

atlantic provinces region



BRUCE MACTAVISH

The autumn was so packed with rarities and unusual events that there is scarcely space for an introduction. **Wood Sandpiper** and **White Wagtail** were new for the Region. A staggering fallout of southern passerines at Cape Sable Island, NS, opened up a week-long vagrant hunter's carnival.

Abbreviations: CSI (*Cape Sable Island*); GMI (*Grand Manan Island*); PEI (*Prince Edward Island*); SPM (*St. Pierre et Miquelon*).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Rare in the Region, an **Eared Grebe** at Prince Edward Island N.P. Oct. 3 was provincial first (DM, RC et al.). It was a banner year for "southern" herons (Table 2). Most unusual was a dead Least Bittern Oct. 17 at Sable I., NS (ZL). Strong S winds Oct. 31 brought an incursion of Cattle Egrets,

	NB	NS	PEI	NF	SPM
Least Bittern	-	1	-	-	-
Great Egret	2	7	-	-	2
Snowy Egret	1	5	-	3	-
Little Blue Heron	2	7	-	1	-
Cattle Egret	-	21	-	8	-
Green Heron	present	2	-	3	-
Yellow-crowned Night-heron	1	10 (!)	-	1	1
Glossy Ibis	-	5	-	-	-

SA The most astonishing fallout of autumn passerines ever witnessed in the Region hit the extreme southwest corner of Nova Scotia Oct. 11. Northwest winds on a cold front sweeping off the Carolinas and north Florida coast Oct. 10 may have triggered a movement of passerines southeast out over the sea. Here migrants met a strong SW flow that apparently transported them northward until they fell into the ocean or reached land at the southwest corner of Nova Scotia. At Cape Sable Island warblers were seen coming in off the ocean in the teeth of a southeasterly gale and rain on the afternoon of Oct. 11. Birders were quickly alerted to the unusual event, but no one was prepared for the magnitude of the flight of vagrants that met them Oct. 12: a lifetime's worth of vagrants in one day! There were more White-eyed Vireos than had previously been seen in all Atlantic Canada! The birding coverage was centred on Cape Sable I., but there were bird banders on Bon Portage I. and Seal I. For a week the bushes remained full of vagrants. Blake Maybank kept the tally. Table 1 is the list of vagrants recorded Oct. 11-17. Exceptional totals of other species were: 900 Red-eyed Vireo, 190 N. Parula, 115 Black-and-white Warbler, 400 Am. Redstart, 90 Ovenbird, 630 Com. Yellowthroat, and 100 Scarlet Tanager.

TABLE 1:
VAGRANTS RECORDED
OCTOBER 11 TO 17

Yellow-billed Cuckoo	14
White-eyed Vireo	95
Yellow-throated Vireo	32
Blue-winged Warbler	10
Golden-winged Warbler	4
Yellow-throated Warbler	13
Prairie Warbler	8
Prothonotary Warbler	2
Worm-eating Warbler	6
Kentucky Warbler	4
Connecticut Warbler	1
Hooded Warbler	55
Yellow-breasted Chat	2
Summer Tanager	8
Blue Grosbeak	120
Indigo Bunting	700

with remarkably large flocks of 13 at St. Peter's River, NS, Nov. 2-9 (CM et al.) and six Nov. 1-14. at St. Lawrence, NF (G. Wilson). An amazing 10 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons in Nova Scotia included five different birds on Sable I. Aug. 3-Sep. 29 (ZL). A late Glossy Ibis was at Yarmouth, NS, Nov. 1 (E. Ruff).

A popular Black Vulture was at Lismore, NS, Sep. 3-11 (KM), and possibly the same bird was at nearby Toney R. Oct. 27 (*vide* IM). The first breeding record of Turkey Vulture in the Region was a cave nest discovered in s. New Brunswick early in the summer. The Turkey Vultures at Brier I., NS, may be a mix of local summer residents and migrants; a kettle of 23 Nov. 15 was noteworthy even for this location (IM).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Strong W winds in the Region Oct. 3-5 pushed record-shattering numbers of Snow Geese into the Region, with at least 10,000 birds in New Brunswick, including 1500 flying south over GMI Oct. 4 (BD et al.). A flock of 300 on Brier I. was a provincial high (CH). The flight brushed by the rest of the Region with "larger than usual numbers" in

PEI (DM) and a flock of 15 as far e. as Bonavista, NF, in Oct. (*vide* JJ). The **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** found at Church Pt., NS, in late Apr. was last seen Sep. 1 (*vide* BMy). Eurasian waterfowl continue a slow increase. Provincial totals of Eurasian Wigeon were two in New Brunswick, five in Nova Scotia, and at least 15 in Newfoundland. By the end of Nov., three male Green-winged Teal of the nominate form were identifiable in St. John's. There was a pair of Tufted Ducks at Dalhousie, NB, Oct. 18-Nov. 30 (Irene Doyle et al.) and single females in Newfoundland at Middle Cove Oct. 20-22 (KK) and St. John's Oct. 20-Nov. 30 (m. ob.). The only Canvasback for the period was at Saint John, NB, Oct. 26 (PP). Three Redheads were at French R., PEI, Oct. 25 (GM). Lesser Scaup seem on a gradual increase over the last 10 years and were exceptionally numerous this fall, with very high counts of 300 Oct. 25 at Clark's Pd., PEI (*vide* BD), 100 in late Oct. at Escuminac Bay, NB (ML), and 40 Dec. 1 at Bissett L., Dartmouth, NS (FL, BMy). A female Hooded Merganser with five juveniles at Raleigh, NF, Aug. 25 constituted a first provincial breeding record (BMt).

Convincing details were supplied for a nearly ad. **Mississippi Kite** observed catching dragonflies at CSI on Sep. 17 (MN, *fide* IM). Almost unbelievable was the appearance of four **Swainson's Hawks** in a field near Donkin, NS, in e. Cape Breton I. on the evening of Sep. 12 (RK). The birds were still present the next day, when they were viewed by several observers and documented with photos (RK, CM, AM et al.). An identifiably different Swainson's Hawk was photographed in the same field 5 weeks later Oct. 20–22 (RK, CM et al.). Newfoundland's first Swainson's Hawk was at the southeastern-most corner of the province, Cape Race, on Oct. 5 (PL, JP). Buteos are rare on insular Newfoundland: there is no record of Broad-winged Hawk and only six for Red-tailed Hawk, making Swainson's Hawk all the more outstanding. Fairly good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks reported from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were likely a result of the high rodent population in Labrador and a correspondingly high success rate of breeding raptors (*fide* BMT). There were several sightings of one or more Golden Eagles from Brier I. Sep. 4–Oct. 12 (IM et al.). An adult was at Mactaquac Dam, NB, Oct. 25 (DC). New Brunswick's 6th Clapper Rail was at Castalia Marsh, GMI, Sep. 16 (D. Gibson, ST). A Com. Moorhen at Argenta, NF, Oct. 17 was the first in the province since 1988 (AH, PL). Single Sandhill Cranes were at St. Andrews, NB, Sep. 16 (L. Dunfield), New Canaan, NB, Sep. 20 (JE), and Wallace, NS, in late Sep. (*fide* IM).

SHOREBIRDS

A **Northern Lapwing** was well described by a nonbirder as it fed on his front lawn in Grand Falls, NF, for 20 minutes on Nov. 10 (L. Harnum). The pair of Am. Oystercatchers that nested unsuccessfully at CSI remained until Sep. 6 (*fide* SF). There were three single Am. Avocets: Sep. 12–Oct. 4 at Windsor Causeway, NS (RS et al.), Oct. 20 at CSI, NS (MN), and Nov. 14 at Cavendish, PEI (GM). A **Wood Sandpiper** photographed at Renewes, NF, Nov. 11–14—the first for the Region and third for e. North America—

**TABLE 3:
TOTALS OF WESTERN SHOREBIRDS**

	NB	NS	PEI	NF	SPM
Western Sandpiper	6	3	-	-	-
Baird's Sandpiper	25	13	-	4	-
Stilt Sandpiper	25+	6	-	2	-
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	2+	25	-	7	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	5	-	-	-

was not high on the list of vagrants expected to occur in the Region (BMT, JW, PL, AH et al.). The Region's one Marbled Godwit was in n. New Brunswick at Maisonneuve Dune Aug. 29–Sep. 14 (MD). It was a banner year for the w. shorebirds (Table 3). The only Ruff was a late one Nov. 8 at Miscou I., NB (MD).

SKUAS THROUGH ALCIDS

Single South Polar Skuas were off Brier I. Aug. 8 (BMy et al.) and Sep. 7 (CH). Another was seen from land sitting among a raft of shearwaters near Cape Race, NF, Aug. 10 (PL, JW). A Great Skua was seen regularly on whale watching trips off GMI Sep. 17–Oct. 12 (*fide* BD). At least eight Little Gulls were in New Brunswick (*fide* BD), while more unusual were singles in Nova Scotia at Three Fathom Hbr. Nov. 16 (*fide* BMy) and near Pictou Nov. 29 (CB). Eight European Mew Gulls reported in the Region included early adults Sep. 4 at Goulds, NF (BMT, PL), and Sep. 9 at Brier I., NS (AM). New Brunswick had all the Sabine's Gulls, with one Sep. 9 at Dear I. Pt. (K. MacIntosh), two at GMI in mid-Sep. (BD et al.), and a late immature Nov. 15–16 near Cape Tormentine (R. LeBlanc). A well-described **Least Tern** was seen from the Grand Manan to New Brunswick ferry on Aug. 30 (KE). A **Black Skimmer** was a surprise at S. Kildare, PEI, Aug. 3 (DM).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

It was a big year for Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Table 1). There were no reports of Snowy Owl. Nova Scotia's 5th **Rufous Hummingbird** was an ad. male at a Victoria Beach feeder on the typically early date of Aug. 3–9 (A. & B. Ellis). It was perhaps the biggest year ever in the Region for Red-headed Woodpeckers, with six in New Brunswick, 13 in Nova Scotia, and one as far e. as St. Pierre, SPM, Oct. 25 for a 4th local record (LJ). There was a mediocre flight of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, with three in New Brunswick, one in Prince Edward Island, and one in Nova Scotia.

A well-documented **Acadian Flycatcher** was seen at Brier I. Sep. 20, a late date for n. N. America (MH, AK, IM). Annual in the Region but always a great rarity, a **Say's Phoebe** was a Sable I. Sep. 19 (ZL). Also nearly annual but causing greater excitement was the **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** at Shippegan, NB, Sep. 22–Oct. 10 (m. ob.). Aside from the mind-boggling s. vireo totals from the "Great Fallout," there were single White-eyed Vireos at GMI Sep. 28 (BD) and Duncans Cove, NS, Oct. 25 (DC),

with Yellow-throated Vireos at GMI Sep. 22 (RW), Brier I. Sep. 20 (IM), and Hartlen Pt., NS, Sep. 22 (BMy). A House Wren was as far e. as St. John's Nov. 23–30 (PL). Single Sedge Wrens were at Brier I. Sep. 9 (AM) and Seal I. Oct. 4 (BMy). Northern Wheat-ear reports were two different individuals near Cape Race, NF, Sep. 18 & 26 (BMT et al.), and singles at Dartmouth, NS, Oct. 10 (IM) and Waterside, Pictou Co., NS, Oct. 16–17 (SV et al.). A rare and very late Wood Thrush was at Brier I. Nov. 22 (MH, AK). A **Varied Thrush** was at Williamswood, NS, Nov. 28–30 (*fide* BMy). The Region's first wagtail was a **White Wagtail** of the nominate race at Renewes, NF, Sep. 14 (AH, PL). It occurred on the last day of a week of strong NE winds that blew directly from Iceland to a point in the ocean just e of Newfoundland. A moderate wave of Bohemian Waxwings was noticed in the n half of the Region starting in late Oct.

TABLE 4: TOTALS OF REGULAR VAGRANTS (EXCLUDING BIRDS IN THE OCT. 11 NS FALLOUT)

	NB	NS	PEI	NF	SPM
Western Kingbird	2	5	-	-	-
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	10	many	5	5	-
Prairie Warbler	2	21	-	6	-
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	20+	-	5	-
Clay-colored Sparrow	4	8	-	1	-
Lark Sparrow	3	6	1	5	-
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	7	-	1	-
Dickcissel	present	16	present	19	4
Yellow-headed Blackbird	3	5	-	2	-

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Even excluding totals from the "Great Fallout," it was a good year for s. warblers. Blue-winged Warblers were represented by one Aug. 28 at GMI (BD) and four in Sep at Nova Scotia's vagrant traps. Golden-winged Warblers were noted Sep. 14–15 at GMI (JWi), Sep. 8 at Blanche Pen., NS (MN), and Sep. 7–9 at Bear Cove Pt., NF (BMT). Single Yellow-throated Warblers were numerous Aug. 19 at GMI (B. MacDonald), Nov. 15–30 at Miramichi City, NB (*fide* BD), Aug. 29 and Sep. 15 at Sable I. (ZL), Sep. 22 at Seal I. (A. Penney), Nov. 19–30 at St. John's (PL), and Nov. 22 at St. John's (BMT). Surprisingly, a Pine Warbler Nov. 7 in St. Pierre, SPM, was a first record for the French Islands (PA). Two solo Cerulean Warblers were noted Sep. 2 at Seal I. (EM) and Sep. 7 & 14 at Bear Cove Pt., NF (JW,

PL). Prothonotary Warblers numbered four: two different individuals Sep. 2 & 10 on Sable I. (ZL), with singles Sep. 27 at Schooner Pd., NS (RK) and Aug. 29 at Cappahayden, NF (JW). The only w. warbler was a **Townsend's Warbler** at Renewes Nov. 15–18, the 8th provincial record (BM et al.). Kentucky Warblers were at Bear Cove, NF, Sep. 7 (KK) and at St. John's Sep. 9 (JS). Hooded Warblers were largely in Nova Scotia: three Aug. 30 on Sable I. (ZL), one Sep. 4 on CSI (MN), one Sep. 12 on Brier I. (CAM, ALM), and Nov. 18–29 Halifax (m. ob.). Another was present Sep. 15 at Renewes (PL).

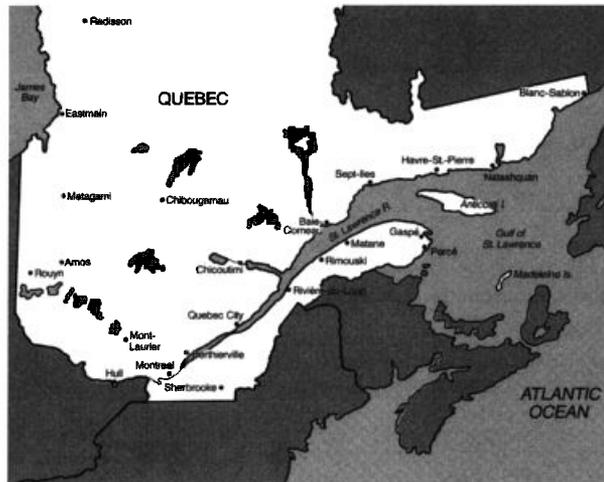
Outside the "Great Fallout," there were Summer Tanagers at Seal I. Oct. 7 (AC) and Dartmouth Nov. 1 (FL). **Western Tanagers** were found Oct. 12–13 CSI (BMy) and Oct. 20–25 Dartmouth, NS (PD et al.). The status of **Spotted Towhee** in the East is still unravelling since it gained status as a separate species. The 2nd in the Region was one near Charlottetown, PEI, Nov. 2–8 (RC et al.). A **Lark Bunting** at Castalia, GMI, Sep. 19–20 was the first provincial sighting in 2 decades of this once regular stray (RW et al.). A well-described **Henslow's Sparrow** at Castalia, GMI, Sep. 25 was the 2nd for the province (KE). The only Orchard Oriole was one at St. Pauls I. off the n. tip of Cape Breton I., NS, in late Aug. (BMy). Records of Blue Grosbeak were singles Sep. 16 at GMI (JE) and Cape Race Oct. 3–10 (TB et al.). A House Finch made it to Sable I. Oct. 18 (RS, ZL)—next stop Newfoundland? The only abundant finch was White-winged Crossbill, which appeared to enjoy good reproductive successes from w. Newfoundland to New Brunswick during the period.

Observers: Pascal Asselin, Calvin Brennan, Todd Boland, Dave Christie, Ray Cooke, Alan Covert, Dave Currie, Brian Dalzell, Marcel David, Pierre Dugauy, Jim Edsall, Ken Edwards, Roger Etcheberry, Sylvia Fullerton, Carl Haycock, Matt Holder, Anne Hughes, Laurent Jackson, Jon Joy, Andrea Kingsley, Richard Knapton, Ken Knowles, Fulton Lavender, Paul Linegar, Zoe Lucas, Mike Lushington, Eric Mills, Dan McAskill, Ian McLaren, Angus MacLean, Bruce Mactavish, Gisele Martin, Blake Maybank, Ken McKenna, Cathy Murrant, Murray Newell, Peter Pearce, John Pratt, Jytte Selno, Richard Stern, Stuart Tingley, Rob Walker, John Wells, Jim Wilson.

Bruce Mactavish, 37 Waterford Bridge Rd., St. John's, NF Canada A1E 1C5



québec region



PIERRE BANNON, NORMAND DAVID, and YVES AUBRY

Following the trend of the last seven or eight months, fall temperatures continued to be above normal, while rainfall was below normal, particularly in n. Québec. It was an excellent season for passerines as well as for nonpasserines. Quite surprising was the occurrence of a good number of s. warblers late in the season. The Nov. 10–11 storm responsible for the wave of Franklin's Gulls in the e. regions of the continent was probably also a contributive factor in the occurrence of many w. species in the province, including Tundra Swans and Ross's Geese in record number. Other highlights were an Am. Avocet in the Abitibi region, a "Lawrence's Warbler" and a Summer Tanager near Montréal, a Spotted Towhee in the L. Saint-Jean region, and an astounding **Hooded Oriole** in e. Québec.

STORM-PETRELS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Wilson's Storm-Petrel strayed to Portneuf, w. of Québec City Sep. 27 (FD), while one at Lévis Sep. 18 was not unprecedented (JL). Amazingly, a Leach's Storm-Petrel at Victoriaville Aug. 27 was the 5th record in 10 years for this inland locality (JD, J. Boissonneault et al.).

Four Great Egrets reached La Pocatière Aug. 16 (CA, CG). There were a record high seven Little Blue Herons reported; the latest

was spotted at Saint-Ferdinand Oct. 13, a new Regional record late date (R. Gingras). A *Plegadis* ibis at Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois Aug. 22–Sep. 13 was not very cooperative, complicating its specific identification (v. ob.). Tundra Swans appeared in unprecedented numbers following the Nov. 10–11 storm and included flocks of 14 at Ayer's Cliff Nov. 14 (A. Schmidt) and 10 at Saint-Lazare Nov. 14+ (L. Miller, v. ob.), while two appeared at Contrecoeur

Nov. 14 (R. Jussaume), and one was killed at Baie-du-Febvre Nov. 13 (*vide* S. Dulac). The number of Greater White-fronted Geese was low, with one at Montmagny Oct. 4 (JL) and two at Saint-Prime Oct. 17 (L. Chiricota). By contrast, the number of Ross's Geese was high and included several blue morphs. Representing the biggest flock ever reported in the Region, the seven birds at Victoriaville Nov. 14 may have been related to the Nov. 10–11 storm (MG et al.). For the 2nd consecutive year, presumed Ross's X Snow Goose hybrids were reported, this time at Cap Tourmente in Oct. (GL, JPO, ML). Eur. Wigeons involved one at Baie-du-Febvre from Aug. to Oct. (SB) and two at Terrebonne Sep. 20 (I. Lusignan). An imm. male King Eider at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Nov. 1–14 represented one of very few records for s.w. Québec (P. Beaulé, L. Simard). Reports of Barrow's × Com. Goldeneye hybrids are reported with increasing frequency and included two at La Malbaie Nov. 12–27 (C. Marcotte) and one at Beaumont Nov. 14 (JL).

VULTURES THROUGH ALCIDS

A Black Vulture at New-Richmond was confirmed only in Dec. but had apparently been present since late Sep. at the local dump (R. Caissy et al.). Over 100 Turkey Vultures were counted Sep. 10 at Saint-Charles-de-Mandeville, in the Lanaudière region, the stronghold of this species in the Province (S. Lafrenière). Our two regularly monitored hawkwatches, Tadoussac (CA,