

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" δ *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

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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.

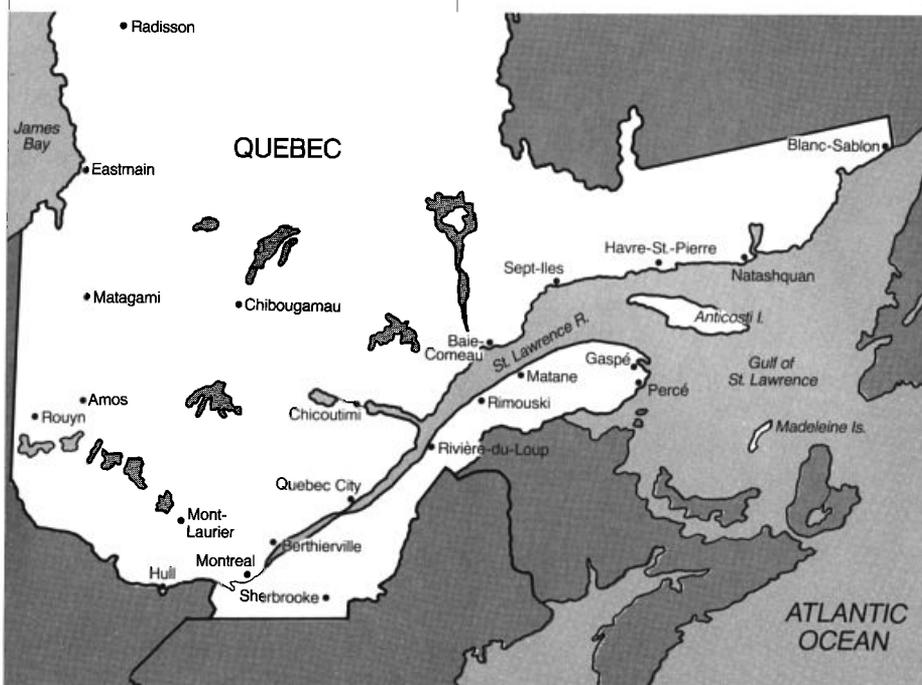
Loons to Waterfowl

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 Chateauguay-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



fingers of one hand. These included a female Am. Wigeon at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 3 (BB, MM) and a male at Côteau-du-Lac from Feb. 8+ (G. Huot, m.ob.); a male Redhead at Côteau-du-Lac Feb. 4+ (D. Gervais *et al.*); four Ring-necked Ducks at Deschênes, Hull, Feb. 21 (*vide* DT); and single female Ring-necked Ducks at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 18 (PB) and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Feb. 25 (PB). Some North American field guides erroneously show the winter range of the Greater Scaup extending from the Upper St. Lawrence to the Gaspé Pen. At best, very few individuals winter in the Montréal area; two females at LaSalle in January (J.-C. Sorel) and one at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 24–25 (PB) were fairly representative of the species winter status. A male Bufflehead at Magpie, Duplessis, Jan. 14 was a notable record so far north (Y. Rochepot, C. Buidin), while reports of Hooded Mergansers included one at Sainte-Marcelline, Joliette, from December–mid-January (R. Plamondon *et al.*), eight at Dégelis throughout the winter (M. Beaulieu *et al.*), two females at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 17–18 (PB), and a pair at Henryville Feb. 25 (PB). Two Ruddy Ducks at Saint-Paul-de-l'île-aux-Noix, Upper Richelieu, Dec. 2 were late sightings (GZ *et al.*).

Raptors to Gulls

The Bald Eagle was well reported. Some individuals lingered into December as far north as the Abitibi and the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean regions; several were reported in the Gaspé Pen. and in the Upper St. Lawrence in January, while s. Gatineau County had a surprising eight individuals in February (*vide* TS). The Sharp-shinned Hawk was well represented at the limits of its winter range, as evidenced by one or more individuals at Chicoutimi Jan. 12–Feb. 23 (*vide* GS), one at Sainte-Luce Dec. 16 (R. Claveau *et al.*), two at Sainte-Flavie Dec. 14 (G. Michaud), and one at Rimouski Feb. 11–20 (P. Vachon). The winter status of the Cooper's Hawk has changed in recent years; it is now regular in the Montréal area. Elsewhere, singles were reported at Berthierville Dec. 11 (CD), Gatineau Dec. 26–Feb. 28 (*vide* TS), Saint-Jean-Chrysostome, Québec City, Jan. 1 (AL), and Saint-George, Beauce, Jan. 14 (P. Rodrigue). The Golden Eagle is always rare in the Region in winter, so single birds at Picanoc R., Gatineau, Feb. 14 (M. Lalancette); Malbaie R., Charlevoix, Dec. 5 (R. Laberge); and Sainte-Hélène I., Montréal, Feb. 25 (J.P. Pratte, G. Lauzières) were interesting. The Merlin has

undergone a steady increase in the Region since 1970, and this has been reflected in the number of winter sightings. This year there were 11 records throughout the winter. A total of 13 Gyrfalcons was typical of recent years.

A Eurasian Coot at Kegaska Harbour, Duplessis, Dec. 14 (M. Osborne, N. D'As-tous, D. Quann) was the 5th addition to the list of Québec birds in 1995. The bird, which was picked up by children, was weak and eventually sent to Québec City Zoological Garden. Not unprecedented in winter, but nevertheless remarkable were single Purple Sandpipers at Bergeronnes Jan 21 (S. Roy *et al.*), 14 at Les Escoumins, Saguenay, Feb. 10 (C. Girard *et al.*), and 12 at Pointe Saint-Pierre, Gaspé, Feb. 11 (M. Larivée, E. Lavoie).

A Black-headed Gull in the Magdalen Is., Feb. 4–24 represented the first February sighting locally and also probably for the Region (DGG, CAG). A Ring-billed lingered to Dec. 17 at Chicoutimi (CC, GS), and the species was back very early in the Montréal area where one was seen at LaSalle Feb. 15 (DD *et al.*) and 65 were counted at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 25 (PB, m.ob.). Local observers spent more time at a recently discovered gull hot spot in the Laval area. This led to the discovery of a 2nd-winter California Gull Dec. 28 (BB). Thayer's Gulls were widely reported: Three birds were in the Laval-Lachenaie area Dec. 23–31 (BB, MM, PB), an adult was still present at Laval in January, and also a first-winter bird in February (GZ). Finally, an adult visited Côte-Sainte-Catherine Feb. 17 (BB, MM). A Lesser Black-backed Gull discovered at Laval Dec. 23 and relocated Feb. 6 represented the first mid-winter record for the Region (PB, m.ob.). Iceland and Glaucous gulls made a good showing at Laval, where a peak of 75 Glaucous Gulls was reached Feb. 6 (GZ). Great Black-backed Gulls also wintered in very large numbers in the Laval area, where they peaked at 2000 in early February (GZ).

Alcids to Wrens

Two Dovekies visited Bergeronnes Dec. 23 (AB), while a Thick-billed Murre at Aylmer Dec. 5–6 was out-of-range (B.M. Dilabio, J. Brisebois).

Snowy Owls and N. Hawk Owls were scarce, but the Great Gray Owl staged a moderate invasion. Birds started to build up in December, but few additional birds were recorded in January. A 2nd wave swept into the Region in February. Birds were reported in most inhabited areas, but they were scarce s. of the St. Lawrence R. and totally unreported in the Gaspé and Lower St.

Lawrence regions. The highest numbers were found in the Saguenay, Québec City, and Montréal areas. Approximately 50 birds were reported across the province.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker made a good showing in the Region with a male in Trois-Pistoles, Rimouski, unfortunately hit by a car Feb. 16 (D&A Beaulieu, F. Dumont), while others included a male at Saint-Jules Dec. 16 (M.-A. Minville *et al.*) and a female at Grand-Cascapedia before Dec. 16 (*vide* PP), both in the Gaspé, and a female at Chateaugay Feb. 10 (*vide* PB). The N. Flicker has a regular winter visitor recently; singles were at Jonquière Dec. 14 (L&P Lemieux) and Shipshaw Dec. 1–Feb. 25 (M.-C. Desbiens, N. Duchesne), both in Saguenay region; at Rimouski Feb. 6 (C. Robin); and five–six birds were reported in the Montréal area in February. A N. Three-toed Woodpecker was observed at Kuujjuaq, Ungava, Dec. 26 (YG), a rare sighting for this remote n. location at this time of the year. After its most widespread movement ever recorded in the Region last fall, three Tufted Titmice overwintered at Saint-Armand, Missisquoi, (J.-G. Papineau), one at Saint-Timothée, Valleyfield (B. Lazzoni), one at Saint-Viateur, Lanaudière (C. Savignac, M. Harnois), and one at Repentigny (*vide* N. David), these last two representing first records n. of the St. Lawrence R. Singles were also observed at Saint-Agapit, Lotbinière (m.ob.) and at Cap-Saint-Ignace, Montmagny (JL *et al.*), whereas seven were reported at different localities in the Upper Richelieu Valley in early winter, one at Saint-Jean-Chrysostome, Lévis, late December (AL), and one at Montmagny late December (J. Lachance *et al.*).

The White-breasted Nuthatch showed up n. of its usual winter range, from Ontario to the Maritime borders. The species was reported from 6 localities in Abitibi, four in the Saguenay region from Baie-Comeau on the N. Shore, while it was widespread in the Lower St. Lawrence and reached 4 locations on the Gaspé region. The only Carolina Wren was reported at Crabtree, Lanaudière, until Dec. 17 (Y. Joly). A wintering Winter Wren was in full song Feb. 25 on Île des Soeurs, Montréal (PB).

Thrush to Finches

A dependable female Varied Thrush on Mt. Saint-Bruno allowed an army of birders to observe it over the season. Townsend's Solitaire was reported in well above-average numbers, with individuals wintering at Trois-Rivières, Sainte-Foy, La Pocatière, and Matane, while singles lingered in Québec City Dec. 17, Rimouski

in January (*vide* J. Larivée), Matane Nov. 29–Dec. 14 (N. Blouin, Y. Lemieux), and Baie-Comeau Jan. 25 (G. Létourneau). A late Brown Thrasher was at Aylmer Dec. 31 (P. Sauvageau). Two Am. Pipits were observed at Saint-Hyacinthe Dec. 16, a late date (R. Roy). Northern Shrike was noted in above-average numbers across the whole Region. Of interest was the report of a bird attacking and carrying a Rock Dove over 50 m before eating it at Sainte-Elizabeth, *Lanaudière*, Dec. 19 (CD). Two Yellow-rumped Warblers were at Havre-aux-Basques, *Magdalen Is.*, Jan. 12 (DGG), while a Yellow-throated Warbler (ssp *dominica*) briefly enlightened Chambly Dec. 9 (PB, GZ).

After an unprecedented fall movement, the N. Cardinal wave which swept across the whole Region did not lose its strength. Many birds reached n. localities and overwintered at Val-d'Or and Lac Malartic, *Abitibi*; Roberval, Chambord, Jonquière, Chicoutimi, and Ferland, *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean*; Baie-Comeau, *N. Shore*; Saint-Louis du Ha-Ha! and Dégelis, *Témiscouata*; Trois-Pistoles, Bic, Rimouski, Sainte-Blandine, Sainte-Anaclet, Sainte-Luce, Les Boules, Matane, and Sainte-Félicité, *Lower St. Lawrence*; and Saint-Majorique, Bonaventure, and Grand-Cascapédia, *Gaspé Pen.* The N. Cardinal was also more abundant than usual in the s. part of the Region. An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, at Matamek, *Duplessis*, Dec. 23 (J. Boulianne *et al.*) was very late.

Single male Eastern Towhees overwintered at Saint-Georges, *Beauce* (L. Légaré *et al.*); Sillery, Québec City, (m.ob.); and Beupré, *Montmorency* (L. Vézina). One wandered to Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, *L'Islet*, Dec. 13 (JL) and a female to Pointe-Paradis, *Duplessis*, Dec. 2 (GC).

Rarely reported in winter, a Chipping Sparrow overwintered at the Montréal Botanical Gardens and another was reported at Notre-Dame-du-Lac, *Témiscouata*, Feb. 3 (R. Deschênes). A first for the Magdalen Is. was the wintering of a Song Sparrow at Cap-aux-Meules (V. Décoste). An "Oregon-type" Dark-eyed Junco was reported at La Pocatière Feb. 29 (C. Auchu), while one overwintered in Québec City (m.ob.). An ad. male Baltimore Oriole eating seeds and peanut butter at a feeder at Sept-Îles Dec. 1–8 (B. Poulin, N. Chouinard) was found dead Dec. 9.

Pine Grosbeaks were reported in above-average numbers in the Abitibi, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, La Pocatière, and Lower St. Lawrence regions. Observers also noticed a decrease in the food crop in the boreal forest. Purple Finches, both cross-

ills, and Pine Siskins were absent from the Region, while redpolls, Am. Goldfinches, and Evening Grosbeaks were generally absent but reported in average numbers in a few localities.

Exotics

Two Ring-necked Pheasants recorded during the Magdalen Is. CBC were without a doubt escapees. A Eur. Goldfinch was at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, *Richelieu*, in January and February (*vide* PB). Very surprising was the Collared Finchbill (*Spizixos semitorques*), an Asiatic bulbul, at a feeder in Cap-Rouge Jan. 4+ (G. Allaire, M. Tremblay); the bird survived to very harsh and cold weather, with many days of temperatures below -20° C., relying on seeds and fruits provided by feeder owners.

Addendum

A belated report of a singing male W. Meadowlark at Lemieux, *Plessisville*, June 10 (J.F. Rousseau) should be added to the last summer report.

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New England Region

BLAIR NIKULA

The winter of 1995–1996 was another memorable one, though once again more for its weather than its birds. Snowfall totals across southern New England set new records: Over eight feet fell in Boston! In northern New England, snowfall was ample but closer to normal levels. Despite the abundance of wintry weather, temperatures averaged fairly close to normal for the period, punctuated by distinct warm spells during the last third of December and the last half of January.

Avian highlights were scant. The bird of the season was Great Gray Owl, which delighted observers in five of the six states. Northern Shrikes staged perhaps the largest incursion on record, while other irruptives in notable numbers included Bohemian Waxwing, Common Redpoll, and Pine Grosbeak. Lingering species were exceedingly few—they must have known what the season had in store! Rarest finds this season were Long-billed Curlew, Rhode Island's persistent Black-tailed Gull, Northern Hawk Owl, Hammond's Flycatcher (from November), Townsend's Warbler, and Green-tailed Towhee. Fol-

