

were considered unusually scarce, a surprising five were at East Point, PEI, 24 Sep (PJ). The only two N. Wheatears were at Grand Barachois, SPM, 9 Sep (LJ, RE) and St. John's 19 Sep (MR). All areas reported more N. Mockingbirds than normal. A probable Yellow Wagtail was seen briefly at Cape Spear 19 Nov (DB); the record is pending approval by the Newfoundland Records Committee. Bohemian Waxwings staged an early and large flight. Some were present all summer in Newfoundland. The first migrants hit New Brunswick in late Sep. During the last ten days of Oct and into Nov, they were common in n. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. By the end of Nov a flock of 2,000 had accumulated in St. John's.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Numbers of southern warblers were deemed low across the Region, probably a reflection of weather patterns rather than population changes. Blue-winged Warblers were at GMI 25 Aug (BD), Baccaro, NS, 22 Aug (*fide* AHO), and St. Anthony, NF, 8 Sep (DF). A Golden-winged Warbler was at GMI 10 Sep (*fide* DC). Yellow-throated Warblers were at Sable Island 1 Sep (ZL), Kingston, NS, 29 Nov (PG), St. Pierre, SPM, 7–27 Nov (PA), and St. John's 6 Oct (TB) and 13–30 Nov (PL). A imm. female Cerulean Warbler was photographed 30 Aug at Brier I. (LL et al.). Prothonotary Warblers were at Sable I. 15 Sep (ZL) and Rainbow Haven, NS, 2 Oct (*fide* AHO); a much-appreciated male appeared 16–26 Oct at Bear Cove, NF (BMT et al.). Two Worm-eating Warblers were at CSI 12 Sep (MN). Hooded Warblers appeared 6 Sep at Pubnico Pt., NS (RD), 15 Sep at Sable I. (ZL), and 22 Oct at St. John's (DB). A Pine Warbler was far e. at St. John's 13–25 Nov (JP et al.). Prairie Warblers and Yellow-breasted Chats were in average to slightly below average numbers.

Late Scarlet Tanagers were 4–6 Nov at Campellton, NB (BG), 7–12 Nov at Charlottetown, NF (*fide* GS), and 10–13 Nov at St. John's (AHu et al.). Summer Tanagers were one 13–16 Oct at Brier I. and two 20–21 Oct at Seal I., NS (*fide* DMcC). It was a better-than-average autumn for Clay-colored and Lark Sparrows, with respective provincial totals of four and seven in NB, nine and four in NS, and one and two in NF. A Field Sparrow at Blackhead 17 Oct–2 Nov was one of the few ever in Newfoundland (DB, TB). The annual late Oct and Nov influx of N. Cardinals into s. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia was the strongest since 1995. Blue Grosbeak totals were back

to normal after a couple of banner years, with five in NB, three in NS, and one in SPM. Dickcissels were seen in somewhat above-average numbers, being too plentiful for contributors to accurately total. An E. Meadowlark was rare at St. John's 15–30 Nov (BMT et al.). Nova Scotia scored the most Yellow-headed Blackbirds, with seven individuals spread over the province Aug–Nov; New Brunswick and Newfoundland each had one. The only Orchard Oriole was a late bird in early Oct at CSI (AM, CM). A massive flight of Com. Redpolls was noted in NB and NS beginning \pm 20 Oct and continuing through Nov. Other finch species were in poor to fair numbers.

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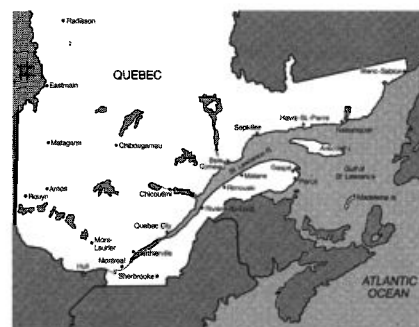
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Fall temperatures continued to be above average with the exception of October. The summer drought, which lasted until early September, came to an end after remnants of Hurricane *Floyd* dumped up to four inches of rain in some parts of southern Québec. October and November were also quite wet. It was an excellent autumn for rarities, with the addition of three new species to the Québec list of birds: Common Crane, Cave Swallow, and Swainson's Warbler.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Not seen every year in s. Québec, single Pacific Loons in Cacouna 11 Oct (L. Messely) and in Newport 31 Oct (PP, D. Mercier, J. R. Lepage) were welcome sightings. *Procellariidae* made a good incursion into the St. Lawrence estuary in late Sep and early Oct.



A round-trip aboard the Trois-Pistoles-Les Escoumins ferry 2 Oct produced seven N. Fulmars, one Greater Shearwater, one Sooty Shearwater, and one Manx Shearwater (JPO, ML). Other trips made during the same period were also quite productive. The Matane-Godbout ferry yielded two Wilson's Storm-Petrels 11 Aug (L. Roy) and one was detected from shore in Rivière-Saint-Charles 19 Oct (JFR, S. Blais).

A white pelican seen from a great distance in Rivière-Ouelle 22 Aug could not be identified to the species (JFR, I. Simard) but one videotaped in Lac des Iles, near Mont-Laurier, 25 Jul, was undoubtedly an Am. White Pelican (P. Moffatt). Last year's respectable count of 10 Great Egrets in St.-Timothée was almost trivial compared to 30 that gathered in the same area throughout Aug (m.ob.). Flocks of 14 and 17 individuals appeared in Saint-Barthélemy 7 Aug (LS) and in Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville 28 Aug, respectively (ND, D. Jauvin). Smaller flocks were seen in different localities and one strayed e. to Cap-des-Rosiers 11 Aug (I.



An adult Common Crane (left) with a Sandhill Crane at Barraute, Quebec, 1–7 Oct 1999 sparked controversy and speculation. The partly hidden bird is an immature believed to be a hybrid and the natural occurrence of these birds remains a mystery. Photograph/Sylvie Gagnon

SA Already welcoming birders on their property in Barraute, *Abitibi*, farm owners Lise Larose and Ghislain Galarneau received far more visitors after their discovery of an ad. Common Crane 1–7 Oct, for a most unexpected first Québec record. It was soon learned that it accompanied an ad. Sandhill Crane and two juveniles and that it was behaving as the head of the group (leading take-offs and presenting food to the young). According to descriptions provided by some observers (S. Gagnon, B. Wilson), the young cranes had contrasting dark flight feathers like the ad. Common Crane, suggesting the possibility that they were hybrids.

Another surprise was awaiting the birding community when it was learned that two odd-looking cranes were seen and photographed with a flock of Sandhill Cranes at Saint-Augustin, *Lac Saint-Jean*, 20–22 Sep (S. Boivin, M. Tremblay, D. Gervais). Both birds had black head markings, unlike Sandhills but not quite right for Commons, and a white cheek patch, the shape and extent of which was incorrect for Commons but somewhat reminiscent of Sandhills. Hybrids again, at least one-year-old in this case, were the most likely possibility.

The approximately 10 previous Common Crane records in N. America are from the w. states and provinces and assumed to be vagrants from e. Siberia, perhaps associating with breeding Sandhill Cranes en route to American winter quarters. A Common Crane with "stiff toes" on its left foot seen and photographed in Whiting, VT, 9–10 Jun 1991 was determined to be an escaped bird from a Catskill Mts. aviculturist (*Am. Birds* 45:1094). Perhaps this same Common Crane with damaged toes was photographed in Jan 1993 in Cumberland, NJ (*vide* P. Lehman). It mated with a Sandhill Crane and produced young in 1994 and 1995 (*Field Notes* 49: 912) and was seen at Bridgeton, NJ, 16 Mar 1996 (*Field Notes* 50: 259).

In view of the longevity of cranes, is it really impossible that the odd-looking Saint-Augustin's cranes were not the 1995 New Jersey hybrid offspring? Is it really impossible that the Barraute's Common Crane was not the now-healed limping bird recorded in New England 1991–1996? Or was it the Common Crane reported in Nebraska in early Mar 1999 (*Winging It* 11(4):3)? At any rate, the origins of many birds reported in N. America, including the Barraute's Common Crane, remain undetermined.

Morris, D. Sigouin). A late movement of Cattle Egrets produced single birds in Dorval 10 Nov (C. Millier) and Rock Forest 11 Nov (W. King). Single Glossy Ibises visited five localities of extreme s. Québec in Aug and Sep. The now almost-routine northward wandering of the Black Vulture furnished another record for the Gaspé Pen.

when a bird visited Matapédia 16–18 Aug (L. Tremblay).

Five Gr. White-fronted Geese and far more numerous than usual Ross's Geese were found among flocks of migrating Snow Geese and Canada Geese. A flock of 72 Brants in Château-Richer 30 Nov was unusual for the late date (G. Harvey). The

fascinating comings and goings of last summer's **Whooper Swans** continued to hold the birding community's attention. Three remained in Ilets Jérémie on the n. shore of the St. Lawrence until 9 Aug (A. Gosselin, R. Gilbert). Then, a total of five birds were back on the s. shore in l'Isle-Verte 2–4 Sep (D. Labarre). Another, probably of different origin considering the dates, was discovered in Granby 19 Aug (ND et al.) and moved to nearby Bromont 16–26 Sep (J.J. Hamel, F. Surprenant). Tundra Swans were reported only from the Saguenay-Lac-St.-Jean area, where a flock of 10 visited Sainte-Marguerite-Marie 13 Sep (C. Norton, L. Villeneuve); one appeared in La Baie 29 Oct (CC, GS). The Canvasback, once a regular fall migrant in s. Québec, was absent from the Montréal area. The only reports involved singles in La Baie 17–19 Oct (S. Tremblay et al.) and Baie-du-Febvre 15 Oct (*vide* N. Roy).

HAWKS THROUGH CUCKOOS

Tadoussac and Montréal are the only hawk-watches regularly monitored in the Region. The Cap-Tourmente N.W.A., probably one of the best hawk-watches in the Region, unfortunately is not monitored on a regular basis. This year, Tadoussac produced a record flight of 24,690 hawks (mean = 15,054 for 1993–98). Bald and Golden Eagles, Sharp-shinned, Red-tailed, and Rough-legged Hawks, Am. Kestrels, and Merlins were almost twice as numerous as usual (CA, CG). This exceptional flight was not paralleled farther s. in Montréal, where migration was at best average (M. McIntosh, B. Barnhurst). Extralimital hawks included a Red-shouldered 12 Aug in Radisson, 600 km n. of its range (M. Thibault), and a Cooper's in Trois-Pistoles 30 Oct (J. Hardy). A Regional total of eight Gyrfalcons was high compared to last year's low of only two. Purple Gallinules continued to make news. Juveniles were found in Saint-Gédéon 17–20 Sep (CC, GS et al.) and Lennoxville 12 Nov (C. Dufresne, JPM).

The shorebird season was neither good nor bad. The only unusual sightings included an Am. Avocet in l'Isle-Verte 11 Aug (JPO), a W. Sandpiper in Rivière-Ouelle 4 Sep (F. Dion, R. Dion), and single Ruffs in the Sainte-Martine and Saint-Étienne area 19–20 Sep (LS) and in Rimouski 1 Nov (G. Gendron). Long-billed Dowitchers, although not as abundant as last fall, continued to be well in evidence in the Montréal area. Always causing a lot of excitement, Red Phalaropes at inland localities were in Napierville 9–12 Oct (M. Poulin et al.) and Cap-Saint-Ignace 13 Sep (JFR). Among our

regular vagrant gulls were eight Laughings, two Franklin's, 16 Lesser Black-backed, and six Sabine's. A first-summer Sabine's, unusual in this plumage, was noteworthy in Métabetchouan 7 Aug (CC, GS). The late-summer dispersal of Caspian Terns in s. Québec produced a remarkable flock of 28 birds in Maple-Grove 15 Aug (PB). Dovekies were well reported in St. Lawrence estuary in Nov, with an exceptional flight of 458 birds noted from shore in Les Escoumins 20 Nov (CA, CG). Out-of-range Atlantic Puffins included three in Ile Saint-Barnabé, *Rimouski*, 1 Aug (D. Ouellet), and one and two from the Trois-Pistoles ferry 28 Sep (CA, GC) and 2 Oct (JPO, ML), respectively.

Also becoming a more or less regular vagrant in recent years, a **White-winged Dove**, the latest ever in the Region, showed up in Rimouski 19 Nov (RS). At least 15 Yellow-billed Cuckoos turned up 14 Sep–3 Oct, a remarkable but not unprecedented flight. The significance of such northward fall movements remains a mystery, as the species is almost unrecorded in the Region during summer.

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

At the Tadoussac banding station, 231 N. Saw-whet Owls were banded 7 Sep–31 Oct (J. Ibarzabal). A Canadian Wildlife Service banding project initiated in Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. yielded 31 during the night of 4–5 Oct (JFR, J. Potvin). One mist-netted at 11:55 p.m. 18 Oct in Tadoussac was recaptured in Cap-Tourmente the following night, a 150-km flight to the sw. in 24 hours.

An ad. male **Rufous Hummingbird**, regularly visiting a feeder in Eastman, *Estrie*, late Sep through Dec (HS) survived a heavy snowfall in mid-Nov and a tempera-

ture of -13°C in early Dec. An imm. Red-headed Woodpecker at a feeder in Lavernière 19–24 Oct (m.ob.) represented a rare occurrence for the Magdalen Is. archipelago. An ad. male Red-bellied Woodpecker was in Ile des Sœurs, 10–11 Oct (G. Larose, C. Pouliot); a female in Port-Daniel 29 Oct (A. Langlois) was probably the same one feeding on sunflower seeds in Chandler 6–7 Nov (G. Belvin, *vide* PP). Unsexed birds also appeared in Québec City 19 Nov (F. Girardin) and Marbleton, *Estrie*, 20 Nov (D. Labbé, B. Turgeon).

Tufted Titmice made a good showing within their recently established breeding range, with numerous birds recorded between Montréal and Sherbrooke. They also wandered well beyond this range, with at least two in Lévis 6 Nov+ and singles in Morrissette-Station, *Beauce*, 18 Oct (M. Labonté, L. Dufour), St.-Nicolas, 13 Nov+ (L. Turgeon, N. Audet), and St.-Pamphile, *L'Islet*, 19 Oct (M. Pelletier). White-breasted Nuthatches made an exceptional showing in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Lower-St. Lawrence, and Gaspésie regions. In Nov, Carolina Wrens were well reported, as evidenced by two in Philipsburg and singles in Pike River, Sainte-Julie, *Montérégie*, and Cowansville. A House Wren in Sept-Iles 24 Oct was both late and out of range (J. F. Laporte). A Varied Thrush reported from Beaudry 21 Nov+ provided a first record for the Abitibi region (D. Nadeau).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Brewster's Warbler with yellow restricted to the crown and wing patches was carefully observed in Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. 9 Oct (AC). Earlier in the season a bird lin-



Rare in northeastern North America, this immature Lark Sparrow was at Cap-Tourmente National Wildlife Area, Quebec, 16 Oct 1999. Photograph/Michèle Laffleur

gered in Frelighsburg 15 Aug–1 Sep (BH, m.ob.). A Blue-winged Warbler stopped briefly in the Montréal Botanical Gardens 9 Sep (G. Leduc). A first record and long awaited in the Region was a well-described **Swainson's Warbler** in Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. 21 Oct (JMG). A Hooded Warbler, the latest ever in the Region, made a brief stop in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 17 Oct (ML). Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. continued to produce its load of rarities this season, with a Yellow-breasted Chat feeding on wild berries 25–28 Oct, a new record late date for the Region (JMG, JPO). Another was reported from Saint-Anaclet, *Rimouski*, 23 Sep (F. Proulx).

An imm. Summer Tanager was feeding from the berries of a wild vine in Roberval 17 Oct–6 Nov (L. Chiricota, C. Boivin, ph.); possibly the same bird was relocated in La Baie 7–10 Nov (J. and M. Rochefort et al.). Now an annual fall event, single Dickcissels were at feeders in two locales in the Lower-St. Lawrence region: Rimouski 23–25 Oct (RS, J. Larivée, ph.) and 2 Nov (L. Ouellet). and Pointe-au-Père 25 Oct–10 Nov (A. Brisson). Singles were also in Sept-Iles 4–8 Oct (J. P. Laporte), Tadoussac 11 Oct (CA), and Cap-aux-Meules, *Magdalen Is.*, 20 Oct (DGG, C. A. Gaudet). An imm. Lark Sparrow was photographed in Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. 16 Oct (A. Couture, P. Otis, ML, JPO); another visited Les Escoumins 20–23 Nov (CG, CA). N. Cardinals crossed the boreal forest and reached the Saguenay region in early Nov, producing at least four sightings.

An imm. and an ad. Yellow-headed

SA Following the early Nov storm that brought record numbers of Cave Swallows into the ne. U.S. and s. Ontario, Québec birders were on the lookout for this species, which had never reached the Region. Their expectations were rewarded with discovery of two in Melocheville, near Montréal, 6–7 Nov (PB, G. Zenaitis, LS, ph. A. Hogues). Despite freezing temperatures at night, one remained in the area until 11 Nov. Two more reached La Malbaie, a more n. location between Québec City and Tadoussac, also 6–7 Nov (M. Robert, C. Simard). Other possible Cave Swallows could not be positively identified because they were too far away or not well seen. Only the orange rump was seen on a swallow flying away from an observer in the Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. 6 Nov (D. Campeau), while an unidentified swallow described as having a chestnut rump and a brown belly was reported in l'Anse-à-Bœufils, *Gaspésie*, 7 Nov (ML). Finally, a swallow routinely identified as a Cliff Swallow in Eastman in early Nov might have been a Cave Swallow (HS, *vide* S. Denault).

Examination of the photographs taken in Melocheville seemed to indicate that the subspecies involved was *pallida*. The orange rump, reddish-brown forehead, mainly gray flanks, and relatively large size (as appreciated in the field) all supported this conclusion. Based on available illustrations (e.g. Raffaele et al. 1998, *A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies*), there was no evidence that these birds belong to the *fulva* group.

Blackbird visited Cap-aux-Meules and Lavernière, respectively, 6–23 Oct (m.ob.); an imm. stopped briefly in Haldimand, Gaspésie, 22 Oct (M.&E. Morency, G. Jobin). An imm. Orchard Oriole was identified by plumage and calls in Cap-Tourmente N.W.A. 9 Oct (AC). Two ad. and five juv. Com. Redpolls at a feeder in Jonquière 23 Aug may have indicated local breeding (D. Gervais et al.).

EXOTICS

A male Mandarin Duck appeared in Laval 20 Oct (D. Hughes) and two Chinese Geese were reported in Clarenceville 7 Oct (*vide* BH). A Chukar in La Baie early Jul–23 Aug was without doubt an escape from a local fancier (S. Tremblay, Mo. Tremblay, H. Simard). A Zebra Finch was found among a flock of House Sparrows at Hull 12 Sep (M. Tellier).

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 20.

new england



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Autumn 1999 was considerably wetter than average, largely attributable to a wet September, in turn owing much to the drenching received from Tropical Storm *Floyd* 16–17 Sep, although other frontal systems pitched in, notably on 10 Sep. August and November were actually much drier than average. Temperature was above average in September and November, but a tad cool in October. Killing frost was frequent from early Oct in the north, but snow was almost absent. Bird activity tended to reflect weather, with some good flights correlating well with frontal passages; e.g., on 12 and 18–19 Sep. The best seabird "wrecks," on 4 Oct and 3 Nov, were associated with southerly blows rather than nor'easters. *Floyd* attracted birders to several sites along its path, but its results were modest—it displaced a handful of larids and caused some shorebird fallout inland.

The avian event of the season in southern New England was the influx of Cave Swallows to our region in November. They appeared not long after the strong southerly blow of the third but were found in clear weather with northwest winds. Lake Champlain reasserted its biogeographic status as the easternmost Great Lake with a remarkable jaeger flight and an excellent array of the smaller gulls. The Neotropical passerine migration was often painfully lacking in numbers and diversity, something

that has not been news for some time. Boreal irruptives were mixed, with few raptors save for the raptorial songbird Northern Shrike, an early Red-breasted Nuthatch flight, good numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, particularly to the north, and diverse but not overly numerous winter finches mostly along the coast. Save for the swallows, rarities were those with a track record in the region, led by Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, and Black-throated Gray Warblers.

Abbreviations: Appledore (*Appledore I., Kittery, York, ME*); Block I. (*Block I., Newport, RI*); Dead Creek (*Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison, Addison, VT*); Great Meadows (*Great Meadows N.W.R., Concord, Middlesex, MA*); Monomoy (*Monomoy N.W.R., Chatham, Barnstable, MA*); Plum I. (*Plum I., Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA*); Rockport (*Andrew's and Halibut Pts., Rockport, Essex, MA*); S. Beach (*South Beach I., Chatham, Barnstable, MA*).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

The usual handful of Pacific Loon reports were submitted, with a bird in partial-alternate plumage in flight at Rockport 4 Oct, the second consecutive year with such a sighting (†RH); Connecticut's second at Sherwood Island S.P., Westport, *Fairfield*, 19 Oct (F. Mantlik); and another in York, ME, 20 Nov (AA *vide* JD). The two Eared Grebes reported were returnees to Trustom Pond N.W.R., *Washington, RI*, 18 Sep–16 Nov (JStJ, D. Wilson, v.o.) and Gloucester, *Essex, MA*, 24 Sep+ (J. Soucy, v.o.).

Autumn 1999 was good for shelf-water pelagics, apparently due to good numbers of bait fish inshore, many of the best counts coming from shore-based seawatchers. This situation was especially true of Greater Shearwaters, with 11 counts in excess of 500, including a major flight during a sou'wester 3 Nov when a New Hampshire record 600 were counted from Ragged Neck, Rye, *Rockingham*, in 1.5 hours (A&BD) and 6,150 were counted in a full day at Rockport (RH). An impressive 12,600 Wilson's Storm-Petrels were tallied at Stellwagen Bank 7 Aug (†RH). N. Gannets were also numerous from August onward, the best counts associated with the 3 Nov storm, including 8,600 at Rockport (RH). Two strayed inland to cen. Maine, with imms. at Bangor, *Penobscot*, on a surprisingly early 12 Aug (C.