucas, Andrew Macfarlane, Blake Maybank, Bruce Mactavish (BMct), Dan McAskill, Cathy Murrant, Murray Newall, Francis Spalding, Richard Stern, Rob Walker, Jim Wolford.

—Ian A. McLaren, Biology Department, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS B3H 4J1.

Quebec Region

YVES AUBRY AND PIERRE BANNON

Southwestern Quebec experienced a very mild winter with very little snow on the ground at any given moment. Mild conditions in December were responsible for an unusual number of lingering migrants until late in the month. After a cold snap in early January, the mild weather was back again. The mid-January thaw raised temperatures to an impressive 17°C near the United States border January 15, and ice eventually disappeared from most of the rivers. Temperatures were closer to normal in February. It was a completely different story in the eastern part of the province, where storm after storm hit the Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower North Shore. At the end of the period, Gaspé had six feet of snow on the ground.

Loons to Waterfowl

A Red-throated Loon trapped in ice at Desbiens Dec. 14 (F. Charlton) and one found on the roadside at St-Gédéon Dec. 16 (J. Desmeules) provided first December records for the Lac Saint-Jean region, but four birds off Nun's I., *Montréal*, Dec. 3 (R. Guillet) and two at Gros-Cap, *Magdalen Is.*, Dec. 18 (BL, J. Bourque) were more expected. A Red-necked Grebe at Rimouski Jan. 21 provided only the Region's 3rd January record (G. Gendron). Several exhausted N. Fulmars were encountered inland in December, including an intermediate morph found in a driveway at Jonquière Dec. 14 (A. Landry *et al.*), a light morph in a field at Chicoutimi Dec. 16 (G. Parent), and a light morph picked up in a backyard at St-Félix-de-Dalquier, *Abitibi*, Dec. 28 that died 4 days later despite a rehabilitation effort (M. Pageau). These birds must have been attempting to move S overland from Hudson Bay. How many ended up in the middle of the boreal forest without being noticed will never be known. Northern Gannets penetrated the Upper St. Lawrence valley in larger numbers than usual. An immature at the Beauharnois dam Dec 3–5 (R. Belhumeur *et al.*) heralded an invasion in the Montreal area: Six were counted Dec. 10 at Beauharnois (BB, MM), five at Côte Ste-Catherine (DD *et al.*), one at Longueuil (R. Boyer *et al.*) and one at Ste-Hélène I. (N. David *et al.*), all immatures. An adult at Les Escoumins, *Saguenay*, Jan. 4 provided the Region's first January record