

atlantic provinces region



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The warm dry weather of spring continued into summer across the Region. This seemed to benefit breeding songbirds: Tree Swallows fledged two weeks early in New Brunswick, and at a long-term monitoring program in Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia, warblers bred early. Presumably foraging for insects was excellent.

There are still patterns of occurrence to discover in the traditionally quiet summer season; it is turning into one of the best seasons for exciting vagrants. White-winged Doves have been showing up in midsummer annually for the last decade; this summer there was one in Nova Scotia and one on a puffin colony off the coast of Labrador! There may be other species riding on the summer train from the southwest. A Cassin's Kingbird in Nova Scotia and a Sage Thrasher in New Brunswick, both Regional firsts, occurred in the same five-day period in July. An interesting variety of rarities from other points on the compass included a Magnificent Frigatebird and a Say's Phoebe in Newfoundland and two Little Egrets and a summering Garganey in Nova Scotia.

Abbreviations: C.B.I. (Cape Breton I., NS); C.S.I. (Cape Sable I., NS); G.M.I. (Grand Manan I., NB); S.P.M. (St. Pierre et Miquelon).

GREBES THROUGH CRANES

Newfoundland's first breeding record for Pied-billed Grebe was established when an adult with three chicks was observed in the s.w. corner of the province at Loch Lomond 28 Jul (GS). Early and rare Cory's Shearwaters were singles reported at Baccaro Light, NS, 5 Jun (MN) and Georges Bank, NS, 25 Jul (RD). Manx Shearwater was reported from all provinces; the greatest number was 100 on 25 Jul off Langlade, S.P.M. (LJ). The first nesting of N. Gannet in Bay of Fundy since the mid-19th century was confirmed when a pair attending a nest containing one chick was found on White Horse Islet near Passamaquoddy Bay, NB, in July (*vide* DC). An imm. Double-crested Cormorant was rare as far north as Goose Bay, Lab., 29 Jun (Bmt). A female frigatebird, presumably a **Magnificent Frigatebird**, spent a morning among gulls scavenging fish scraps in the s. coastal Newfoundland community of Ramea 4 Jun (RN). Nova Scotia had two **Little Egrets**, with one photographed at Rossway 6 Jun (IM) and another at The Hawk, C.S.I., 12–20 Jun (MN). Southern heron reports were few, with the most interesting being a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron 9–16 Jun at Overton, NS (HH), single Tricolored Herons 16 Jun at C.S.I. (MN) and 11–21 Jun on Sable I., NS (ZL), and an ad. Little Blue Heron 21 Jun at Ramea, NF (RN). There was a Turkey Vulture nest near Saint John, NB, at the same site as the Region's first nesting last year (JWi).

A late migrating flock of 32 Snow Geese flew over Campbellton, NB, 3 Jun (RCh). Five male and a female Wood Duck at various locations in the Codroy Valley, NE, 4–7 Jun suggests the first provincial breeding record is close at hand (PL). A brood of N. Shovelers at S.P.M. was a faint echo of last summer's influx into the e. part of the Region (RE). The male **Garganey** found in May at Belleisle Marsh, NS, was present until at least 26 Jul (m.ob.). The only Eur. Wigeon was a male at Eddy Marsh near Amherst, NS, 19 Jun (RS). One-hundred-and-seventy post-breeding male Greater Scaup had accumulated at Pictou, NS, by 12 Jul (KM). For the 4th consecutive year a brood of Harlequin Ducks was on the Charlo R., NB (*vide* DC). Single Ruddy Ducks were at the

Pointe-Verte, NB, sewage lagoon 29 Jun (RG) and Broad Cove, NS, 7 Jul (SF). A N. Harrier fledged five young at the site of Labrador's first breeding record last year beside the Churchill Falls airport runway (*vide* Bmt). A Red-shouldered Hawk was n. of the known breeding range in New Brunswick near Dalhousie 17 Jul (ML). An Am. Kestrel nest at Goose Bay 21 Jun was one of the few nests found in Labrador (Bmt). Soras were heard at 2 different locations near Goose Bay, Lab., 5 & 27 Jun (Bmt). An unusual number of Sandhill Cranes was present in New Brunswick, with singles at Lower Coverdale 2–4 Jun, Eight Mile L. 12–13 Jun, Havelock 15–21 Jun, and Shippagan 1 Jul (*vide* DC). One was at East Pt., PEI, 1–18 Jun (*vide* RC).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

Three Am. Oystercatchers were present throughout the period on C.S.I. with one fledgling being fed in early August (MN). Very unusual was an **American Oystercatcher** at S. Harbour Beach, C.B.I., 8 Jun (DM). A pair of Semipalmated Plovers with three young at C.S.I. 24 Jun was at the s. breeding limit of the species (MN). The most eastern outpost of Piping Plover is at Miquelon, S.P.M., where there was one successful brood in June (RE). A Killdeer nest was unusually far north at Goose Bay, Lab. (Bmt). Intriguing was a Solitary Sandpiper in breeding habitat near Money Pt., C.B.I., 10 Jun (RK). Upland Sandpiper was found at the airfield in Charlo, NB, for the 3rd year, suggesting breeding (*vide* DC). Early arriving Whimbrels included five on 25 Jun and 25 on 29 Jun at Isthmus, S.P.M. (RE). Maximum counts of Semipalmated Sandpiper from the Nova Scotia side of the Bay of Fundy were 80,000+ at Evagaline Beach and 10,000+ at nearby Windsor Causeway 25 Jul (JT). An unseasonable Stilt Sandpiper was at Conrad's Beach, NS, 23 Jun (IM). Impressive counts of Short-billed Dowitcher from C.S.I. were 2000 on 14 Jul and 4000 on 24 Jul (MN).

Skuas identified to species were single South Polar Skuas at Brier I., NS, 13 Jun (CH), Cherry Hill Beach, NS, 11 Jul (EM), and off G.M.I. 17 Jul (LM). The only Great Skua identified was "an adult" s. of St. Pierre, S.P.M., 6 Jun (LJ). An unidentified



A thrasher captured and photographed on 20 July at the Bowdoin Scientific Station on Kent Island, New Brunswick. Working through their *Identification Guide to North American Birds* (Pyle 1997), the banders methodically eliminated other possibilities, including a mockingbird × thrasher hybrid, and identified the first-time regional visitor as an adult female Sage Thrasher—with a brood patch! Photograph/Nathaniel Wheelwright

skua was observed “dancing on the head of a Greater Shearwater” off G.M.I. 13 Jul (LM). There were nine Laughing Gulls reported: three in New Brunswick, four in Nova Scotia, and two in Newfoundland. In Newfoundland ad. Black-headed Gulls were seen feeding young at the long-established breeding site, Stephenville Crossing, on 12 Jul (KK), and a new breeding site was discovered at Gambo when two pairs of adults were observed feeding juveniles 12 Jul (TS). Increased observer awareness was probably the reason for more Lesser Black-backed Gull reports this summer. There were seven in Nova Scotia and three in Newfoundland, including a singleton 100 mi inland at Goose Bay, Lab., 13 Jun (BMT). A rare mid-summer Dovekie was near St. Pierre, S.P.M., 25 Jul (BL).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

Surprisingly regular as a summer vagrant, a **White-winged Dove** at a Brier I., NS, feeder 22–23 Jun (D. Pugh) was the 16th for the province. Another photographed on a seabird colony at The Gannet Is., e. of Cartwright, Lab., 4 Jul was at an extreme location for a first provincial record (*fide* IJ). There were at least five singing Mourning Doves during June in Goose Bay, where the first Labrador breeding record was established in 1998 (BMT); several summer sightings of Mourning Dove on insular

Newfoundland invite an as yet unconfirmed nesting (*fide* PL). A Black-billed Cuckoo was out-of-range at Ramea I., NF, 23 Jun (RN). A N. Saw-whet Owl calling at Codroy, NF, 5 Jun was another indication that the species breeds in the province (PL). At Terra Nova N.P., NF, in late June, an E. Wood-Pewee was singing in vain (GS). A **Say's Phoebe** near Cape Ray, NF, 5 Jun

provided the 4th provincial and perhaps only the 2nd spring record for the Region (PL et al.). Concerted nest-finding turned up an impressive 5 nests of Willow Flycatcher at an abandoned airstrip near Frederickton, NB, in June (PP, SM). Nova Scotia had single Willow Flycatchers at Advocate Harbour 18 Jun (BMy) and Coldbrook 28 Jun (AM). A W. Kingbird at Tracadie-Shealia, NB, 2 Jun was a rare spring occurrence (RG). The Region's first **Cassin's Kingbird** was well scrutinized by many observers and beautifully photographed at Little Harbour, *Shelbourne*, NS, on the unlikely dates of 16–18 Jul (DY et al.). Most of the very few records for the e. coast of North America are in autumn. Two E. Kingbirds at Goose Bay, Lab., 6 Jun were far north of the expected breeding range (BMT).

Tree Swallows had a very successful breeding season in New Brunswick, probably due to the warm and dry summer, with young fledging one to two weeks ahead of normal (DC, BD). Red-breasted Nuthatches were very numerous in New Brunswick. Christie is predicting a large fall flight of the species because of the poor cone crop. Unexpected were single Winter Wrens singing in Labrador at Gull I. 18 Jun and Goose Bay 7 Jul (BMT). The dry summer apparently also had a positive effect on the nesting success of E. Bluebirds, with many broods noted throughout New Brunswick (BD). A Brown Thrasher was out-of-range at Ramea I., NF, 11–25 Jun (RN). Vying with Cassin's Kingbird as the off-the-wall bird of the season, a **Sage Thrasher** was banded, videotaped, and photographed at Kent I., NB, on the unlikely dates of 19–20 Jul for a first Regional occurrence (*fide* BD). Summer Bohemian Waxwings have become routine in the Labrador wilderness, although breeding has not been proven. This summer several Bohemians were seen during July on the

island of Newfoundland, including a courting pair at Daniel's Harbour (ST).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Warblers in Labrador included a singing male Nashville at Churchill Falls 19 Jun; and at Goose Bay, a juv. Nashville 16 Aug, four singing male Cape May Warblers during June, and a singing male Com. Yellowthroat 27 Jun (BMT)—all unconfirmed as breeders. A Kentucky Warbler at Yarmouth, NS, 29 Jul (*fide* AH) was an early southern vagrant. An out-of-season E. Towhee was at Kejimikujik N.P. in late June (JN). Lustily singing at Goose Bay, Lab., 22 Jun, a Chipping Sparrow was well n. of its breeding range (BMT), while a Clay-colored Sparrow singing at Miscou Lighthouse, NB, 5 Jun was a late spring migrant (RD). Unusual pairings of Savannah and “Ipswich” sparrows occurred on Sable I., NS (ZL), and C.S.I. (MN). A flock of 120 Com. Grackles going to roost at Stephenville, NF, 13 Jul was probably the largest flock ever seen in the province (BMT). An over-enthusiastic Brown-headed Cowbird amidst a half-million breeding Com. Murres on Funk I., NF, may help explain why this icterid rarely breeds in the province (WM). The cone crop was poor to fair across the Region, and correspondingly White-winged Crossbills were in low numbers. Pine Siskins were generally common throughout. American Goldfinches in Labrador were n. of their breeding range two at Labrador City 15–20 Jun (CD) and a singing male at Churchill Falls Jun 19 (BMT).

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