

Atlantic Provinces Region

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It was a season highlighted with influxes of a wide variety of species. An early movement of Bohemian Waxwings evolved into a massive movement by the end of the period. White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins swarmed over cone-burdened spruce and balsam fir trees after a booming breeding season. Eurasian Wigeon and Tufted Duck staged their biggest flights with eighteen and thirteen individuals respectively. From the south, record numbers of Northern Cardinals and Red-bellied Woodpeckers crossed into New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in October and November. Vagrants seemed almost under control, with Mississippi Kite, Spotted Redshank, and Golden-crowned Sparrow in Nova Scotia, and a Wood Stork and Virginia's Warbler in New Brunswick being highlights. The most extraordinary

bird of the season was an Old World raptor in Newfoundland thought to be a Black Kite. It is gratifying to see more rare bird reports supported by photographs or descriptions.

Abbreviations: G.M.I. (*Grand Manan I., New Brunswick*); C.B.I. (*Cape Breton I.*); S.P.M. (*Saint Pierre et Miquelon*).

Loons to Herons

The highest count of Red-throated Loon from the loon rich Northumberland Strait was 175 Oct. 26 at Melmerby Beach, NS (CB). An ad. Pacific Loon in alternate plumage well observed from a whale watching boat off Campobello I., NB Aug. 26 represented one of very few records for the province (CD, PV *et al.*). A Horned Grebe at Outer Cove, NF Nov. 28 was a provincial rarity (KK). Six Red-necked Grebes were early Aug. 23 at Long Pond, G.M.I. (ST). An Eared Grebe at Taylor Head P.P., NS Sept. 27–Oct. 7 was well seen and photographed, the first of several sightings in the province and Region to be confirmed (RBS *et al.*).

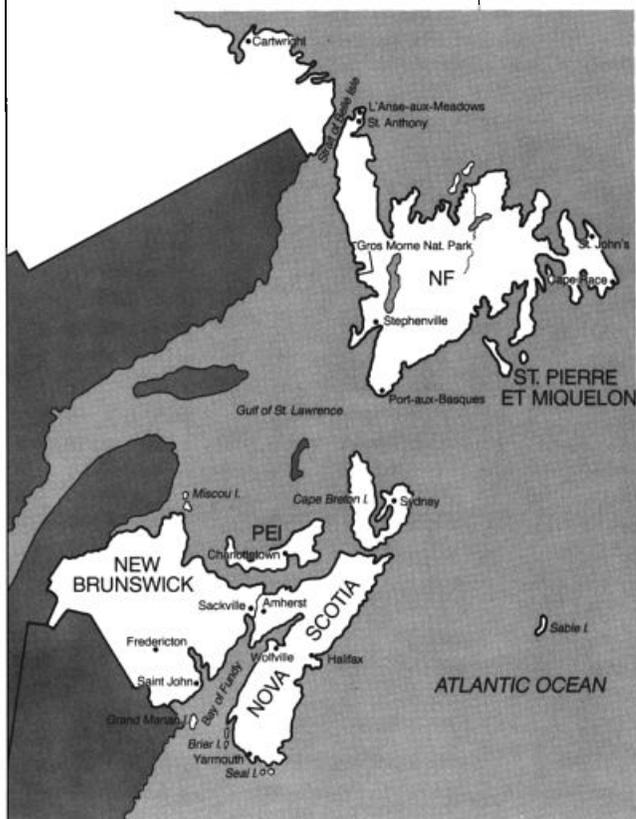
It was a poor season for Cory's Shearwater, with the only report a single bird (IJ). The largest concentration of shearwaters was 5000 Greater and 1000 Sooty off s.e. G.M.I., Oct. 26 (*fide DC*). Late Greater Shearwaters included 30 Nov. 11 in Grand Manan Channel, NB (ST). The well-known concentration of Wilson's Storm-Petrels in the Bay of Fundy off G.M.I. reached 3000 Aug. 23 (ST). Most interesting of the few southern heron reports were three separate Yellow-crowned Night-Herons in Nova Scotia in August, and one Sept. 15–18 at Haricott, NF (CBr *et al.*). A light flurry of late Cattle Egrets was detected in November, with singles in New Brunswick and Newfoundland and two in Nova Scotia. An imm. Wood Stork hopped around New Brunswick. It was found feeding at Hampton Sept. 9 (B. MacPhee, M. Bradstreet), and subsequently seen in flight over Moncton Sept. 11 (J. Poirier), Mary's Pt., Sept. 13 (M. Majka), Westfield Oct. 2 (A.

Gorham). The one previous record for the Region was at Saint John in June 1911.

Waterfowl to Rails

Two of three Greater White-fronted Geese were shot by a hunter near Terrenceville, NF Oct. 14 (*fide BMt*). A single was enjoyed by birders at Coverdale, NB Nov. 17–27 (RS *et al.*). Locally high concentrations of Snow Geese were 10 in early October at St. Pierre, S.P.M. (*fide RE*) and seven Oct. 29 at Kensington, PEI (LH). Another breeding record for N. Shoveler in New Brunswick was confirmed with a family group of ten at St. Basile Aug. 10 (G&MT). Eurasian Wigeons were present in force. There were at least four in St. John's, NF during November, and a Regional all-time-high flock of eight in the Grand Codroy R., NF Nov. 10–12 (PL, BMt, JW). Elsewhere there were three in Nova Scotia, two in Prince Edward Island and one in New Brunswick. A ♀ Canvas-back was well seen at East Ferry, NS on the early date of Sept. 2 (PC). Thirteen Tufted Ducks across the Region would have been inconceivable 10 years ago. New Brunswick had its first, with a male Oct. 14 at Tracadie sewage lagoon joined by a 2nd male Oct. 20 (BH, PP *et al.*); also, two different females at Coverdale Nov. 16 & 17 (ST *et al.*). Nova Scotia had a male near Pictou Sept. 23 (CB), and a male and two females at Dartmouth Nov. 11–30+ (BMy *et al.*). Newfoundland had two female-types at St. John's Oct. 15–23 and three female-types in the Grand Codroy Valley Nov. 10–12 (BMt *et al.*). Highlights of a modest flight of Ruddy Ducks were nine Nov. 5 at Antigonish, NS (RL) and 20 Nov. 16 at Musquash, NB (*fide DC*).

Two Black Vultures soaring with four Turkey Vultures over Barrington, NS Sept. 16 provided probably the first multiple sighting of this now annual, but still very rare, bird in the Region (BD). Up to 12 Turkey Vultures at Long Beach, Kingston Pen., NB in August suggested local breeding (JB *et al.*). The Region's and Nova Scotia's 3rd Mississippi Kite was a 2nd-year bird photographed at Brier I., Sept. 4–24 (S.R. Drennan, V. Shaw, JK *et al.*). Largest numbers of hawks reported were 500 Sharp-shinned Hawks Sept. 15 at Brier I., NS (SC *et al.*), and a single kettle of 85 Broad-winged Hawks Sept. 25 over Kent I., NB (BD). Very scarce in the Region, migrant imm. Red-shouldered Hawks were identified at Brier I., NS Sept. 15 (SC *et al.*) and two on Seal I., NS Oct. 3 (BMy *et al.*). An imm. Red-tailed Hawk moving N over Cheeseman P.P., NF Nov. 12 represented only the 6th for insular Newfound-



land (BMT, PL, JW). There was yet another summer sighting of Golden Eagle from New Brunswick with an adult Aug. 19 at Christmas Mt. (DM). Early Gyrfalcons were singles at Seal I., NS Oct. 3 (BMy *et al.*), Cape Sable, NS Oct. 19–24 (MN *et al.*), and Castalia Marsh, G.M.I., Oct. 30 (JL).

SA A bird of prey floating in the sea breeze back and forth along a shore in Bonavista, NF Aug. 21 was identified by Jon Joy as a Black Kite [*Milvus migrans*]. The 3 photographs of the bird have been shown to several European experts. There is unanimous opinion that it is indeed an Old World kite; however, opinions based solely on the small images in the photos are divided between Black Kite and Red Kite [*Milvus milvus*]. The verdict is still out, but should be resolved. There are no other records for this genus in North America. Seemingly an unlikely bird to stray across the Atlantic, Black Kite has been recorded once in Iceland, indicating that long flights over water are possible.

The only Sandhill Crane was one Sept. 7 at Bay Bulls, NF, and presumably the same bird 30 mi s. at Bear Cove Pt., Sept. 30 (PL *et al.*).

Shorebirds

The 3rd Spotted Redshank to be reported in Nova Scotia in 4 months was an adequately described individual at Cape Sable I., NS Oct. 7 (MN, JN). Peak counts of Semipalmated Sandpiper from the traditional feeding locations in the Bay of Fundy were: 200,000 July 30 and Aug. 15 at Dorchester Cape, NB (RS); 100,000 Aug. 2 at Mary's Pt., NB (DC), and 100,000 July 29 at Evangaline Beach, NS (JT). Western Sandpipers were well reported. New Brunswick had three–four individuals at various times Sept. 2–14 at Long Pond, G.M.I. (ST *et al.*), and one Sept. 14 at Cap Bimet (ST). Nova Scotia had one Aug. 26 at Big I., Pictou (CB, KM) and one Oct. 4 at Seal I. (BMy *et al.*). There was a moderate flight of Baird's Sandpipers with totals of 13 in Nova Scotia and nine in New Brunswick. An ad. Curlew Sandpiper provided a nice find at Sable I., NS Aug. 11–14 (ZL). Stilt Sandpiper totals included five in New Brunswick and a high 16 in Nova Scotia. Buff-breasted Sandpiper totals were seven for both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and nine for Newfoundland. The only Ruff was a male in fading breeding plumage at Pt. de Bute, NB Aug. 12 (WP

et al.). New Brunswick as usual headlined the Long-billed Dowitcher reports with all this season's reports: one Aug. 2 at Sackville (ST), three adults Aug. 12 at Pt. de Bute (WP *et al.*), two Oct. 29–Nov. 4 at Castalia, G.M.I. (JWi), and two late October at Sackville (*vide* DC). An Am. Woodcock strayed E to Grand Barachois, S.P.M., Oct. 20 (LJ). Wilson's Phalaropes are underreported in the w. half of the Region, but in Newfoundland, where it is almost an annual rarity, there was one Aug. 26 at Lamoline (PL *et al.*) and one Sept. 2–11 at Renew's (TB *et al.*). It is difficult to beat Christie's pick of winner in the "most unusual habitat category" of a Red-necked Phalarope feeding under fox pens at Salisbury, NB on the late date of Oct. 9 (RS).

Jaegers to Terns

Most curious were small groups of sub-ad. Long-tailed Jaegers resting on the beaches of Sable I., NS June 6–Sept. 2, with an extraordinarily high count of 25 Aug. 2 (ZL). The usual scattering of Laughing Gulls across the Region included singles at The Whistle, G.M.I., Oct. 7 (AS); Macataquac Dam, NB Nov. 13–20 (DG); Sable I., NS Aug. 17 (ZL); Waterside, NS Sept. 10 (KM *et al.*), and one late August–Sept. 2 Biscay Bay, NF (KK, TB). An ad. Franklin's Gull was seen from a boat going to Seal I., NS Oct. 7 (IM *et al.*). Common Black-headed Gulls peaked at 70 during November at St. John's, NF (BMT). An ad. Mew Gull was at St. John's, NF Aug. 23–Nov. 30+ (KK *et al.*). Lesser Black-backed Gull totals included seven in New Brunswick, four in Nova Scotia, and 10 in Newfoundland, the latter including five in juvenile plumage feeding with Herring Gulls around a St. John's duck pond in the last week of October. An ad. Sabine's Gull was among a feeding frenzy of birds at Bulkhead Rip, G.M.I., NB Oct. 26 (LM). Black Tern was confirmed breeding for the 3rd consecutive year well e. of the main



Lesser Black-backed Gull in first-winter plumage at St. John's, Newfoundland, November 25, 1995. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.



Adult "Common" Gull [the European race of Mew Gull] at St. John's, Newfoundland, November 8, 1995. The broken dark ring on the bill is typical of this race in winter, and so is the spotting and streaking on the head [more sharply defined than in the Mew Gulls of western North America]. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.

breeding range, when an adult was seen feeding a just-fledged young Aug. 2 at Miquelon, S.P.M. (RE).

Cuckoos to Waxwings

A fairly large flight of Yellow-billed Cuckoos was detected, with about 18 in New Brunswick, 10 in Nova Scotia, and one in Newfoundland. A N. Saw-whet Owl on a clothes line in Miquelon, S.P.M. provided a 3rd record for the French colony (*vide* RE). No Snowy Owls were reported.

SA Red-headed Woodpeckers have maintained a steady but low presence as a fall stray to the Region for the last couple of decades. This season's reports of one Oct. 17–25 at North Head, G.M.I., NB (JL) and one Oct. 8 at Seal I. (BMy *et al.*) were typical. On the other hand, Red-bellied Woodpecker—much rarer than Red-headed Woodpecker 20 years ago—now occurs in explosive numbers during autumn. Fall 1996 provided the largest influx to date, with at minimum 13 in New Brunswick and 14 in Nova Scotia. The influx started in early October, with new birds being found into November. Eventual breeding in the Region is anticipated.

Single Say's Phoebes were photographed Sept. 11 at Big Pond C.B.I., NS (AM, CM) and Sept. 23 at Inkerman, NB (AR). An imm. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Oct. 3 at Seal I., NS was the first for this vagrant trap (BMy *et al.*). For the first autumn since birdwatching "began" (?) there were no W. Kingbirds reported in either New Brunswick or Nova Scotia; there were sin-

gles farther east at St. Pierre et Miquelon Oct. 19 and Nov. 4–8 (RE *et al.*). October Cliff Swallows included seven Oct. 2 at St. John's, NF (BMT), one Oct. 30 at Cape Sable I., NS (KM, CB) and one Oct. 31 at Bandcroft Pt., NB (BD). A huge southward movement of Black-capped Chickadees was noted in New Brunswick along the coasts of the Northumberland Strait and Bay of Fundy during September and October, with morning flights of ≤ 300 birds and single flocks of ≤ 125 (m.ob.). A few Boreal Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches were moving with the Black-capped Chickadee flocks. Red-breasted Nuthatches were abundant in the woods of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia throughout the period. Large numbers were seen migrating S in August at migration watch points such as Brier I., NS, where 7200 were seen leaving out over the Bay of Fundy in 2 hours Aug. 18 (RBS).

A Carolina Wren was at Fredericton, NB Aug. 14 (DG). While 12 House Wrens and 18 Marsh Wrens on Seal I., NS in the first week of October were very high totals (BMy *et al.*), a House Wren Nov. 5–11 at Blackhead, NF and a Marsh Wren Oct. 21 & 22 at Ferryland, NF were provincial rarities (BMT, IJ *et al.*). Rare and difficult to find in migration, a Sedge Wren was discovered at Seal I., NS Oct. 3–7 (BMy *et al.*). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers have become so routine in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that they are not all reported; but in Newfoundland, after a 3-year decline as a fall vagrant, the species was unrecorded for the first year since 1982.

Northern Wheatear continues its improved presence of the 1990s with singles Oct. 1–5 at Petite Shippegan, NB (GB), Oct. 13 at Southern Head, G.M.I., NB (ST), Sept. 27 & 28 at Seal I., NS (IJ *et al.*), Oct. 18–25 Cape Sable I., NS (MN *et al.*), and five at widely scattered locations in Newfoundland between Aug. 22–Sept. 24. Twenty Bohemian Waxwings at Pt. Escuminac, NB Sept. 24 heralded a record-early influx into the Region. The first large flocks were reported in the east, with 300 Nov. 9 at Port Morien, C.B.I., NS, 400 late November at St. Anthony, NF (BB), and 1000 late November at Clarendville, NF (GS). See the upcoming winter report, when the influx reached astronomical proportions.

Vireos to Warblers

Nova Scotia's first White-eyed Vireo in 5 years was at Cape Sable I., Oct. 30 (CB, KM). Newfoundland had its 4th and 5th ever with one Sept. 30 at Bear Cove Pt. (PL, JW) and one Oct. 26 at Blackhead (TB, BMT). Solitary Vireos lingered until

the end of November in Dartmouth, NS (three) and in St. John's, NF (one). Yellow-throated Vireos put in a good showing, with four between Sept. 10–20 at G.M.I., NB (ST *et al.*), one Oct. 1 at Saint John, NB (*vide* DC), and one Sept. 3 at Brier I., NS (BF). The latest of three Warbling Vireos straying E to the Avalon, NF was at St. John's Oct. 22 (BMT). A very late Philadelphia Vireo was at Halifax, NS Nov. 12 (AV, DAC).

Straying Blue-winged Warblers were below recent autumn totals with singles Aug. 27 at Fundy N.P., NB (RW), Sept. 3 at Bon Portage I., NS (JC *et al.*), Sept. 10 at Cole Harbour, NS (RF), and Sept. 29 at Louisburg, NS (CM). The only Golden-winged Warbler was banded Sept. 23 at Kent I., NB (BD). Amazingly, for the 3rd time in 13 months there was a **Virginia's Warbler** in the Region, this time well seen and described at Southwest Head, G.M.I., NB Oct. 14, providing a provincial first (ST). One wonders if the unprecedented occurrence of six Chestnut-sided Warblers in e. Newfoundland Sept. 6–Oct. 7 was somehow related to the one that made it over to Britain, providing the 2nd Western Palearctic record. Single Black-throated Blue Warblers rare e. of the breeding range were males at Cape Miquelon, S.P.M., Oct. 11 (RE) and St. John's, NF Oct. 15 (TB). New Brunswick's 2nd **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was a female photographed Oct. 27 at McLaren Pond Fundy N. P. (ST *et al.*). Four Yellow-throated Warblers was about average, with singles Sept. 10 at St. John's, NF (PL), Sept. 18 at Kent I., NB (BD), Oct. 25 at Bedford, NS (RP), and Oct. 23–Nov. 30 at Lower Cunard (m.ob.). Three Pine Warblers were as far east as St. John's, NF during November, despite being scarce in the w. part of the Region. It was a bumper year for Prairie Warblers with ≥ 16 in New Brunswick, >20 in Nova Scotia, and seven in Newfoundland; both Kent I., NB and Sable I., NS recorded one as early as Aug. 3. The most unanticipated November warbler to be found in St. John's, NF was the imm. ♀ **Cerulean Warbler** Nov. 18–Dec. 2 (TB, BMT, IJ, m.ob.); it provided only the 3rd provincial record and one of the latest records for North America! Prothonotary Warblers included one Sept. 3–8 at Sable I., NS (ZL) and one Sept. 17 at Whale Cove, G.M.I., NB (JB). Kentucky Warblers included one Sept. 8 at Sable I., NS (ZL), a record-late bird Oct. 9 at Seal I., NS (IM, PM) and an ad. male Sept. 9 & 16 at Bear Cove Pt., NF (BMT, JW). A brief, though close, encounter with a "Mourning Warbler" exhibiting vivid white crescents above and below the eye on the late date of Nov. 7 in St. John's, NF was highly suggestive of

MacGillivray's Warbler; unfortunately it could not be relocated for confirmation (DP). Hooded Warblers included one at G.M.I., NB Sept. 12 & 15 (RS), two on Sable I., NS Sept. 3 (ZL), and a rare inland bird at Sand Lake Rd., C.B.I., NS Sept. 23 (CM). It was a monster year for Yellow-breasted Chat, with minimum totals of 19 in New Brunswick, 30 in Nova Scotia, and six in Newfoundland, most occurring in September and early October, with a number of stragglers to late November. Editors' favorite picks of the few November warblers were Yellow Warbler Nov. 13–17 at Dartmouth, NS (m.ob.); Blackburnian Warbler Nov. 29 at Avonport, NS (*vide* JT); Black-poll Warbler Nov. 13–18 at Dartmouth, NS (m.ob.); Ovenbird Nov. 27 at St. John's, NF (DB); and single Prairie Warblers Nov. 30 at Pictou, NS (CB), Nov. 26–30+ at St. John's, NF (BMT), and two Nov. 28 at Renewes, NF (IJ, PJ). A large, golden-yellow Wilson's Warbler with an unusual call note at Alma, NB Nov. 6 was thought to be a w. subspecies (ST).

Tanagers to Finches

Single ♂ **Western Tanagers** were identified at Dartmouth, NS Nov. 6 (*vide* JTa) and Cape Blomidon, NS Nov. 27 & 28 (m.ob.). A Scarlet Tanager was far east at Blackhead, NF Sept. 30 (JP). Perhaps the largest influx of N. Cardinals ever recorded in the Region was noted in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, starting in mid-October and continuing through November. Numbers were difficult to obtain as most birds showed up at feeders; however, ≥ 50 were tallied for Nova Scotia. An outstanding 15 of the 17 Blue Grosbeaks in the Region were registered on Seal I., NS Oct. 1–9 (BMy *et al.*). It was an average fall for Indigo Buntings, with six–eight being found as far east as the Avalon Pen., NF. It was an above-average season for Dickcissel, with ≥ 27 in New Brunswick, ten in Nova Scotia, and eight in Newfoundland. Extraordinary was the occurrence of three Rufous-sided Towhees in Newfoundland, where it is very rare: one male Oct. 26 at St. John's (KK), one female Nov. 25–30 at St. John's (BMT *et al.*), and one female Nov. 28 at Renewes (IJ, PJ). Clay-colored, Field, Lark, and Grasshopper sparrows occurred in near average numbers. See Table 1. The third Field Sparrow for St. Pierre et Miquelon was at St. Pierre Oct. 27 (RE). Formerly a somewhat regular rarity in the Region, a Lark Bunting at Hartlen Pt., NS Nov. 13–16 was the first in that province in 6 years (PM *et al.*).

A Seaside Sparrow was at Castalia Marsh, G.M.I., NB Sept. 10 & 11 (JWi *et*

Table 1. Autumn Totals of Dickcissel and Uncommon Sparrows

	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Newfoundland	earliest date	latest date
Dickcissel	27	10	8	Aug. 6	Nov. 30+
Clay-colored Sparrow	2	4	-	Oct. 5	Oct. 31
Field Sparrow	8	4	-	Sept. 28	Nov. 30+
Lark Sparrow	4	8	2	Aug. 26	Nov. 7
Grasshopper Sparrow	1	3	1	Sept. 16	Nov. 5

al.). A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** at Chebucto Head, NS Oct. 29–Nov. 30+ was nicely photographed for about the province's 5th record (AV *et al.*). New Brunswick's 3rd **Harris' Sparrow** was at a feeder in Moncton Nov. 23–30+ (BC *et al.*). A Lapland Longspur was 3 weeks early Aug. 20 at Outer Cove, NF (BMT). A well-marked ♀ Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco was described from North Head, G.M.I., NB Nov. 10 (ST). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Kent I., NB Sept. 5 (BD); Lawrencetown Beach Aug. 26 (AC), and Glovertown, NF Sept. 10 (GS).

House Finches have reached n.e. New Brunswick where a pair was seen feeding young at Carquet (BH). White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins were common throughout most of the Region, and superabundant in areas of exceptionally heavy cone crops such as Cape Breton I., NS; coastal Labrador, and the entire island of Newfoundland. The many streaked juv. White-winged Crossbills in August were the result of local breeding in July. Pine Siskins were also common to abundant in the same areas as White-winged Crossbill, where they likewise benefited from an exceptional cone crop. Smaller numbers of Red Crossbills were seen in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but were almost completely absent from Newfoundland. Other finch species were in average to good numbers.

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Quebec Region

YVES AUBRY AND PIERRE BANNON

The hot and dry weather of the early summer continued until late August, but September and October saw the return of more normal temperatures. Last summer's drought definitely ended in October, when the remnants of hurricane *Opal* dumped four inches of rain on southern Quebec October 6, and a strong cold front added another four inches October 21–22. Otherwise October was a pleasant month. But it was followed by a wintry November. Montreal experienced one of its coldest Novembers on record, and had twice the amount of snow normally received.

Loons to Waterfowl

A Red-throated Loon reached L. Massawippi, *Orford*, Sept. 18 (C. Chalk) and two were spotted on Res. Beaudet, *Victoriaville*, Sept. 21 (JD, CR). An Arctic/Pacific Loon in basic plumage at Étang du Nord Aug. 26–27 provided the 3rd record for the Magdalen Is. (DGG, CAG), while one at Saint-Gédéon, L. *Saint-Jean*, was a first locally (CG, MS). And **Eared Grebe** reappeared by L. Malbae, Laurentide, Sept. 8–18 (L. Lesage), where one spent part of the summer last year.

A Sooty Shearwater seen from a whale-watching boat near the mouth of the Saguenay R., Aug. 21 was a good find (NR). The same outing allowed the discovery of four Manx Shearwaters (NR). Two Manx were also spotted from the Rivière-au-Renard/Port-Menier ferry Aug. 13 (DJ *et al.*), and singles were seen off Percé Aug. 15 (G. Duquette *et al.*) and from the Rivière-au-Loup ferry Sept. 10 (JPO, ML). Wilson's Storm-Petrel was the only petrel sp. observed on a pelagic trip off Percé Aug. 15 (ND *et al.*); one encountered at Sainte-Angèle, *Nicolet*, Sept. 16 was a rare sighting so far upstream (AC *et al.*). The discovery of a Leach's Storm-Petrel Sept. 22 at Res. Beaudet, an inland location, was also a notable event (CR), while single birds at Québec City Oct 1 & 24 (LM, GL) and at Rivière-Ouelle, *Kamouraska*, Oct. 22 (JFR, SB) were more expected. The annual incursion of N Gannets into the upper St. Lawrence R did not result in any spectacular concen-