

pulled their usual disappearing act, with only small numbers reported, mostly in Nova Scotia.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

The amazing “hat-trick” of tanagers continued to frequent berry bushes at Canso (Town), NS in early Dec (Rose Ann McMullen et al.): one each of Scarlet, Summer and Western (cf. *N. A. B* 56:24). Two more **Western Tanagers** were found, one until late Jan in Halifax (Etta Parker) and an imm. male that appeared 23 Jan in Lower Sackville (Peter LeBlanc, m. ob., ph.).

A Summer Tanager was found dead near Sydney, NS in early Jan (Darryl MacAulay, *fide* John MacInnis), and another at a feeder in Fredericton, NB was last seen in late Dec (DG). A **Green-tailed Towhee** at a Saint John, NB feeder 4 Jan+ was a first provincial record (Jim Wilson, et al.). Clay-colored Sparrows numbered 3 in Nova Scotia and 2 in Newfoundland. A Field Sparrow was a good find at New Dominion, PEI 17-18 Jan (EM). A **Vesper Sparrow** at Renewes, NF through the period was the first confirmed record for the province (BM, Dave Brown et al.) Five Lark Sparrows were in Nova Scotia and 2 in Newfoundland. Quite rare were single Grasshopper Sparrows at Lunenburg 2-6 Jan (James Hirtle et al.) and Renewes, NF 29 Dec (BM, Dave Brown). An Ipswich Sparrow was a good find at Biscay Bay, Avalon 10 Feb (Rudolf Koes, BM). A spectacular assortment of *Ammodramus* sparrows came to light at Daniels Head, C.S.I. in mid-Feb, including 4 Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrows and one **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (first for Nova Scotia), a Seaside Sparrow, and a **Henslow’s Sparrow** (MN et al.). It was interesting to note that of 8 White-crowned Sparrows found in Nova Scotia, half were of the w. *gambelli* race. A plucky Dark-eyed Junco survived the period at a Labrador City feeder, but alas succumbed in late Apr (*fide* CD).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak made it to 22 Dec at Buchans, NF feeder (Dianne Burton). An Indigo Bunting at a Lameque, NB feeder 20 Jan was the latest ever for the province, as was one at a St. John’s feeder 26 Dec (John Pratt). Nice groups of Eastern Meadowlark included 5 each at Shepody Marsh, *Albert*, NB 11 Jan (BD) and Daniels Head, C.S.I. 17 Feb (Paul Gould et al.). A **Bullock’s Oriole** at Bathurst, NB 24 Dec—20 Jan (MD et al.) was a first for the province. Many Baltimore Orioles survived until well into Jan at feeders in Nova Scotia and even s. New Brunswick. A **Common Chaffinch** at a Halifax feeder until 13 Jan (FL et al.) brought birders from as far as California and was the 4th Nova Scotia record. As Mactavish put it: “It was a very good winter for most finch species.” Of special note were the many reports of Pine

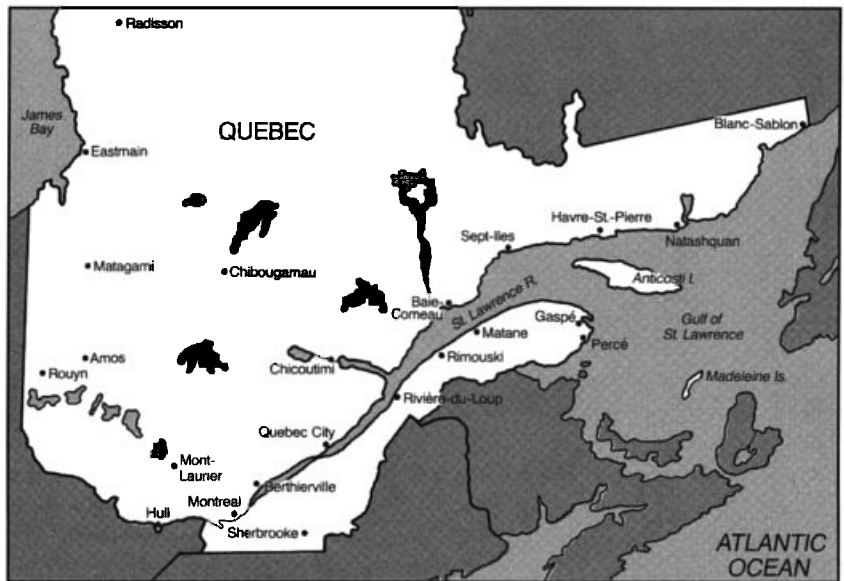
Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, and White-winged Crossbills coming to feeders, an increasingly common trend in just the past decade.

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With temperatures exceeding the normal by 7 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit, the winter 2001-2002 will be remembered as the mildest ever in

southern Québec. One had to travel as far as Ungava Bay to find temperatures slightly below normal. At the same time, precipitation was below normal all along the St. Lawrence River but closer to normal or above normal farther north.

As a result of the mild weather, many species normally leaving the Region in fall lingered very late or in some cases overwintered successfully. Waterfowl in particular were much more abundant than usual in southern Québec, and expanding species such as the Carolina Wren and the Tufted Titmouse also appeared to benefit from these conditions. Finally, apart from the redpolls, winter finches were rather scarce.

Abbreviation: C.W.S. (Canadian Wildlife Service).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon at Les Escoumins 6-10 Jan established a new record late date for the Region (CA, CG). Once again, while none were reported in the southern part of the Region, Common Loons appeared in Feb at some more northerly

locations, e.g., 2 at Laterrière, *Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean* 16 Feb (L. Tremblay) and singles at Pabos 2 Feb (C. Poirier, PP, G. Roy), Saint-Godefroi 16 Feb (B. Arsenault), and Les Escoumins 15 Feb (CG, CA). The presence of a Pied-billed Grebe at Rivière-du-Loup 9 Jan—23 Feb was considered as the first overwintering record in the Region, although there have been previous sporadic records in winter (D. Bérubé, R. Plourde). Another bird present at Maple Grove 7-12 Jan and nearby Beauharnois 8-25 Feb probably involved the same overwintering individual (PB). Additional records involved single birds at Amqui 12 Dec—29 Jan (RL) and Valleyfield 17 Feb (AH). Three Red-necked Grebes at Les Escoumins 11 Jan were noteworthy for the North Shore (CA, CG). A Double-crested Cormorant at Ile Sainte-Hélène 4 Feb was the first ever for the month of Feb in the Montréal region (RB). Aerial surveys conducted by C.W.S. biologists highlighted the presence of 916 Great Cormorants along the e. and s. coasts of Gaspésie 12-13 Feb (MR, CM, DB). There were six records of Turkey Vulture, all of single birds, for Jan-Feb compared to a total of only five previous records known for this period, these birds were found at Saint-Damien 3 Jan (D. Savard, *fide* M. Dufort), Saint-Joseph-de-Lepage 16 Jan (S. Routhier, *fide* J. Larivée), La Pocatière 25 Jan (MF. Auchu, *fide* CA), Rockburn 10 Feb (A. Quenneville), Victoriaville 23 Feb (CR), and Saint-Armand 25 Feb (JG. Papineau).

A few Snow Geese overwintered successfully, including 11 at Victoriaville (*fide* CR) and 7 at Iberville (*fide* PB), while other sightings included 4 at Saint-Romuald 21 Jan (D. Lepage), 2 at both La Pocatière (R. Lepage) and Saint-Nicolas 25 Jan (S. Blais), and finally 2 at Auclair 14-18 Feb (M. Beaulieu). Considering the mild weather, a total of 130 overwintering Canada Geese in the Montréal area was rather expected, but a group of 8 at Laterrière 18 Jan-16 Feb was more notable (M. Tremblay, D. Gervais).

Single Mute Swans appeared at Saint-Irénée 6 Jan (RG et al.) and at Cap-de-la-Madeleine 12 Feb+ (*fide* HB). Wood Ducks are known to winter occasionally in the Montréal area, but one at Amqui 12 Dec—28 Feb represented the first overwintering record for the Lower St. Lawrence (RL). A male Eurasian Wigeon at Lachenaie 8-26 Dec established a new Regional record late date by more than 3 weeks (S & F. Rousseu, m. ob.). A mid-Feb waterfowl count showed that the Montréal area hosted 64 wintering Gadwall, 94 American Wigeon, and a staggering 7000 Mallards (PB et al.). Following a count of only 50 wintering individuals in 1982, the latter has been steadily increasing during the 20 years existence of this annual

duck census (PB et al.). Single Northern Pintails were located at Amqui 19 Jan—28 Feb (RL) and Les Escoumins 18-28 Feb (CA, CG). Mid-winter records for this species are very scarce away from the Montréal area. Possibly a first for the Québec City region, a Green-winged Teal overwintered at Beauport (JFR), while the presence of 60 Greater Scaup, at least 2 Lesser Scaup, and 2 Ring-necked Ducks wintering at Lachine, Montréal was a notable event (PB et al.). An out-of-range female King Eider at Carignan 13 Jan—24 Feb represented the 2nd overwintering record only for the Montréal region (P. Beaulé, m. ob.). Unusual hybrid waterfowl included a Mallard x American Wigeon at Lévis 1-31 Dec (JL et al.), a Barrow's x Common Goldeneye at Lachine 20 Jan (PB), and a Hooded Merganser x Common Goldeneye also at Lachine 17 Feb (PB). Finally, a female Ruddy Duck at Lachine 13 Jan was record late by a little more than 2 weeks (PB).

HAWKS THROUGH OWLS

Bald Eagles were reported in record numbers in some regions. An aerial survey by the C.W.S. showed a surprising 46 individuals on Anticosti I. 11-15 Feb (MR, CM, DB). A group of 5 Northern Harriers overwintered on Ile aux Fermiers, near Montréal (Y. Gauthier, S. Moran), while one at Isle-Verte, *Lower St. Lawrence* 17 Jan was locally very late (A. Boucher, *fide* D. Bérubé). Two Red-shouldered Hawks overwintered at Québec City (*fide* JL), while there were at least 3 in the Montréal area (*fide* PB). The Rough-legged Hawk was commonly reported, as far n. as the Lac Saint-Jean region through the end of the period. An American Kestrel at Saint-Alexis 27 Jan was the first winter record for the Gaspésie region (P. Beaupré). Gyrfalcons numbered 19 individuals, a good Regional total if significantly lower than last year's. Rarely so dependable, a white-morph Gyrfalcon was seen almost daily at dusk at its roosting site on Mont Saint-Hilaire (Y. Fredette, m. ob.).

Two American Coots were at Maple Grove 5-13 Jan (PB, m.ob.), while one was spotted at nearby Côteau-du-Lac 16 Feb (LS et al.), which is suggestive of a successful overwintering record. A Sandhill Crane at Les Cèdres 5 Dec furnished a new record late date for the Region (M. Spencer). A Killdeer at Bécancour 26-31 Jan was only the 2nd Regional record for Jan (HB et al.), while one at Pointe-au-Père 15 Dec was locally very late (J. Larivée et al.). In line with data from 1999, C.W.S. biologists found a sizeable wintering population of Purple Sandpipers in the St. Lawrence Estuary where they made a count of 534 individuals 19 Feb (MR, CM, DB). Two hundred more were located in the Gaspésie

region 31 Jan (MR, CM, DB). A Dunlin at La Malbaie 7-27 Jan was the latest ever found in the Region by almost six weeks (ML, RG). Although known to overwinter irregularly s of the St. Lawrence R., the occurrence of 2 Common Snipe at Sept-Iles 24 Feb was quite surprising (JF. Laporte, B. Duchesne, C. Couture). An American Woodcock at Cap Tourmente 13-20 Jan was the latest ever reported in the Region (J. Guérin, JL, RG).

Black-headed Gulls numbered a high 34 at Havre-aux-Basques, *Iles-de-la-Madeleine* 10 Dec (DGG), but dwindled to 6 on 1 Feb (*fide* DGG). Always rare, a first-winter Mew Gull of the North American race *brachyrhynchus* was found at Pointe-Claire 5-15 Dec (B. Barnhurst), and an ad. of the European race *canus* was at Saint-Irénée 5-6 Jan, a new late date for the Region (RG, J. Forgues et al.). Many Ring-billed Gulls overwintered in the s. part of the Region as indicated by a count of 105 along Rivière des Prairies, Montréal, 13 Feb (LS, GL) and smaller groups at Lachine and in the Montréal harbour throughout Feb (PB). An influx of migrants was already obvious starting 22 Feb. Lesser Black-backed Gulls included 4 individuals in the Montréal region in Dec (*fide* PB), one at Baie-Sainte-Catherine 1 Dec (OB, N. Barden) and an ad. at Les Escoumins 12-27 Dec, followed by a third-winter bird 9 Jan (CA, CG). Interesting hybrid gulls included a presumed ad. Herring x Great Black-backed 11-13 Jan at Laval (M. Bertrand et al.), 2 different first-winter Great Black-backed x Glaucous at Les Escoumins, 11-12 Jan and 20 Feb (CA, CG), and finally an ad Herring x Glaucous also at Les Escoumins 24-28 Feb (CA, CG).

A count of 469 Mourning Doves around a single feeder at Pointe-au-Père 21 Jan was highly indicative of the very mild weather prevailing in the Region this winter. Snowy Owls were common everywhere, notably in the Québec City region, where 56 were counted 23-24 Feb (G. Lemelin et al.). After last year's memorable invasion, Northern Hawk Owls and Great Gray Owls were down to more normal numbers, totaling 24 of the former and 15 of the latter for the period extending from late Oct through the end of Feb (*fide* S. Belleau).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH ORIOLES

The Lower St. Lawrence region was rewarded with 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers: one (previously found during the fall) at Rimouski until 20 Dec (P. Saint-Jean) and another at Pohénégamook 17-24 Dec (F. Gagné, R. Deschênes). In the s. part of the Region, a female seen intermittently at Bedford 14 Jan+ (C. Hamon) and another at Quyon 16 Jan (R. Craig) were more expected. Tufted Titmice were

much in evidence, with 75 reported from 32 sites (*fide* PB). Even more noteworthy were the 30 Carolina Wrens tallied from 23 localities (*fide* PB), the highest count ever for this species, with the northernmost appearing at Sainte-Pétronille (*fide* JL).

A group of 5 Eastern Bluebirds, seen sporadically from the end of Dec through mid-Feb at Hemmingford, established the first overwintering record in the Region (PB, E. Samson, A. Lacasse). Townsend's Solitaires are now found almost each winter: singles were at Rivière-du-Loup 3 Jan+ (R. Plourde, m. ob.) and at Boucherville 24 Feb (P. Casavant). Very rare in winter, single Hermit Thrushes resided at Ile Sainte-Hélène through at least 23 Jan (R. Bélanger, D. Cloutier) and at Cap Tourmente 11-30 Jan (A. Rasmussen et al.). A similar pattern was evident for Varied Thrush: single males visited feeders at Deschambault 4 Jan+ (F. Paré, m. ob.) and Cookshire 31 Jan—10 Feb (K. Clarke, S. Lamontagne). A Brown Thrasher successfully overwintered at Saint-Zénon (*fide* R. Piché).

The Nashville Warbler that lingered at Québec City until 16 Dec was the 2nd latest ever (C. Nadeau). Most surprising was an imm. male Yellow Warbler at Saint-Nicolas until 25 Dec (MR et al.). An imm. Pine Warbler successfully overwintered at Ile Notre-Dame, Montréal (C. Morin, D. Daigneault), while another individual was reported at Pabos 22 Jan (J. Blais). Single Common Yellowthroats at Carignan 15-26 Dec (P. Beaulé) and at Cap Tourmente until 3 Jan (P. Otis, R. Lepage) contributed new Regional record late dates. The imm. male Summer Tanager that was already present at Baie-Saint-Paul was last seen 2 Dec (*fide* SD), while the female at Rivière-au-Renard made its last appearance 21 Dec (*fide* PP). A Scarlet Tanager visited a feeder at Sainte-Foy until 30 Dec (*fide* OB), providing a new Regional record late date.

A male Spotted Towhee that spent the whole winter at a Gatineau's feeder represented our 13th Regional record (C. Gratton, *fide* DT). Unusual winter sparrows were probably sustained by the mild weather. A Chipping Sparrow was seen daily at a Cowansville's feeder (BH), while an ad. Chipping turned up briefly at Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade 20 Jan (OB). A Vesper Sparrow lingered at Saint-Mathieu until at least 5 Jan (L. Gervais, F. Roberge, PB). Totally unexpected were 3 Savannah Sparrows at Laval 7 Feb+ (GL et al.) and another at a feeder of Saint-Timothée until 6 Feb (S. Bougie), providing the first Feb records for this species. A Fox Sparrow at Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park, Montréal 10-17 Feb was notable (P. Franche, A. Gosselin). A

Lincoln's Sparrow at Montréal 17-18 Dec was very late (RB). A Swamp Sparrow at Cap Tourmente 2 Jan through Feb (MR, F. Schaffer et al.), and another at Beauport 31 Jan—3 Feb (JFR) were interesting sightings for the season. Finally, single White-crowned Sparrows of the *gambelii* race appeared at Saint-Majorique 10 Feb+ (J. Lehoux) and Château-Richer 9 Feb (OB, N. Barden).

The imm. male **Black-headed Grosbeak** previously reported at Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval was last seen 7 Jan (ME. Lepage). Noteworthy were 3 Dickcissels throughout Dec: one at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 1 Dec (M. Larrivée), a 2nd individual at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré 12 Dec (E. Razurel), and a female at Saint-Timothée 15-16 Dec (AH). The ad. male **Bullock Oriole** reported in Nov at l'Isle-aux-Coudres was last seen 8 Dec (*fide* SD) and to everyone's surprise reappeared at nearby Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive 5-22 Jan (ML et al., A. Jean). A Baltimore Oriole at Sainte-Foy 15 Feb was the latest ever in the Region (OB).

EXOTICS

A belated report was received of a Mountain Quail at Lennoxville 26 Nov (C. Parent-Pomerleau). A Yellow-fronted Canary at Philipsburg 20 Jan—6 Feb impressed everyone by its ability to survive our climate (P. Wery et al.).

CORRIGENDUM

Please delete the record of the Carolina Wren at Falardeau 12 August 2001 (GS).

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2003 BIRDING TOURS

THAILAND
Northwest, Central, Peninsular
4-26 January

SOUTH INDIA
Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andaman Is.
2-25 January

Forest Owlet Pretour
28 December-4 January

SRI LANKA
24 January-10 February

PHILIPPINES
Luzon, Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan, Bohol, Negros
31 January-3 March

CAMBODIA
Giant Ibis
7-25 March

BHUTAN
28 March-20 April

EAST HIMALAYAS
West Arunachal Pradesh
25 April-18 May

MALAYSIA
Malaya, Borneo (Mt. Kinabalu)
3-25 May

CHINA #1
Beidaïhe Migration
3-19 May

CHINA #2
Manchuria, Inner Mongolia
20 May-14 June

INDONESIA #1
Java, Bali
12 July-2 August

INDONESIA #2
Sulawesi
3-24 August