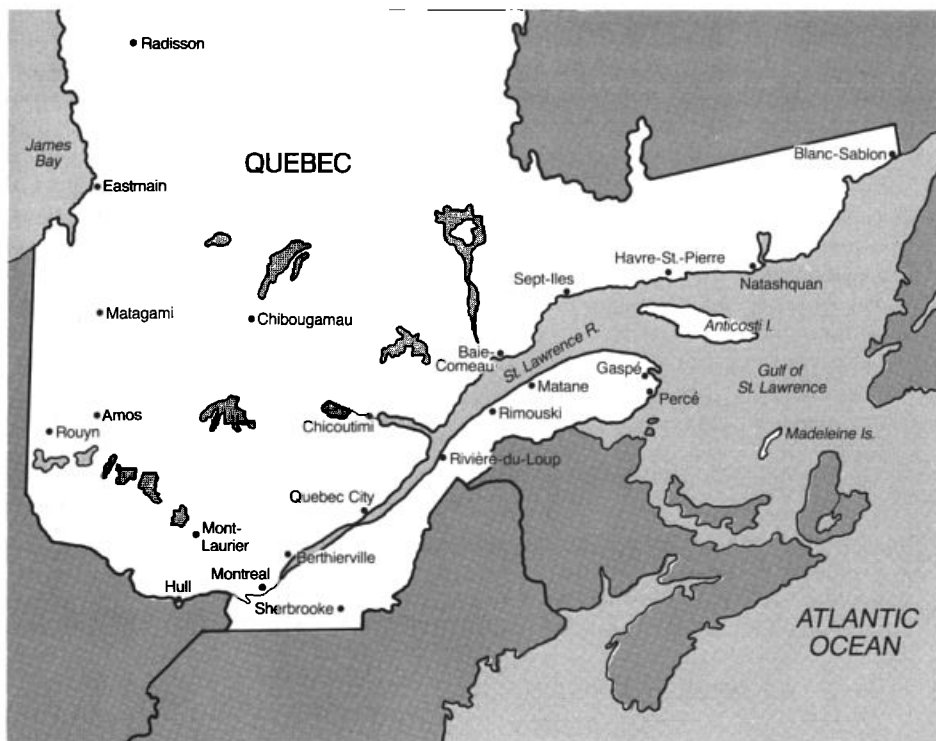


québec region



PIERRE BANNON AND NORMAND DAVID

After a late March heavy snowfall in southern Québec, a rapid thaw provided widespread habitats for migrating waterfowl and excellent opportunities for birders to study large concentrations of ducks and geese. April and May, on the other hand, were characterized by sunny and warm weather that gradually led to an almost drought situation. The complete absence of any adverse weather systems in May, combined with a very early foliation, was probably in part responsible for one of the poorest showings of migrating neotropical species in years.

PELICANS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A hawk watcher was rewarded by the sighting of two ad. Am. White Pelicans flying over Saint-Fabien on 2 consecutive days May 25–26 (RP). Single Snowy Egrets were hosted at Pabos May 2–6 (*vide* PP), and at Berthierville May 6–12 (J. Quintal, m.ob.). Among the nine Glossy Ibises reported, one was record early at Notre-Dame-des-Pins Apr. 5–7 (L. Légaré, M. Gélinas et al.).

There was an unprecedented influx of

Tundra Swans in the s. part of the Region, that topped with the appearance of a group of 10 imm. birds lingering at Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix for 2 weeks from Apr. 22 through May 4 (JM. Béliveau, F. Roberge, LS, m.ob.). Three early Mute Swans that appeared at Saint-Stanislas Mar. 3 wandered in the area until at least mid-April (L. Goneau, m.ob.).

For the 3rd consecutive year, a **Pink-footed Goose** caused a sensation in the Region; this time the bird showed up at Baie-du-Febvre Apr. 14–17 for our 5th provincial record (GL, m.ob.). The 15 Greater White-fronted Geese represented the highest Regional total of the last 10 years; all but one of those identified to subspecies were of the Greenland race. A Snow Goose at Cap-de-l'Est, *Magdalen Is.*, Apr. 6–7, was e. of its range (CCD, JCR). Three flocks made up of a majority of blue-morph birds flying over Saint-Stanislas Apr. 5 were thought to be Snow Geese of the nominate or western race. (MM, BB). The total of 20 Ross's Geese included three blue-morphs: singles at Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel Apr. 4 (S. Denault, S. Auclair), Baie-du-Febvre Apr. 10 (M. Bertrand et al.), and Res. Beaudet Apr. 26 (AD, JD, MG). Apparent Ross's × Snow

At Anse-à-Beaufils, Gaspé Peninsula, May 30, 1998, this White-winged Dove furnished a sixth record for Québec—further demonstrating the propensity for northward wandering by this subtropical dove.
Photograph/ Michèle Lafleur

Goose intermediates were carefully described at Lévis (white morph) May 5 (JL) and at Cacouna (blue morph) May 17 (JPO, ML). A flock of 1200 Brants at L. Joannes, Abitibi, May 15 was a notable event (Y&P Cossette). A Barnacle Goose was enjoyed by several observers at Plaisance Apr. 26–May 5 (DT et al.). The season was highlighted by seven Canada Geese, apparently of the *hutchinsii* race.

A flock of 30–40 Wood Ducks at Barachois, *Gaspé*, May 30 was remarkable so far east (JPO, ML). Only two "Eurasian" Green-winged Teals were located, singles at Saint-Vallier Apr. 25 (JL) and at La Martinique, *Magdalen Is.*, Apr. 27 (DGG). The total of 118 Eur. Wigeons included 15 for the southwest. Inland Com. Eider included singles at Deauville Mar. 5 (B. Laliberté, C. Lessard) and at Res. Beaudet Apr. 4–6 (AD et al.). Single male Common × Barrow's Goldeneye hybrids in alternate plumage were well studied at Côte-Sainte-Catherine

Mar. 7, Noyan Mar. 7, and Chambly Mar. 21. These hybrids may well be more frequent than the records to date would suggest, as such hybrids are probably most often misidentified as Barrow's Goldeneyes (PB). A female Ruddy Duck that reached Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Mar. 1 smashed by 28 days an earlier record set at Aylmer Mar. 29, 1980 (PB).

VULTURES THROUGH TERNS

Hawk watchers at Saint-Stanislas tallied a total of 157 Turkey Vultures, more than twice their previous high (MM, BB). A few individuals also reached the L. Saint-Jean and the Abitibi regions. The hawk flight at Saint-Stanislas also included 23 Bald Eagles (highest ever), 112 Red-shouldered Hawks (highest ever), 288 Broad-winged Hawks (lowest ever), 1254 Red-tailed Hawks (2nd highest), and 34 Golden Eagles (2nd highest) (MM, BB). Only two Gyrfalcons visited the Region, a white morph at Saint-Damase Apr. 1 (J. Barrette) and a dark one at Victoriaville Apr. 7 (AD et al.).

Ring-necked Pheasants do not survive the winter on their own in the Region, so a dozen birds at Saint-Agnès-de-Dundee Mar. 18 were without a doubt locally released (JP. Tremblay). In contrast, the Wild Turkey is more hardy and is now occupying new localities within its range; this spring, it was found at Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton Apr. 11 (JF. Joannette), as well as Dunham, Frelighsburg, and Lac Brome (*vide* BH).

Sandhill Cranes ventured well E of its known range as shown by singles at Les Escoumins Apr. 19 (CA, CG), Clermont Apr. 26 (R. Laberge, H. Routhier), and Cacouna May 18 (RD). It was also more in evidence in the s. part of the Region, where two birds noted in flight at Mirabel Mar. 29 set a new early arrival date for the province (N. Bélanger); two birds that arrived at Katevale Apr. 15 were still around at the end of the period (D. Carlos, C. Dufresne, m.ob.), while two were at Dundee Apr. 19 (M. Lavallée), three at Baie-du-Febvre Apr. 23 (m.ob.), and two at Gatineau May 14 (L. Bouthiller, *vide* D. Saint-Hilaire).

Two Piping Plovers at Grande-Entrée, *Magdalen Is.*, Apr. 22 (CCD, JCR); a Marbled Godwit at Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix May 2-7 (PB); and a Least Sandpiper at Baie-du-Febvre Apr. 11 (F. Gariépy et al.) all provided new early arrival dates for the province. A Baird's Sandpiper at Portneuf May 31 represented one of very few spring records (F&R Dion), while a Purple Sandpiper at Les Escoumins Mar. 26 was probably a wintering bird (CA, CG). Ruffs

included a male at Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix Apr. 30-May 8 (LS, m.ob.), and single females at Cacouna May 17-18 (RD), in the upper Richelieu valley May 21-22 (PB, LS, N. Roy), and at Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois May 23-24 (L. Lavolette et al.).

Small gulls were rather scarce and included a Laughing Gull at Bic May 18 (RP), a Franklin's Gull at Saint-Vallier May 22 (JL), single Little Gulls at Chambly Apr. 30-May 7 (LS et al.) and Les Escoumins May 3 (CG, CA), and a Black-headed Gull at Rimouski May 30 (R. Fortin). The total of nine Lesser Black-backed Gulls included single adults at Les Escoumins (CG, CA) and Côte-Sainte-Catherine (PB) on the very early date of Mar. 8. Other bizarre larid sightings included an ad. Glaucous × Herring Gull hybrid (Nelson's Gull) at Chicoutimi Mar. 8-9 (CC, GS), an apparent Great Black-backed × Herring Gull hybrid near Franquelin from May 22 onwards (C. Marcotte), and a Great Black-backed Gull with yellow legs at Chicoutimi Mar. 15 (CC, GS). An inland Black-legged Kittiwake at Res. Beudet Apr. 3 was noteworthy for spring (MG, JD). Caspian Terns included one at Baie-du-Febvre May 23 (E. Samson, A. Lacasse) and two at La Pocatière May 30 (GL et al.).

DOVES THROUGH ORIOLES

A **White-winged Dove** at Anse-à-Beaufils May 27-31 (R. Cloutier et al.) provided a 6th Regional record, and the 3rd for the Gaspé Pen. Two very early Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported; one at Morin Heights Apr. 21 (C. Lemieux, P. Dubuc) broke a century-old record arrival date (Apr. 26, 1896, at Québec City), and the one seen at Chicoutimi Apr. 29 (CC) was no less surprising so far north. Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at Sherbrooke Mar. 6 were also very early (M. Provencher, R. Smith). Four reports of Red-headed Woodpecker, including one for the well known breeding site at Breckenridge, *Hull*, still give hope for this threatened species in our Region. A Red-bellied Woodpecker showed up again at Phillipsburg May 14-19 (J-G. Papineau).

Another record arrival was provided by a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on Ile aux Grues Apr. 29 (G. Samson). One of the prize birds of the season was undoubtedly the record-early Say's Phoebe that was fully described at Fabre, *Témiscamingue*, Apr. 24 (L. Laforest). The N. Rough-winged Swallow was back again at the Rivière-du-Loup pier May 12 onwards (RD). A Barn Swallow at La Baie Mar. 29 (J. Tremblay, L. Paquet) represented another record-early arrival, while a

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on Ile de la Visitation, *Montreal*, Apr. 20 (P. Gervais) matched a previous record-arrival date.

The only two adequately described Loggerhead Shrikes were reported in the w parts of the Region; one was at Dubuisson, *Abitibi*, Apr. 11 (AL), and the other at Gatineau May 18 (JP. Artigau et al.). The uneventful warbler migration produced an "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler at La Pocatière May 9 (J-F. Rousseau), a Louisiana Waterthrush at Orford May 2-June 13 (A. Schmidt), and a unexpected Yellow-breasted Chat at Val-d-Or May 16 (AL)

A Blue Grosbeak at Saint-Ulric, Matane, Apr. 24-27 (Y. Lemieux) added to the pattern of Spring overshoots in the e. parts of the Region. The Clay-colored Sparrow that overwintered at Chandler was last seen May 1 (*vide* PP); only two other birds were reported, at Huntingdon May 16 (PB) and at Sainte-Anne-de-Portneuf May 30 (GL et al.). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Saint-Godefroi, *Gaspé*, Apr. 21 (E. Arsenault), at Valleyfield Apr. 28 (BB), and at Forestville May 27-28 (P. Bélanger, B. Théberge). A first-year male Orchard Oriole spotted on Ile des Soeurs May 16 (P. Homier, J-P. Hameury, A. Gauthier) was a good find.

EXOTICS

A Bar-headed Goose visited Barachois May 15 (E. Arsenault, D. Mercier et al.). A Greylag Goose was found at Rigaud May 23 (ND, R. Bisson). Single Ringed Turtle-Doves were located at Laval Apr. 17 (G. Lévesque) and Cowansville May 10 (L. Coté).

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