

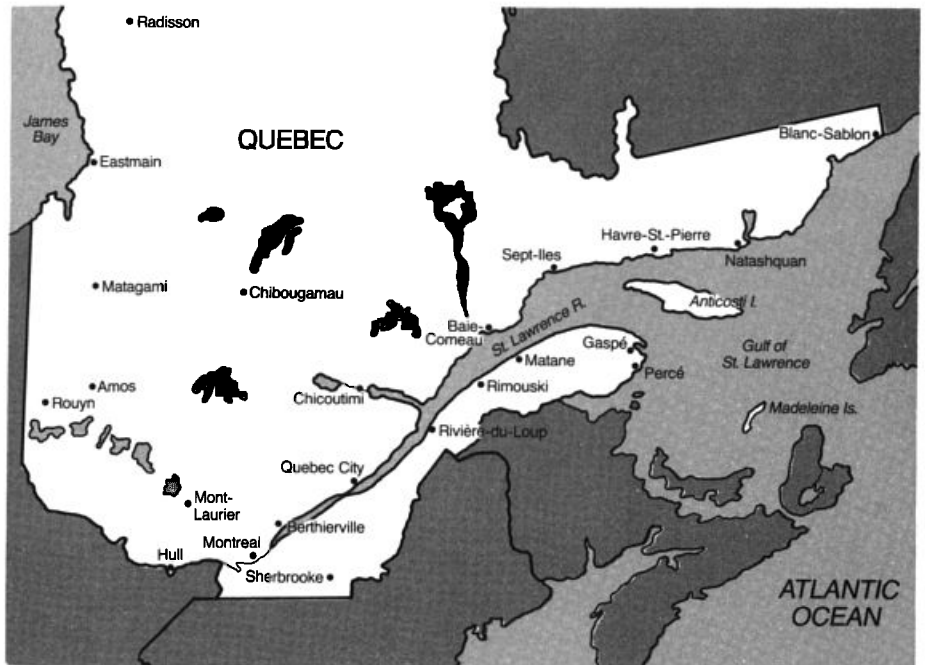
weather in February abetted sporadic and localized redpoll deaths from salmonella infection in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, leading to broadcast promotion of dismantling of feeders; most saw no signs of the problem.

**Observers (subregional compilers in bold-face):** David Christie, Brian Dalzell, Fred Dobson, Roger Etcheberry, Bernard Forsythe, Sylvia Fullerton, Carl Haycock, Andrew Horn, Paul Linegar, Bruce Mactavish (BMT), Blake Maybank (BMy), Dan McAskill, David McCorquodale, Eric Mills, Murray Newall, John Nickerson, Peter Pearce, Richard Stern, Stuart Tingley, Eva Urban, Rob Walker.

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



# québec region



## WARBLERS APPEARING OR REMAINING AFTER DECEMBER 1

Species	Province *	Number	Latest
Tennessee	NF	1	Dec. 3
Orange-crowned	NF	4	Dec. 26
Orange-crowned	NB	3	Feb. 22
Orange-crowned	NS	6+	March
Nashville	NS	1	March
N. Parula	NS	1	Dec. 5
Yellow	NF	3	Dec. 13
Townsend's	NF	1	Dec. 18
Yellow-throated	NS	2	Jan. 12
Pine	NS	±16	March
Pine	NB	8	March
Palm	SPM	1	Jan. 6
Palm	NB	1	Dec. 30
Palm	NS	4	March
Blackpoll	NS	1	Dec. 20
Black-and-white	NS	3	Jan. 28
Black-and-white	NF	4	March
N. Waterthrush	NF	1	Dec. 8
Com. Yellowthroat	SPM	1	Dec. 12
Com. Yellowthroat	NS	3+	Jan. 27
Wilson's	NF	1	Dec. 1
Wilson's	NS	2	Dec. 14
Yellow-breasted Chat	NB	1	Dec. 5
Yellow-breasted Chat	SPM	1	Dec. 24
Yellow-breasted Chat	NF	3	Jan. 10
Yellow-breasted Chat	NS	12+	Jan. 26

\* SPM is, of course, French territory. All records from Newfoundland are for the Avalon Pen., most from St. John's, and *vide* BMT.

## PIERRE BANNON and NORMAND DAVID

The 1997–1998 winter was milder than usual. Precipitation was above normal for December and January, but February turned out very dry, except for the eastern part of the province. Although true, this laconic climatological report overlooks one of the most dreadful weather systems to hit the Region in living memory. The shocking aftermaths of the early January ice storm were still being felt by the southern Québec population three months later. To appreciate the impact of this storm on human activities, nothing has more suggestive power than the following hard facts: Up to four inches of ice accumulating over a period of five days, 25 storm-related fatalities, 3.5 million persons without electricity at the peak of the storm, some of them without power for a month, 320 hydro towers and over 30,000 poles knocked down, millions of trees severely damaged, and so on.

Although one can imagine the consequences of such a storm on human and economic activities, it is yet impossible, three months later, to identify with certainty any impact—negative or positive—on bird life. In any cataclysm, two types of impacts can be anticipated, including first a

short term impact affecting the survival of resident species. The general impression, however, was that such a negative impact was probably minimal. Some feeder owners noticed that birds were more numerous at their feeders in the days and weeks following the storm. An unpublished study made by Environment Canada revealed a higher seed consumption at feeders newly set up within the affected area after the storm, as compared to controls.

Intermediate and long term effects will certainly take more time to assess. What will be the effects of the destruction of the canopy for nesting raptors and other canopy nesting species? What will be the effects of the mass of broken branches lying on the forest floor for ground nesting species? In the latter case, very long term effects can be expected as these branches may take up to 20 years to decompose. Obviously, very informative studies can be worked out, but in this difficult economic period, will the financial and human resources be sufficient to complete such long term studies?

## GREBES TO WILD TURKEY

A Red-necked Grebe at Les Escoumins Jan. 3 provided the Region with a rare winter record (CA, CG). A N. Gannet at Laval Dec. 14 was the only one wandering upstream

into the upper St. Lawrence R. in December (*vide* JP Pratte). Two cormorants seen in flight over Montreal Feb. 17 could not be identified (GL), but whatever the species, both the Great and the Double-crested cormorant are exceptional at this date in s.w. Québec.

A Mute Swan at Aylmer Dec. 10–11 was apparently of captive origin (DT et al.), but an immature at Île de la Visitation Jan. 26–30 was of undetermined origin (Y. Desmarais, GL). A Wood Duck at Sainte-Blandine Dec. 21 (R. Saint-Laurent) and a Green-winged Teal at La Baie Dec. 1–14 (H. Simard, S. Tremblay) were locally very late. Although not unprecedented, a Ring-necked Duck overwintering at Dorion (J. Atkinson), and single Lesser Scaup at Alma for the 2nd consecutive winter (S. Boivin et al.) and at Dorval Jan. 31 onwards (PB), were of interest. A female Harlequin Duck also overwintered at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu for the 2nd year (G. Zenaitis), while four more individuals were widely scattered throughout the Region. Barrow's Golden-eyes peaked at an impressive 700 at Baie-des Rochers Dec. 19 (CM, M. Robert). A Common × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrid was reported from the latter locality Dec. 16 (CM).

Gyrfalcons totaled a low eight individuals. At Cap d'Espoir, two Gyrfalcons were seen giving chase to an unfortunate Snowy Owl that finally sank in the cold water of the Gulf of St. Lawrence (PP). Wild Turkeys apparently remained unaffected by the ice storm. Six of them were seen for the first time at Dundee Feb. 21 (L. Simard).

### RAILS TO GULLS

A Sora was picked up alive at Sainte-Anne-de-Sorel Dec. 29 (P. Messier). The bird was kept in captivity throughout the winter and will be released by spring. Our previous record-late date was Nov. 26. A Com. Moorhen lingered in the Boucherville Is until Dec. 28 (Y. Gauthier, S. Morand). Four species of shorebirds were reported throughout the winter. A Killdeer was notably late at Boischatel Dec. 24 (JL, C. Pépin) and one was early at Noyan Feb. 28 (S. Denault, PB). Four Sanderlings were tallied on the Magdalen Is. CBC Dec. 20, setting a new record departure date by 19 days. The Purple Sandpiper was our most abundant shorebird, as shown by flocks of 25 and six at Les Escoumins Jan. 3 and Feb. 4, respectively (CA, CG); and two at Pointe Saint-Pierre Dec. 18 (JRL, R. Lefebvre). And 100 unidentified shorebirds at Baie-Sainte-Catherine Dec. 21 were almost certainly

this species (JL). Finally, single Com. Snipes overwintered at Beauport and La Pocatière (*vide* LM).

A first-winter Mew Gull (apparently *brachyrhynchus*) was seen from both sides of the Lachine rapids at Côte Sainte-Catherine and LaSalle Dec. 14–28, establishing a new record departure date (PB, B. Barnhurst, m.ob.). Several reports of Thayer's Gull were received, but only one first-year bird studied at Matane Jan. 1 included some details on the plumage (LM, A. Gagnon, J. Goulet). An impressive count of 1750 Iceland Gulls was recorded at Les Escoumins Dec. 27 (CA, CG). An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull appearing to be of the *intermedius* race was reported from 3 different localities in the Montreal region: Beaconsfield Dec. 7 (P. Tarassof), LaSalle Dec. 22 (D. Daigneault, R. Lavoie), and Île de la Visitation Jan. 2–4 (PB). A Glaucous Gull at Sainte-Gertrude Jan. 3–7 represented a first winter record for the Abitibi region (J. Tessier).

Two ad. Ivory Gulls caused a sensation at Les Escoumins Dec. 15, one remaining until Dec. 21 to the pleasure of dozens of observers who made the trip there (CA, CG). Another adult briefly landed on a kayak off Forillon Park Jan. 18, to the amazement of the oarsman (*vide* S. Marchand).

### OWLS THROUGH MEADOWLARKS

All irruptive owl species were reported in very low or below average numbers. One of the casualties of the January ice storm was perhaps a Barn Owl, found dead in Dorval in March, but that had been seen lying on the ground by the farm owner sometime in winter (*vide* PB); the taxidermist who prepared the specimen found 3 lead pellets in the bird's plumage, but there is no indication that a gunshot caused its death. Previous occurrences (about 50) were all recorded April through December.

A Red-headed Woodpecker remained at a Becancour feeder from Dec. 24 into March (J. Gaillardetz), and a Red-bellied Woodpecker overwintered at Carignan (C. Adam). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the Montreal Botanical Gardens until at least Feb. 14 (m.ob.) represented a first overwintering record for the Region. The January ice storm hit the heart of the range of the Tufted Titmouse in the Region, but with some 20 birds reported in February, mainly e. of the Richelieu R., the species is showing all signs of strengthening its foothold north of the United States border. A Brown Thrasher overwintered at Sept-Iles (R

Saucier), and another one was at Pointe-Label until Jan. 13 (C. Martin), both representing new northernmost winter records, only one year after last winter's report from the L. Saint-Jean area.

A Yellow-throated Warbler made a one-day appearance at Saint-Timothée Dec. 1 (B. Derome), and the one that was discovered in fall in Rimouski was last seen Dec. 18 (D. Côté, Y. Boulanger), a new record-late date. A Pine Warbler lingered at Cap-aux-Os until Dec. 22 (A. Bourassa, F. Ville-neuve), and another one visited a Chandler feeder Dec. 7–Feb. 6 (JRL et al.), with the result that 5 of the 10 Regional records for January and February come from the Gaspé Pen. Five different overwintering N. Cardinals in the Lower St. Lawrence (Rivière-du-Loup, Rimouski, Amqui) are an indication that the species continues to progress eastward on the s. shore of St. Lawrence R. A Dickcissel on the Magdalen Is. Dec. 20 (*vide* DGG) was noteworthy.

The Eastern Towhee that showed up at Obaska Nov. 3–4 (C. Bédard, F. Martel) furnished a first record for the Abitibi area. A **Spotted Towhee** at Saint-Godefroi Jan. 2–15 (E. Arsenault) provided a 9th Regional record and a first in the Gaspé Pen. An overwintering Chipping Sparrow at Pointe-Claire (M. McIntosh) is no longer a surprise, but the Clay-colored Sparrow that remained at a Chandler feeder from Dec. 8 into March (JRL) represented a first winter record for the Region. A Savannah Sparrow at Dorion Jan. 24 (C. Dagenais) was a rare winter occurrence. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Saint-Ulric Dec. 1–Jan. 29 (J. Côté, D. Desjardins), and an E. Meadowlark was at Mont-Laurier Nov. 15–Jan. 25 (C. Villemaire).

### ADDENDUM

Seven Sandhill Cranes at Saint-Germaine-Boulé, *Abitibi*, Oct. 22 provided the Region with a new record departure date (SG)

**Subregional editors (boldface) and initialed observers: C. Auchu, C. Cormier, G. Cyr, P. Fradette, S. Gagnon, D. G. Gaudet, C. Girard, G. Lachaine, J. Lachance, J. R. Lepage, C. Marcotte, L. Messely, E. Milot, P. Poulin, J.-F. Rousseau, G. Savard, D. Toussaint.**

**Pierre Bannon**, 1517 Leprohon, Montréal, Québec, H4E 1P1, and **Normand David**, 11931 Lavigne, Montréal, Québec, H4J 1X9

