

Atlantic Provinces Region

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Following stressful cold in December, temperatures were near average, but cold snaps alternated with mild spells and torrential rains after mid-January. Landbirds became scattered on open terrain, and waterfowl benefited from open waters. Excellent cone crops and paltry fruit crops were reported from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Unattributed records are *fide* subregional summarizers.

Abbreviations: S.P.M. (*Saint Pierre et Miquelon*), P.E.I. (*without locality, Prince Edward Island*)

Loons to Waterfowl

Among the usual loons and grebes, only Red-necked Grebes in Nova Scotia were

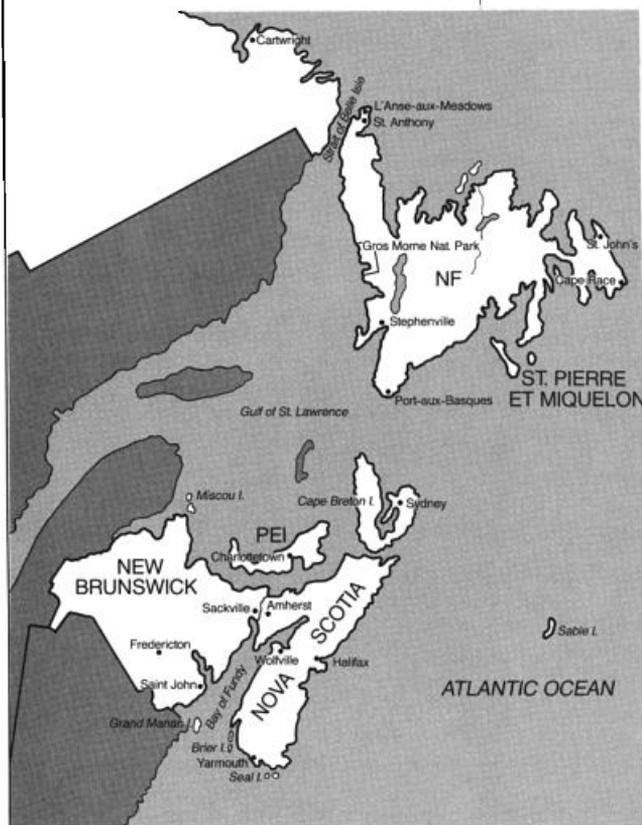
rated common through winter. Five post-CBC Pied-billed Grebes in Nova Scotia were less surprising than one Jan. 24 at Port Union, NF (KK, BM). In addition to the usual few Double-crested Cormorants staying in Nova Scotia, there were individuals mid-December at Miquelon, S.P.M. (RE,) and Jan. 27 at Ferryland, NF (IJ). Two post-CBC Great Blue Herons were fewer than usual in Nova Scotia. A Cattle Egret Dec. 6 at Kildare, P.E.I., was found dead Dec. 18 (C. Edgar). Urban waterfowl concentrations included the usual rarities enjoyed by many. Three ♂ "Eur." Green-winged Teal wintered in St. John's, and another at Cape Broyle, NF. Wintering Eur. Wigeons included two males and four females in St. John's, NF, two males around Halifax, NS, and a male was at Pomquet, NS Dec. 17. Surprisingly, **Tufted Ducks** bypassed St. John's, NF. In Nova Scotia, there was a "pair" from early January near Sydney, a male to Dec. 7 and a female Jan. 1+ in Dartmouth, a male Jan. 6+ at Trenton, and a male in late February at Waverly. A male appeared from Jan. 19 at Saint John, NB. The increasingly regular Lesser Scaup included approximately 20 in Nova Scotia, seven in New Brunswick, and the first one to winter in St. John's, NF. Numerous Com. Eiders and some Oldsquaws were oiled in late January off S.P.M. (RE). A pleasing 42 Harlequin Ducks were present at Prospect, NS (BS), and 35 around The Wolves, NB Dec. 12 (P.

Kehoe); approximately 20 were noted elsewhere. Scoters remained below past levels in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A record ≥ 40 Hooded Mergansers wintered in Nova Scotia, they were "well above average" on CBCs in New Brunswick (DSC), and the latest ever on S.P.M. was a male Feb. 25 (B. Letournel). Five late Ruddy Ducks were at Fredericton, NB Dec. 17.

Raptors to Alcids

A **Black Vulture** Feb. 8 at Hampstead, NB (E. Inch) was less startling given recent winter records. Two Turkey Vultures were in s.e. New Brunswick in early December, seven wintered on Brier I. and one on Cape Sable I., NS. Individuals appeared briefly at 3 Nova Scotia

locations Jan. 8 and Feb. 10 (v.o.). Bald Eagles were above average on Maritime CBCs. The annual census Jan. 21 in Kings, NS produced a 4-year low of 300 birds, attributed to snow-free countryside (J. Wolford). A Cooper's Hawk wintered near Norton, NB (J. Wilson *et al.*), and another pursued pigeons in Moncton, NB Jan. 22+ (BD). About 20 N. Goshawks killed rats at the dump in St. John's, NF, but numbers remained average on Maritimes CBCs. An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk was at Mary's Pt., NB Jan. 1 (DSC), and another exploited feeder suet in St. John's, NB Dec. 26+ (v.o.). The peripheral Red-tailed Hawk at St. John's, NF may have been last winter's bird (BM). This was a very "off" winter for Rough-legged Hawks. A near-ad. Golden Eagle was seen several times after Jan. 20 in Yarmouth, NS (J. Czapaly *et al.*). Only about five each Am. Kestrels and Merlins wintered in Nova Scotia, where both were once more regular. Peregrine Falcons, increasingly regular in winter, included one at Cape St. Mary's, NF, three in Nova Scotia, and two on Grand Manan Is., NB. In Newfoundland, two Gyrfalcons were at Cape St. Mary's in February, and the "usual numbers" (BM) were around St. Anthony's. One at St.-Pierre Jan. 19 supplied a 2nd S.P.M. record (RE). Four of five in New Brunswick were in the north, and none was reported from Nova Scotia. Ruffed Grouse on CBCs were "above average" in New Brunswick, and 70% up from last year in Nova Scotia. A late Sora was at Ferryland, NF Dec. 30 (C. Brown). An imm. **Purple Gallinule** captured mid-February at Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay, NF was flown to Texas in March (*fide* BM). Another was found dead Feb. 5 on Seal I., NS (*Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History). An Am. Coot wintered in St. John's, NF (the first to do so) and another in Dartmouth, NS. A **Northern Lapwing** was videotaped by a non-birder Dec. 27 at St. Anthony, NF (*fide* BM). In addition to the more widespread Purple Sandpipers, a few shorebird species lingered through winter in Nova Scotia (v.o.): a Ruddy Turnstone and ≥ 180 Sanderlings on Sable I. (ZL), and three Black-bellied Plovers, five Red Knots, ≥ 75 Sanderlings, a White-rumped Sandpiper, and 10 Dunlin on Cape Sable I. (M. Newall *et al.*). Individual Com. Snipe survived into February at Saint John, NB (v.o.), and at Pubnico (RD) and Windsor, NS (v.o.). A late **Little Gull** was at Canso, NS Dec. 29 (†BD). Black-headed Gulls were more numerous than usual in Nova Scotia, and ≥ 80 in St. John's, NF represented the most in years (BM). Single ad. Mew Gulls were sporadic



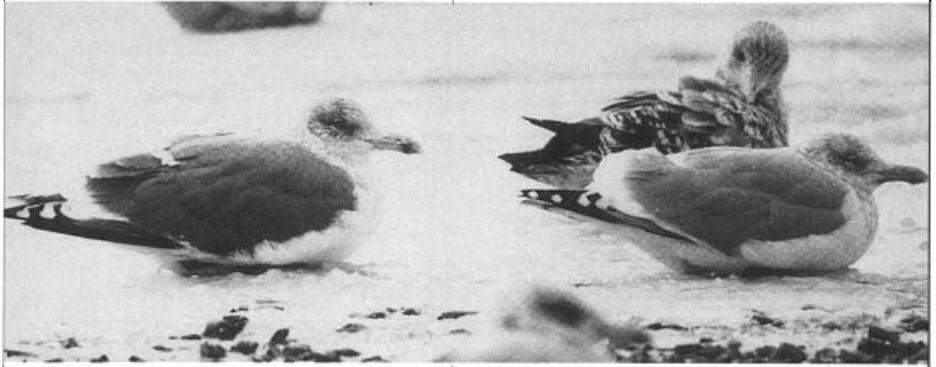
around Halifax, NS and through winter at Saint John, NB. Of two in St. John's, NF, a banded bird that stayed through the period is believed to have been present each winter since 1990. The band, read by scope (BM), had been placed on it as a chick at Akreyri, Iceland, July 14, 1990. Herring Gulls became fewer on Nova Scotia CBCs, while Iceland Gulls were up three-fold; cause and effect? Five Lesser Black-backed Gulls at St. John's, NF disappeared by February; individuals were sporadic around Moncton, NB and at 3 locations in Nova Scotia.

SA A Yellow-legged Gull Dec. 6 (BM), 13 (BM, KKn), & 20 (U) in St. John's, NF was not the same bird as last winter's. Meticulous field notes (BM) describe it as darker-backed [approaching *L. fuscus graelsii*] and flatter-crowned, but with all diagnostic features: stout, bright-yellow bill with large, red gonys spot; very limited head streaking; vermilion eye ring; extensive, square-cut black of wing tip with one large outer-primary window [see photo *Birders Journal* 5, p. 10, 1996]. Its dark mantle, and the much paler mantle of a "probable" in Halifax, NS Feb. 11, 1995 [*Birders Journal* 4, p. 302-304, 1995] suggest we need to know more about their variability relative to our Herring Gulls. Mactavish's gull magic also produced a n. European *L. a. argentatus*, somewhat larger, darker-backed, with brighter pink legs than our *smithsonianus*, with reduced black on wing tips and two very large windows. He has seen only one other in St. John's [see *Am. Birds* 45, p.409, 1991].

An ad. Ross' Gull flew by Chebucto Head, NS Dec. 3 (†BMa). As usual, Ivory Gulls were regular around St. Anthony, NF, and three were farther south during January at Bonavista, NF (v.o.). A Forster's Tern lingered at Chezzetcook, NS Dec. 23 (†SF). Alcids remained mostly offshore in the Maritimes, but a spectacular $\geq 25,000$ Dovekies rounded Cape Spear, NF early morning Jan. 21 (KKn, BM). A totally dark-chocolate Black Guillemot was at Cape Spear, NF Feb. 3-17 (BM, ph.).

Doves to Shrikes

A Band-tailed Pigeon seen briefly Dec. 12 at East Pubnico, NS could not be confirmed by birders (RD), but was probably the one that appeared at a feeder 20 mi away in Yarmouth Jan. 12-14. Limited access was permitted to confirm a 3rd



Beautifully documented was this Herring Gull, evidently of the northern European subspecies *L. a. argentatus*, at St. John's, Newfoundland, December 31, 1995. Useful points include its darker back compared to a nearby North American bird [*smithsonianus*], and the restricted black wingtips with very large white spots in the outer primaries. Photographs/Bruce Mactavish.



provincial and Regional record (JG, ph.). A Barn Owl at Cape Tormentine, NB Jan. 14 was found dead 2 days later, although not emaciated (DSC). The only reported N. Hawk Owl wintered near Inkerman, NB (G. Hébert *et al.*). Snowy Owls were decidedly scarce throughout. A Regionally rare Great Gray Owl was around Hopewell Cape, NB Jan. 30-Feb. 18 (A. Lesage *et al.*). The only Boreal Owls were two in New Brunswick, and a successfully rehabilitated weakling from Cherry Hill, NS. At least four Belted Kingfishers survived winter in Nova Scotia. Following last autumn's incursion of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, four were noted in New Brunswick, one in P.E.I., and ≥ 20 in Nova Scotia. Fewer stayed at feeders (or survived?) through winter. Single Three-toed Woodpeckers were reported on the CBC at Sackville, NB and at a feeder in Chester, NS Dec. 13-16 (M. Hasse). Two post-CBC N. Flickers were noted in New Brunswick, and 14 in Nova Scotia, down from last year. A Say's Phoebe (now Regionally annual) appeared Dec. 8 in Pictou, NS (H. Brennan *et al.*). A Eurasian Jackdaw Jan. 7 & 13 at St. John's, NF (BM, P. Linegar), was probably last winter's bird. American Crows were well above average on CBCs in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A videotaped chickadee, somewhat like a Siberian Tit, but possibly a Boreal x Black-capped, frequented a feeder in Upper Clyde, NS (*vide* JG). The counts of Black-capped Chickadees on CBCs were highest ever per party-hour in New Brunswick, and twice as high as last year's in Nova Scotia. Not

all Red-breasted Nuthatches departed in last fall's large movement; CBCs counts were "above average" in New Brunswick, and twice last year's in Nova Scotia. White-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers were respectively "above average" and "average" in New Brunswick, and both about 3 times more common than in last year's CBCs in Nova Scotia. Two Marsh Wrens lingered into December in Nova Scotia. Two Carolina Wrens stayed to Dec. 17 at Youngs Cove, NB (D. Gibson), and another appeared briefly from Feb. 23 near Kentville, NS (B. Forsythe *et al.*). Surprising were three Townsend's Solitaires in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; four of them discovered during January. American Robins were "low" on New Brunswick CBCs, and about average in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, where they diminished rapidly when berries ran out in January, and simultaneously became common (fugitives?) on S.P.M. (RE). Three Varied Thrushes were reported from Nova Scotia. A Gray Catbird appearing Dec. 28 on Sable I., NS



Nova Scotia's (and Atlantic Canada's) third Band-tailed Pigeon was present January 12-14, 1996, at a feeder in Yarmouth. Photograph/June Graves.

soon died (ZL). Single Brown Thrashers survived to Dec. 28 near Fredericton, NB (D. Myles), and through February at Freeport, NS (D. Tobin). There was a "record-smashing influx" of Bohemian Waxwings in e. Newfoundland, including "probably 20,000+ within a 20 km radius of St. John's" (BM). It was a "small flight year" (DSC) in New Brunswick, "very large numbers" were in P.E.I. (DM), and flocks of ≥ 500 were reported in Nova Scotia, where some observers nevertheless thought that the 1993-1994 flight was bigger. Tree fruit was quickly consumed in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and exposed ground berries sustained many fewer in February. Cedar Waxwings also broke records in Newfoundland, where a flock of ≥ 500 in St. John's Dec. 28 was the largest ever (BM). Only a few remained into winter in the Maritimes. Northern Shrikes were "fairly numerous" to early January in s.e. Newfoundland (BM), "above average" on New Brunswick CBCs (in which DSC found a negative correlation with snow depths), and unusually common through winter in Nova Scotia.

Vireos to Finches

A Solitary Vireo stayed to Dec. 10 in St. John's, NF (BM) and another to Dec. 19 in Dartmouth, NS (v.o.). Most straggling warblers disappeared during December's cold. Two Orange-crowned Warblers got through winter in Nova Scotia (v.o.). The season's prize was an ad. ♂ **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in Halifax, NS Dec. 2-21 (v.o., ph.). Two Pine Warblers in St. John's, NF and one in New Brunswick lasted until Dec. 10, and only three of an initial ≥ 15 survived winter in Nova Scotia. The lingering **Prairie Warbler** and **Cerulean Warbler** in St. John's, NF were not seen after Dec. 2 (BM). One of the former was at Pictou, NS Dec. 1 (C. Brennan). A Black-and-white Warbler and a N. Waterthrush stayed to Dec. 10 in St. John's, NF, and in Nova Scotia there were two Com. Yellowthroats in early December and a late Wilson's Warbler in Halifax Dec. 11 (J. Taylor). Of about six Yellow-breasted Chats in Nova Scotia, only two survived by early January.

The autumn influx of N. Cardinals doubled past CBC *maxima* in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and sent six to P.E.I. Fewer seemed evident beyond December. Three Dickcissels in Nova Scotia and one in P.E.I. visited feeders during December. An Indigo Bunting was nurtured to Dec. 19 in Halifax, NS. Eastern Towhees were at feeders through winter at Edmonston, NB (R. LeMarche), and West Pubnico, NS (L. D'Entremont). The usual

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1996 BIRDING TOURS

MALAYSIA

Malaya/Borneo
30 June - 21 July

INDONESIA #1

Sumatra Expedition
5 - 26 July

INDONESIA #2

Greater Sundas
Java, Bali, Borneo
26 July - 18 August

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

16 - 24 August

1997 BIRDING TOURS

THAILAND

4 - 26 January

NW INDIA

2 - 25 January

SRI LANKA

25 January - 10 February

PHILIPPINES

31 January - 3 March

VIETNAM

7 - 30 March

BHUTAN

5 - 27 April

MALAYSIA

29 June - 20 July

INDONESIA #1

Halmahera/Sulawesi
11 July - 3 August

INDONESIA #2

Lesser Sundas
Flores, Timor, Sumba
Komodo, Sumbawa
3 - 24 August

sparrows were not common in the Maritimes, perhaps being more scattered on open terrain. Wintering Chipping Sparrows are now regular in Nova Scotia, where there were 25 on CBCs, but four during late December in s.w. Newfoundland were unusual, and only one lingered in New Brunswick. A Field Sparrow was in Herring Cove, NS Dec. 2 (BMa, R. Foxall), and another at a feeder in Shediac, NB, until Dec. 16 (DD). A Vesper Sparrow frequented a feeder at New Glasgow, NS during January (K. McKenna, ph.). Individual Lark Sparrows were on CBCs



Male Black-throated Gray Warbler in Halifax, Nova Scotia, December 21, 1995. About the eighth record for the province. Photograph/ Ian McLaren.

in Louisbourg, Sydney, and Halifax, NS. Savannah Sparrows largely disappeared from Nova Scotia beaches after December; N. Shrikes were seen pursuing these on 2 beaches (IM). About 100 "Ipswich" Sparrows wintered on Sable I., NS (ZL). Two Lincoln's Sparrows on CBCs in s.e. Newfoundland were routine for recent years, whereas one to mid-February near Moncton was only the 2nd to winter in New Brunswick (DSC). Single White-crowned Sparrows stayed into December at Moncton and Hartland, NB, and at Bedford, NS. New Brunswick's 3d well-documented **Harris' Sparrow** was at a Moncton feeder to Dec. 28 (v.o., ph.). Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were uncommon (or unconcentrated?) in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The usual icterids wintered in below-average numbers in the Maritimes. The latest of six meadowlarks (v.o., four definite Easterns) in Nova Scotia was there Jan. 3. An imm. ♂ **Yellow-headed Blackbird** appeared from Feb. 5 in Halifax, NS (v.o.). About 45 Baltimore Orioles (none claimed as Bullock's) began winter in Nova Scotia, and one was in Sherwood, P.E.I. (R. Cooke). Three last (?) survivors were in Halifax, NS Jan. 16 (S. Cohrs). Pine Grosbeaks were particularly common in New

Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but scarce in Newfoundland. Purple Finches were rated as common only on Cape Breton I., NS (DAC). In New Brunswick, 171 CBC House Finches almost equaled last year's record, and ≥ 150 wintered in Moncton (BD). Up to 32 wintered in Halifax, but only a few elsewhere in Nova Scotia. Red Crossbills were scarce everywhere, with none noted in s.e. Newfoundland. By contrast, White-winged Crossbills were abundant throughout, especially in s.e. Newfoundland, where they fledged young in mid-February (BM). Common Redpolls were "fairly common" in s.e. Newfoundland (BM), "heavily concentrated" in n.e. New Brunswick (DSC), and "almost all" in n.e. Nova Scotia during early winter (DAC). Later they became more frequent in mainland Nova Scotia and s.e. New Brunswick. A number of Hoarics reported in New Brunswick included a "beautifully marked" ♂ *hornemanni* at Shediac (DD). Pine Siskins were abundant and possibly nesting in late February in s.e. Newfoundland (BM), but rated scarce in New Brunswick and common only in n.e. Nova Scotia (DAC). American Goldfinch and Evening Grosbeak numbers were generally unexceptional.

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Quebec Region

Y. AUBRY AND P. BANNON

December weather was a continuation of the conditions that prevailed in November, and by Christmas southern Québec had already received four to five feet of snow. The situation was drastically different thereafter, as only about a foot of snow fell during the next two months. By mid-January, southern Québec experienced a major thaw, which brought some severe flooding. Only the most northern areas received snow instead of rain. After a period of cold in early February, the temperatures rose again and heavy rains fell as far east as the Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower North Shore. Baie-Comeau had almost four inches of rain February 21. The mild weather induced some migrants to move into southern Québec by late February.

Loons to Waterfowl

A report of a pair of Pacific Loons with young at Akulivik, *Ungava*, Aug. 11–13 was received too late for inclusion in the fall chronicle (YG). Further details received pertaining to the bird seen at L'Anse Pleureuse, *Gaspé*, July 23, 1995 (A. Foxall, *see Summer report*) confirmed it as a Pacific Loon. There are no known reports

of Arctic Loons in the Region, but as a precaution, Pacific Loons reported without details are designated as Arctic/Pacific Loons by the editors. A Com. Loon at Bergeronnes, *Saguenay*, Dec. 24 was late (AB), while an individual present from Jan. 12+ at Laval, *Montréal*, represented one of the few overwintering records for the Region (L. Simard, m.ob.).

A Pied-billed Grebe lingered at Île des Soeurs, *Montréal*, until Jan. 1 (PB). Single Horned Grebes at Dégelis, *Témiscouata*, Jan. 21 (C. Gendron *et al.*) and at Noyan, *Upper Richelieu*, Feb. 25 (PB) provided the 4th and 5th mid-winter occurrences for the Region. Just as surprising were single Red-necked Grebes at Causapsal, *Matapédia*, Jan. 29 (L. Pitre), Amos, *Abitibi*, Feb. 6 (A.G. Bernier), and Henryville, *Upper Richelieu*, Feb. 28 (DD *et al.*). A Black-crowned Night-Heron at New-Richmond, *Gaspé*, Dec. 16 was noteworthy (B. Arsenault *et al.*).

A single Snow Goose was spotted at the Hemmingford Zoo Feb. 17 (PB). A female Green-winged Teal wintered in the Chateaugay-Léry area (A. Leduc), while a male visited Côteau-du-Lac, *Valleyfield*, Feb. 8–10 (GZ, PB). Northern Pintail have been observed regularly in winter in the Lachine rapids near Montréal for the last 20 years, but single birds at Pointe-aux-Pic, *Charlevoix*, in January (A. Boucher *et al.*) and Bergeronnes Dec. 23–28 (AB) were rather exceptional. A male Gadwall at Côte-Sainte-Catherine, *Montréal*, Feb. 24–25 was record early (PB). There were several other reports of anatids whose past February sightings can be counted on the

