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Quebec Region

PIERRE BANNON AND NORMAND DAVID

Yves Aubry, co-author of this Regional report from 1983 to 1996, has decided to take a well-deserved respite. His constant enthusiasm over these thirteen years arouses admiration. Fortunately, before leaving, Aubry convinced Normand David, co-author of the report from 1975 to 1983, to get back in business. Normand's thorough knowledge of Québec's avifauna will undoubtedly be much appreciated.

This fall's weather in southern Québec involved a warm and sunny August, a pleasant September, a near normal October, and a cold and rainy November. At Montréal, the five inches of rain that fell November 8–9 rose the rivers to their spring levels. Overall, southern Québec experienced near normal temperature and precipitation for the whole period. In northern Québec, temperatures were slightly above normal, while precipitation was below normal.

The season was highlighted by a higher-than-usual number of vagrants from the west and impressive concentrations of Snow Geese and other waterfowl in southern counties of the province. On the negative side, the hawk flight was unremarkable and gull watching rather lackluster.

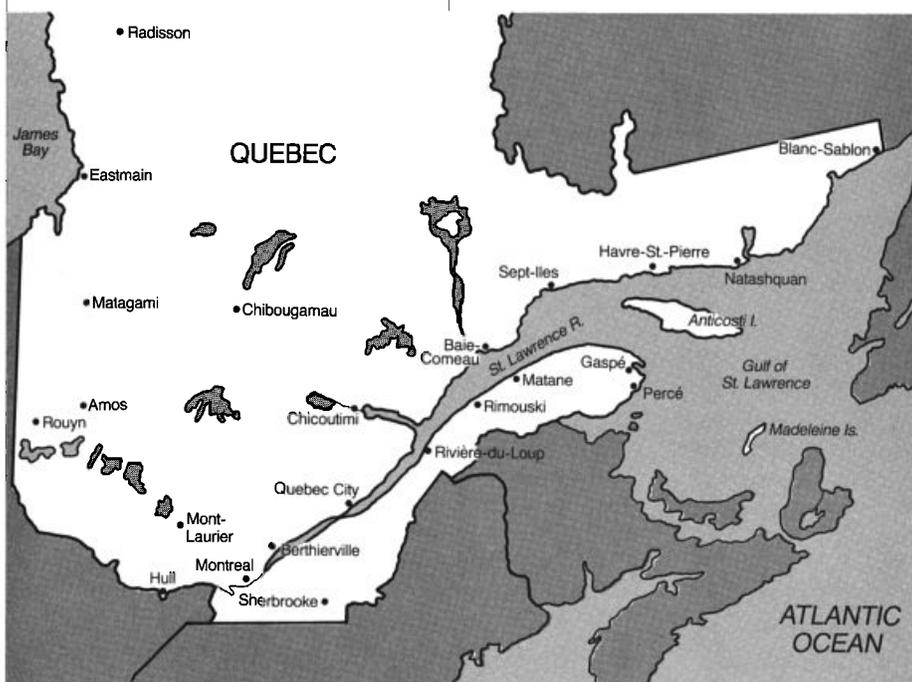
Abbreviations: C.T. (*Cap Tourmente, near Québec City*); M.B. (*Missisquoi Bay, Upper Richelieu*); R.B. (*Res. Beaudet, Victoriaville*); S.L.D.G. (*Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, Valleyfield*).

Grebes to Swans

Two grebes of the genus *Aechmophorus* were reported. The first, found at Pointe-au-Père, Rimouski, Oct. 22, was thought to be a Clark's Grebe on the basis of an area of white feathers that extended above the red eyes and a yellow bill, but the remainder of the description was sketchy at best (F. Proulx). In the 2nd case, a bird seen on Rivière des Prairies, n. of Montréal, Nov. 2–3, was readily identified as a W. Grebe, but the description did not include any references to the color of the lores (D. Tessier, G. Lachaine, P. Paillé). As crucial details are lacking (above all, the exact color of the bill and lores), we prefer to report these birds as *Aechmophorus* sp. The greatest care must be taken in separating the 2 species of this genus, especially in fall and winter. As yet, there is no substantiated record for either species in the Region.

Wilson's Storm-Petrels straying W on the St. Lawrence R. included two individuals at Québec City Sept. 14 (AD, LR) and singles at Rivière-Ouelle, Kamouraska, Sept. 22 (LM, AG) and Pointe au Platon, Lotbinière, Oct. 24 (JF Bédard). For the 2nd consecutive year, Leach's Storm-Petrel appeared inland at R.B., where singles were detected Aug. 14 (A. Daigle) and Sept. 20 (MG, CR).

A N. Gannet was a rare fall visitor at M.B., Nov. 6 (JGP). An ad. Am. White



Pelican was a prize find at L. Castagner, Aug. 24–26 (*fide* SG), a first for the Abitibi region. Two young Least Bitterns at Katevale Aug. 14 provided the first confirmed breeding record for the Estrie region (CR). Southern herons included a Snowy Egret at Saint-Vallier Aug. 18–Sept. 7 (*fide* LM, m.ob.) and four Cattle Egrets at 3 different locations Sept. 15–Nov. 11.

Single ad. Tundra Swans at S.L.D.G., Nov. 2–3 (AW, MT, v.o.) and at Mont-Brun, Abitibi, through Oct. 20 (SG) were worthy of mention. A Mute Swan disrupted traffic as it landed on a busy road at Saint-Hubert, Montréal, Nov. 16 (R. Guillet *et al.*).

Waterfowl

An ad. Pink-footed Goose brightened a pond swarming with Snow Geese at S.L.D.G., Nov. 2–10, providing our 3rd Regional record (PB, v.o.). Also at the latter location, plumage differences allowed the identification of four different Greater White-fronted Geese Oct. 19–Nov. 17 (PB, v.o.), while one individual stopped briefly at R.B., Nov. 6 (JD). Although over the years the spring flock of the “Greater” Snow Goose has shown a greater tendency to spread over a wide front away from its historic staging area near Québec City, it is only recently that the same phenomenon has taken place in the fall. This year, unusually large flocks in s. Québec included $\leq 60,000$ individuals at S.L.D.G., 50,000 at M.B., and 20,000 at R.B., where they stopped for the first time. A diligent search among the flocks of Snow Geese resulted in the discovery of a higher-than-usual number of Ross’ Geese; two–five white morphs were at S.L.D.G., Oct. 19–Nov. 16 (PB, AH, v.o.), a blue morph was there Oct. 26 (AW, MT, PB), five white morphs were at C.T., Oct. 6 (AC *et al.*), and two at R.B., Oct. 20–Nov. 17 (MG *et al.*). The two individuals still present at R.B. (MG *et al.*), plus one at S.L.D.G., Nov. 17 (PB) provided the Region with its latest-ever records. No more surprising was a Barnacle Goose at C.T., Sept. 28–Oct. 1 (C. Simard *et al.*). Small races of the Canada Goose delighted alert observers at S.L.D.G., where an individual of the *hutchinsii* race paused Oct. 26–Nov. 4 (S. Denault, v.o.) and one of the *minima* race stopped briefly Nov. 4 (CR).

A concentration of 210 Blue-winged Teal at Saint-Gédéon Sept. 14 was encouraging, considering the recent decline of its population (CC, GS). Anatids of note included two ♂ Eur. Wigeons at Havre-aux-Basques, *Magdalen Is.*, Oct. 8–Nov. 13 (DGG), another male at S.L.D.G., Oct. 26–Nov. 9 (FB, v.o.), two out-of-range Canvasbacks at Havre-aux-Basques, Oct. 28–31 (DGG *et al.*), a startling ♂ Tufted

Duck at Beaconsfield, Montréal, Nov. 3 (BB), and a displaced Com. Eider at Saint-Stanislas, Valleyfield, Oct. 16 (L. Goneau). Harlequin Ducks were again well represented w. of their range with six individuals at Tadoussac Oct. 7 (CG), three at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Nov. 26 (JGP), and singles at Rivière-Ouelle Sept. 22 (LM, AG) and Baie-du-Febvre, Nicolet, Oct. 16 (*fide* SD).

Vultures to Shorebirds

This fall brought more evidence of the increasing range of the Turkey Vulture, as evidenced by one–two individuals between Tadoussac and Bergeronnes Sept. 9–Oct. 26 (A. Bouchard, CG, CA), 12 at Saint-Fabien, Rimouski, Sept. 16 (J. Faubert, Cécile Roy), four at Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Témiscamingue, Sept. 4 (DR), and one at Montbeillard, Abitibi, present from last summer to Sept. 22 (S. Lehouiller, L. Gauthier). A dark Red-tailed Hawk at Lévis Oct. 5 displayed some characteristics of the *calurus* s.sp. (GL *et al.*). A Peregrine Falcon released at Bancroft, Ont., in July 1995 was found dead from strychnine poisoning at Hull Oct. 23 (*fide* DT). Gyrfalcons totaled eight for the season.

The fall staging of the Sandhill Crane in the w.c. areas of the Region has never been so well documented (*fide* SG, GS, CC and DSH). In Abitibi, noteworthy sightings included two birds at Roulier Aug. 20 (A. Gaudreau, JP. Hamel), 70 at Val-Senneville Sept. 14 (Y. Cossette), 50–135 at Barraute Sept. 16–20 (G&L Galarneau, D. Denis, L. Maheux), ≤ 300 at La Reine from mid-September–Oct. 7 (B. Cusson, G. Legault), and eight at Roquemaure Sept. 24–Oct. 8 (Y. Leclerc). North of L. Saint-Jean, ≤ 15 cranes, including one juvenile, were at Saint-Augustin Sept. 12–22 (S. Leboeuf *et al.*), and eight graced Sainte-Marguerite-Marie Sept. 15–19 (B. Dumont, M. Savard, JF. Ouellet). Finally, in Témiscamingue 40 and 110 cranes were reported at Nédelec Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, respectively (DR). If anything, these reports show that the breeding population of the James Bay Lowlands is certainly increasing; it was learned that the La Reine flock has been congregating (and increasing) in the same fields for the past 5 years. After leaving these staging areas, cranes do not stop thereafter in the s.w. parts of the Region; this fall one bird at Lévis Oct. 14 (GL) represented the only report. On the other hand, four cranes at Saint-Romuald Aug. 2 (PBr) and two at Barachois Sept. 1 (JP. Noel) were most probably summering individuals.

An injured Purple Gallinule, picked up at Étang du Nord Oct. 20, died 2 days later (Y. Richard, DGG); this species has been recorded on 10 previous occasions in the Region.

This was an average fall for the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, with 7 individuals reported Aug. 6–Sept. 18. Whimbrels appeared w. of their range in larger number, reaching a maximum of 15 at Ile du Moine, Sorel, Aug. 24 (P.Q.S.P.B. field trip). A lone Ruff stopped at Portneuf Sept. 18 (FD), while Long-billed Dowitchers were scarce with only two juveniles identified at Rapides Plats, Saint-Hyacinthe, Sept. 18–24 (PB, v.o.). South-bound Red Phalaropes were well in evidence inland with 10 individuals reported at various locations Sept. 14–Nov. 23.

Jaegers to Alcids

Two Pomarine Jaegers seen from the Trois-Pistoles ferry Sept. 22 were not totally unexpected (JR. Pelletier *et al.*), but singles at Tadoussac Nov. 2 (CA), Saint-Gédéon Nov. 3 (CC, GS) and M.B., Nov. 11 (JGP) suggested a possible late overland flight from the Arctic. Most reports of Parasitic Jaegers from the upper St. Lawrence were circumscribed to the period of Sept. 14–16 and were probably storm-related. The only Long-tailed Jaeger of the season was seen at Saint-Vallier Aug. 18 (L. Imbeau, M. Bélisle).

Small gulls were poorly represented, as shown by a lone Laughing Gull at R.B., Sept. 13–20 (MG *et al.*) and a lone Franklin’s Gull at Tadoussac Oct. 21 (CG, CA). Black-headed Gulls were unreported. Little Gulls numbered 12 individuals from widely scattered locations. An unusually high count of 1500 Bonaparte’s Gulls was made at M.B., Nov. 7 (G. Zenaitis). A “Common” Mew Gull in 3rd-winter plumage at Vaudreuil Nov. 2–3 provided the 19th record for the Region (BB, M. McIntosh). No less interesting were single first-winter Thayer’s Gulls at R.B., Oct. 16–18 (JD *et al.*) and at the Beauharnois dam Nov. 10 (PB). A total of 11 Lesser Black-backed Gulls included a molting juvenile at Mercier, Châteauguay, Sept. 21 (M. Bertrand). Two imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes at L. Villiers Nov. 18 provided a very unusual sighting for the Laurentians (C. Arbour, D. Asselin); along the St. Lawrence several individuals strayed W to the Montréal region, including two early birds at Beaconsfield Aug. 26 (P. Tarassoff), while an unusually large flock of 150 individuals at Québec City Sept. 14 was storm-related (AD, LR). It was a very poor season for the Sabine’s Gull, as evidenced by an isolated individual reported from Lévis Sept. 14 (GL). Post-breeding dispersal from the Great Lakes region was probably responsible for the appearance of juv. Caspian Terns accompanied by their parents at LaSalle Aug. 6–8, Beauharnois Aug. 17–31, and Châteauguay, Aug. 24 (PB, v.o.).

Dovekies staged a modest invasion in the Lower St. Lawrence, a maximum of 13 having been reported from the Matane-Godbout ferry Nov. 17 (D. Desjardins *et al.*). Out-of-range alcids included a Black Guillemot at Québec City Aug. 28 (G. Poisson) and an Atlantic Puffin at Lévis Sept. 18 (AC).

Pigeons to Owls

For a first Regional record, a **Band-tailed Pigeon** showed up at a Saint-André-Avellin feeder Nov. 20 (M. Meloche), and was seen by tens of observers until the end of the period.

At Rivière-Madeleine Nov. 9, a Great Horned Owl pinned down a ♀ Snowy Owl in a backyard, but was forced to abandon its prey by a compassionate dog; the stunned bird was captured and released apparently unharmed a few hours later (R&G Blanchette). The southward incursion of the N. Hawk Owl was impressive, spread over a broad front across the w. half of the Region. A few birds appeared in the Abitibi and L. Saint-Jean areas Oct. 11–12 (*vide* SG, GS, CC), and by the end of the period ≥ 11 birds had been seen in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, ≥ 9 in the Québec City area (*vide* LM), ≥ 6 in the Lower Ottawa Valley (*vide* DT), and ≥ 10 in the greater Montréal area (*vide* PB); one bird reached the Magdalen Is., Nov. 7 (DGG, Z. Duchesneau) for a 7th local record. There is no way to tell if the half-dozen Great Gray Owls spread across the St. Lawrence Valley in November forecasted a major incursion or not.

SA Jacques Ibarzabal and his co-workers of the Tadoussac banding station provided the most astounding news in years: **125 Boreal Owls (yes, 125) were banded Oct. 5–Nov. 16, and 70 N. Saw-whet Owls Sept. 20–Nov. 16!! All in an area of 900 square feet!!! And since the banding operations were discontinuous, it was felt that a good number of birds were missed. Preliminary results show that Boreal Owls were mostly one-year-old females at the beginning of the capture program, followed by immatures of both sexes afterwards. On the other hand, one of the N. Saw-whet Owls was an ad. female, banded while incubating earlier this year at Sorel (P. Messier), 350 km to the southwest. Of course, these data left many unanswered questions. For example, do major southward flights of the Boreal Owl go unnoticed, since the season's half-dozen sightings in the Upper St. Lawrence Valley was very typical of reports in previous falls?**



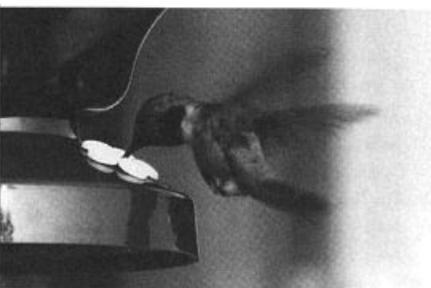
Band-tailed Pigeon at Saint-André-Avellin, Quebec, November 27, 1996. First record for Quebec. Photograph/Normand David.

Swifts to Gnatcatcher

Two Chimney Swifts at Sainte-Catherine Oct. 13 (PB) and one at Tadoussac Oct. 14 (CG) were very late, as was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Chicoutimi Nov. 9 (P. Dufour). Our 2nd Regional **Rufous Hummingbird** was a male that showed up at Saint-Charles-de-Mandeville in mid-September (C. Dupuis, S. Gauthier, m.ob.), and was last seen Oct. 19. A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers with at least one young was a welcome find at Rivière-Beaudet Aug. 10 (C. Childs, PH); a single bird was also reported from Philipsburg Sept. 21 (B. Barber *et al.*). A Red-bellied Woodpecker was found again at Saint-Armand Nov. 10 (C. Auclair).

Photographed alongside an E. Kingbird, a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** at Saint-Justin, *Maskinongé*, Sept. 3 (J. Philibert) represented our 5th Regional record. A Willow Flycatcher at C.T., Aug. 4, (AR) was record late, and a Say's Phoebe at Tadoussac Sept 2 (F. Gagnon *et al.*) provided a 13th Regional record.

October seems to be the only month in which to see N. Rough-winged Swallows in flocks: ≤ 40 birds fed at Mercier Oct. 5–14 and 30 were at nearby Sainte-Martine Oct. 5 (PB). Late swallows included a Cliff Swallow at Tadoussac Oct. 29 (CG), a Barn Swallow at Montmagny Nov. 9



A second for Quebec was this adult male Rufous Hummingbird at Saint-Charles-de-Mandeville October 19, 1996. Photograph/S. Gauthier and C. Dupuis.

(AR, P. Otis), and another at Anse-au-Griffon Nov. 15 & 18 (J. Constant). Three Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, including at least one young, were found at Châteauguay Aug. 4 (PB); other sightings included single birds at Cap-des-Rosiers, *Gaspé*, Oct. 13 (M. Saint-Amour, D. Turcotte), and at La Martinique, *Magdalen Is.*, Sept. 7 (B. Vigneault).

Thrushes to Blackbirds

A Veery at C.T., Oct. 16 (R. Lepage) was late, and single Bicknell's Thrushes at Sainte-Emmélie, *Lotbinière*, Oct. 6 (LM, L. Roy, AR) and at Pont-Rouge Oct. 7 (FD) were record late. A White-eyed Vireo at Laval Oct. 26 (RB *et al.*) provided a 16th Regional record.

A N. Parula at Rimouski Oct. 30–Nov. 7 (RSL) set a new record-late departure date. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** found Nov. 15 in the Montréal Botanical Gardens (R. Belhumeur), and seen daily until the end of the period, represented a first documented—and long overdue—Regional record. For a very rare fall occurrence, a Yellow-rumped "Audubon's" Warbler was spotted on Ile aux Grues Oct. 27 (P. Lane, J. Labrecque). The rare Connecticut Warbler was discovered again in the Montréal area as single birds were seen at Saint-Hubert Sept. 8 (R. Belhumeur) and at Longueuil Sept. 16 (D. Daigneault).

As a result of the 1995 unprecedented northeasterly dispersal, N. Cardinals now have a foothold in the Québec City area: Pairs were recorded in Neuville, Beauport, and Lévis (*vide* LM). Two Indigo Buntings at Rimouski Oct. 27 (G. Bouchard) were very late, and a single bird at Château-Richer feeder Nov. 17 was record late (G. Harvey). The annual fall dispersal of the Dickcissel brought an average total of five birds, including a rare sighting for the Montréal area, a single bird at Otterburn Park Oct. 29–Nov. 12, (L. Hélie). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Granby Oct. 12 (RB) provided a rare inland fall occurrence. An imm. ♀ Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Rimouski Nov. 1–2 (RSL *et al.*)

Exotics

A Black Swan was a surprising sight at Saint-Siméon Aug. 3 (B. Tardif). Two Swan Geese were shot by a hunter at Grand Saint-Esprit, *Nicolet*, Sept. 27 (*vide* SD), and the two birds present in Laval since last spring were seen throughout the period (*vide* JPP). A Greylag Goose at Varennes Nov. 3–10 (Y. Gauthier, ND, R. Bisson) was perhaps the same individual seen at nearby Bourdon I. last spring. A Ruddy Shelduck was found at Saint-Augustin, *Portneuf*, Sept. 8 (AD), and four

others were discovered at Granby Nov. 23 (Mich. Grégoire). An ad. ♀ Com. Shelduck, not banded and free-flying, enlivened Rimouski Nov. 12–24 (B. Proulx). An Egyptian Goose roamed the Quebec City area Sept. 2+ (A. Couture, m.ob.). Two Marbled Teal were an unexpected find at Saint-Lazare Aug. 10 through early September (PH).

The first nesting record of the N. Bobwhite for the Region was established when two adults and five young were found at Sainte-Béatrix July 31 (M. Bergeron); the group swelled to 11 birds Aug. 8 (R. Pelletier). A Spotted Dove (*S. chinensis*) visited a Saint-Timothée feeder from Aug. 10+ (AH). A Red-billed Leiothrix was a colorful visitor at a Boucherville feeder Nov. 2–3 (FB). Single Eur. Goldfinches were reported in Montréal Nov. 13 (*vide* JPP), and also in the Montréal Botanical Gardens Nov. 19+ (m.ob.).

Addenda

Providing a first nesting record for the Region, a pair of N. Fulmars incubated an egg in June on Corossol I., off Sept-Iles, but disappeared in July. Also on Corossol I., eight ad. Atlantic Puffins were found in late June, but breeding remained unconfirmed (PBr, J. Thibault, *vide* YA).

At Summit Park, Westmount, May 19, 1996, a well-studied *Contopus* flycatcher showed the characteristics of a **Western Wood-Pewee** (harsh *preer-eeer* call, brownish upperparts, lower mandible largely dark), in direct comparison with E. Wood-Pewees (G. Seutin, ND, PB); unfortunately, the bird could not be tape-recorded and thus remains an undocumented report, the Region's first.

Subregional editors (boldface) and initialed observers: Y. Aubry, C. Auchu (CA), B. Barnhurst (BB), F. Blouin (FB), R. Boucher (RB), P. Brousseau (PBr), H. Brunoni, C. Cormier, A. Côté (AC), G. Cyr, A. Desrochers (AD), F. Dion (FD), J. Ducharme (JD), S. Dulac (SD), P. Fradette, A. Gagnon (AG), S. Gagnon, D. G. Gaudet, C. Girard (CG), M. Grégoire, P. Hilton (PH), A. Hogue (AH), G. Lemelin (GL), L. Messely, J.G. Papineau (JGP), P. Poulin, J.P. Pratte (JPP), A. Rasmussen (AR), D. Robert (DR), L. Rochefort (LR), C. Roy (CR), D. Saint-Hilaire, R. Saint-Laurent (RSL), G. Savard, D. Toussaint, M. Trembley (MT), R. Turgeon, A. Walde (AW).

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New England Region

WALTER G. ELLISON AND NANCY L. MARTIN

The autumn of 1996 continued the predominant pattern of the prior seven months. It was wet and cool at the start with a mild finish. One hurricane, *Edouard*, and the remnants of two tropical storms, *Josephine* and *Fausto*, brushed the coast, but had little effect inland. Strong nor'easters also hit the coast September 18 and October 20. Some excellent seawatching accompanied the nor'easters and *Josephine* October 9. *Edouard* had its primary effect on Cape Cod. The most noteworthy landbird waves seemed to follow in the wake of these storms September 6–7, September 20–22—which featured southern reversed migrants on the coast, and October 12–13. Bluff Point in Groton, Connecticut, saw its best flight September 30–October 1. Other notable dates for fallout in late fall were October 25–26, November 10–13, and November 30. In general the season lacked distinction, poor migrations of both long and short distance migrant landbirds, a weak shorebird flight, and few irruptions from the far north save owls, which were represented by modest to good reports of all northern species. Rarities were not numerous and none was unprecedented, but highlights included Black-browed Albatross, Anhinga, Wood Stork, Black-tailed Gull, and Swainson's Warbler.

Abbreviations: Appledore (*Appledore I., Kittery, York, ME*); Block I. (*Block Island, RI*); Bluff Pt. (*Bluff Pt., Groton, New London, CT*); Dead Creek (*Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison & Pantton, Addison, VT*); First Encounter (*First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Barnstable, MA*); Grand Isle (*Grand Isle, Grand Isle, VT*); Monomoy (*Monomoy N.W.R., Chatham, Barnstable, MA*); Plum I. (*Plum I., Parker River N.W.R., Newburyport, Essex, MA*). Note:

County names will be given the first time each locality is mentioned in the text.

Loons to Wood Stork

The best count of Red-throated Loon was 292 at Block I., Nov. 11 (RF), and the best Com. Loon count was inland with 110 at Grand Isle Oct. 8 (DJH). A well-described Pacific Loon was reported from coastal Maine Oct. 18 at Bar Harbor, *Hancock* (†SWM). Red-necked Grebes seem to have moved eastward in some numbers early in the season, with 5 inland reports in August, four from L. Champlain, and a very large flock in the Mount Desert Narrows, Bar Harbor, arriving in late August and peaking with 225 Sept. 4 (CW, *vide* AB). The inland high count of 25 fell on Oct. 19 at Grand Isle (DJH). Eared Grebes were well represented, with ≤two at Trustom Pd., RI Oct. 15–Nov. 10 (S. Mitra, m.ob.), and another at Niles Cove, Gloucester, *Essex*, MA Oct. 16–December (J. Soucy, m.ob.). It was a solid season for pelagics, with some very productive sea watching in the wake of storms, and good numbers of seabirds at Stellwagen Bank and in the n. Gulf of Maine. The best tubenose of the season was the young **Black-browed Albatross** seen from South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, Sept. 21 (W. Harrington, *vide* Mass. Audubon). In spite of several solid sight reports, there is still no photographic or specimen documentation of this mollymawk from the w. North Atlantic. Northern Fulmars were widely reported with

