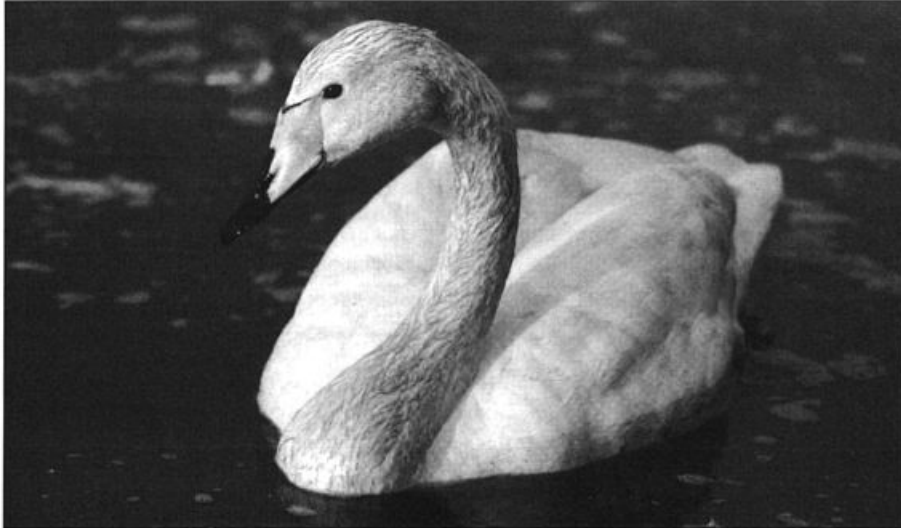


québec region



One of five Whooper Swans present near Cacouna and Trois-Pistoles, Québec, 8 June through 27 July. The base of the bill was yellowish white on this individual, while the other four showed a bright yellow base. Photograph/Michèle Lafleur

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Temperatures continued well above normal across the province. June was the warmest on record in Montreal, while July was the twentieth consecutive month with above-average temperatures. Although heavy precipitation was recorded locally in early July, this rainfall was insufficient to bring a continuing drought to an end. The St. Lawrence River was at its lowest level ever in the southern part of the province.

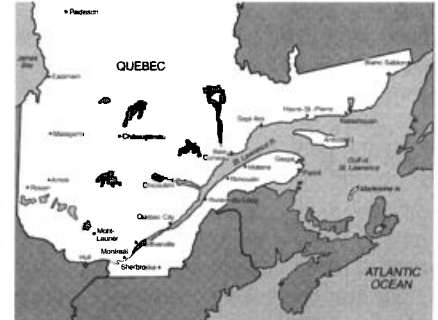
LOONS THROUGH MERGANSERS

A pair of Pacific Loons was noted again at Akulivik 15–18 Jun (YG), where the species has been reported for over 10 years now. A Sooty Shearwater from the Matane-Godbout ferry 5 Jun (LM, AG) furnished a record early arrival. A single Least Bittern was seen again 24 Jun in L'Isle-Verte (JLM), the easternmost site where the species is reported in summer, but as yet we have no confirmation of breeding.

Great Egret is showing signs of continuous expansion: a colony found in 1984 on Dickerson I. in L. Saint-François has been known to increase steadily. Great Egrets nested in 1998 on Heron's I. in the Lachine Rapids, where breeding was confirmed again this year; in addition, up to seven

birds were seen flying repeatedly in the direction of a large heronry on Grande Ile, near Berthierville, and two birds were seen feeding in Grande Baie, near Oka, in late May. An ad. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was seen briefly in Sainte-Martine 9 Jun (D. Doherty), and what is probably the same bird was relocated in Lasalle 27 Jun (C. Dickers, A. Wahba, P. Ash) and seen daily (J.-C. Sorel) until 27 Jul, much to the enjoyment of hundreds of people. Three Glossy Ibises were found in Saint-Paul-de-l'île-aux-Noix 10 Jul (S. Larocque, M.-F. Daigle). An ad. **White-faced Ibis**, only the 2nd to be found in the province, delighted many birders in Saint-Hyacinthe 30 Jul–3 Aug (Y. Bilodeau, R. Roy, N. Roy). Since 1990, annual occurrences of Black Vulture have continued unabated, with singles seen in Saint-Fabien 18 Jul (A. Cyr) and near Cabano 20 Jul (JPO, ML).

Tracking the subsequent whereabouts of five **Whooper Swans** discovered in Trois-Pistoles 8 Jun (J.-P. Rioux) proved fascinating. Numerous observers also found them in nearby L'Isle-Verte and Cacouna until 29 Jun, at which time four moved back to Trois-Pistoles and one remained in Cacouna. Meanwhile, a single bird had been seen 19 Jun in Les Escoumins (L. Boucher, *vide* CA), across the St. Lawrence R. on the n. shore. Then on 6 & 13 Jul, three were



seen at Ilets Jérémy and Sainte-Anne-de-Portneuf respectively, again on the n. shore of the river, and five birds were back in Cacouna 17–27 Jul. The next day, all five were seen again in Sainte-Anne-de-Portneuf, but on 29 Jul only three could be found in nearby Sainte-Thérèse-de-Colombier. At least two of these Whoopers readily approached humans offering food or even feigning to do so. It is tempting to conclude that these swans may belong to the feral population breeding in Massachusetts (*Field Notes* 52: 29; *N. Amer. Birds* 53: 31). Showing faint traces of grayish brown on hindneck and upper wing coverts, they were thought to be 2 years old at the most.

Greater Snow Geese summering in the s. half of the province in numbers higher than ever included birds crippled during the new spring open season. Representing a 3rd provincial occurrence for the year, a male **Cinnamon Teal** in Cacouna 12 Jun (JL) was found to be accompanied by a female the next day (m.ob.), and the pair was seen until 4 Jul (G. Bouchard et al.). Ongoing field work in the newly discovered breeding range of Barrow's Goldeneye e. of the Saguenay R. (*Field Notes* 52: 432) yielded 10 new broods in ZEC Chauvin and Martin-Valin in July (C. Marcotte, M. Robert). Single female Hooded Mergansers with young at Grande-Rivière 27 Jun (D. Mercier) and Escuminac 21 Jun (R. Caissy) provided the first breeding confirmations for the Gaspé Pen.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Merlins do not ordinarily nest in the Upper St. Lawrence Valley w. of Québec City, but in the last few years they have become more prevalent in urban and suburban environments; this year, we received reports that two pairs nested in Saint-Hyacinthe (*vide* F. Bourret) and that single pairs nested in

Blainville, Laval, and Montreal. An ad. female Willow Ptarmigan was found on Grande Ile, Mingan Is., Jul 23 (P. & M. Bornais), some 200 km w. of its breeding range on the Lower N. Shore. Since the establishment of Wild Turkeys in the Region in the early 1980s (likely from the spread of wild stock released in n. New York State), nesting confirmations have been few; this year, sightings included two females with at least two young in Havelock 18 Jun (ES, AL), one female with three young in Hemmingford 21 Jun (J-M. Béliveau), a female with seven young at a different site again in Hemmingford (ES, AL), and two females with 15 young in Napierville 4 Jul (PB).

There was heartening news from the Magdalen Is. concerning Piping Plover: at least 44 pairs yielded more than 64 fledglings (FS et al.). An Am. Avocet at Pointe Yamachiche 31 Jul (M. Bisson, HB) was only the 4th ever w. of the Québec City area (out of about 28 Regional occurrences). A Marbled Godwit in Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville 20 Jun (D. Jauvin) was out-of-season, and a Stilt Sandpiper at Pointe-au-Père 1-2 Jun (R. Fortin) was a rare find. There were two reports of the rare *hendersoni* Short-billed Dowitcher: singles in Longueuil 15-17 Jul (S. Denault) and Sainte-Martine (PB). An early ad. Long-billed Dowitcher was found in Sainte-Martine 31 Jul (M. Bertrand et al.).

A Long-tailed Jaeger seen from the Matane-Godbout ferry 5 Jun (LM, AG) was a rare occurrence. Franklin's Gulls overwintering in the East after last November's influx were likely the source for summer reports of single immatures at Rivière-Ouelle 3 Jun (LS), La Malbaie 20 & 25 Jun (LM, JPO, ML), and Trois-Pistoles 30 Jun and 7 Jul (JPO, ML), and adults in La Pocatière 5 Jun (J-F. Rousseau) and near Chambly 16 Jul (LS, P. Beaulé). Due to very low water levels, the small Black-headed Gull colony of the Magdalen Is. was visited regularly by a fox, and no hatching occurred (*vide* DGG). The nesting of two pairs of Black Terns on an artificial impoundment in Neuville near Québec City (*vide* JL) could very well mark the establishment of the easternmost colony in the St. Lawrence Valley.

For a number of years now, Montreal birders have predicted that the Caspian Tern would soon be found nesting locally, since pairs have been seen into early June and small groups into late July. This year, numerous pairs and groups were seen all summer long w. of Trois-Rivières, on the shores of L. Saint-Pierre, L. Saint-Louis, and L. Saint-François (all enlargements of

the St. Lawrence R.), but we are still awaiting breeding confirmation. Considered casual in summer in the St. Lawrence estuary, a Dovekie was well described from an ore carrier off Sainte-Anne-des-Monts 11 Jul (*vide* M. Gosselin); another was at Anse-à-Beaufils Jul 13 (R. Cloutier).

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Again this year, very successful intensive owl surveys in the L. Saint-Jean lowlands yielded 55 nesting pairs of Long-eared Owl with a total of 162 young (B. Dumont et al.). A male *Selasphorus* sp. hummingbird was briefly observed at Saint-Magloire, Bellechasse, 31 Jul (R. Barry); the report noted strong contrast between the wings and the coppery-toned back. An ad. Red-headed Woodpecker was out-of-range in Lévis 9 Jun (JL), and an unpaired adult was in Saint-Anicet until 16 Jul (A. Dancause); otherwise, the only known nesting pair in the province was back again for a 3rd consecutive year at its breeding site in the s.w. part of the province (ND).

A Great Crested Flycatcher enlightened Grosse-Ile, Magdalen Is., 11 Jun (F. Shaffer), a 2nd record for the archipelago. For a 3rd consecutive year, Rough-winged Swallows were present at Rivière-du-Loup (m.ob.), the easternmost site of their summer range. Another success story is that of Tufted Titmouse: its breeding was confirmed in 2 new localities. Two adults and three young came to a Cowansville's feeder 30 Jun (M. Smith), while one adult and one young were seen at a Baie-Missisquoi feeder 14 Jul (B. Brunet). Broods and breeding pairs were also reported from Saint-Anicet (*vide* A. Hogue) and Saint-André and Frelighsburg (J-G. Papineau). A singing Marsh Wren delighted observers at Pointe-de-l'Est 16 Jun (F. Gariépy et al.) for a first occurrence in the archipelago. Noteworthy is the report of two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in Québec City 13 Jun (F. Girardin).

An *albilora* Yellow-throated Warbler was found at Sainte-Hedwidge, L. Saint-Jean, 23 Jun (L. Chiricota). Rare buntings for the season included an ad. male Lark Bunting that made a brief appearance at Val-Senneville, Abitibi, 1 Jul (S. Lehouiller) and an ad. Lark Sparrow seen at Cap-des-Rosiers 28 Jun (G. Lemelin). Three White-crowned Sparrows attended a feeder in Chandler 18 Jun, and on 21 Jun a bird was seen carrying nesting material, perhaps representing the first breeding attempt for this region (L-P. Luce); one bird was still present 2 Jul (*vide* PP). Another White-crowned Sparrow attended a Sainte-Luce feeder 10

SA Studies on Bicknell's Thrush in June and July verified an unusual breeding system unexpected in *Catharus* thrushes that was first noted in Vermont last year (*vide* Vermont Institute of Natural Science). The Canadian Wildlife Service-Québec Region (YA) and McGill University (G. Seutin) closely monitored a breeding population at Mine Madeleine (49°0' N, 66°0' W) in the Chic-Chocs Wildlife Reserve in the center of the Gaspé Pen. using color banding, telemetry, and video recording. In addition to the absence of strict male territories, two males and a female were observed feeding young at a nest. One of these males also fed the young of a 2nd nest a few hundred meters away. Future DNA analysis will hopefully clarify the entire paternity pattern at this site. Bicknell's Thrush was classified as vulnerable in Canada last April by the CWS-Cosewic committee.

Jul onward (R. Claveau). An E. Meadowlark was a rare summer occurrence in Les Escoumins 15 Jun (CA, C. Girard), and a singing male W. Meadowlark in Mont-Saint-Pierre 25 Jun was a first for the Gaspé Pen. (A. Gaumond). A pair of **European Goldfinches** found nesting in the Montreal Botanical Gardens in July (C. Tastayre) provided a first confirmed breeding record for the province.

CORRIGENDA

The road-killed Long-eared Owl reported in our Spring 1999 summary at Longue Pointe de Mingan (S. Kavanagh, S. Marchand et al.) was in fact found mid-June 1999. In addition, an Am. Coot caught alive (but that could not be saved) on 13 May at Tasiujaq (58°42' N, 69°56' W) appears to represent a northernmost Regional record (*vide* YG).

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