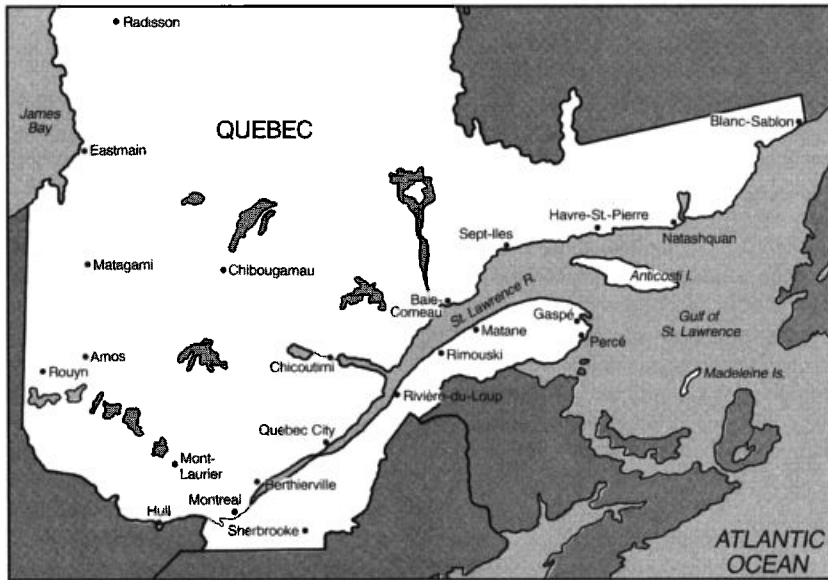


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After several consecutive seasons of above-normal temperatures, the Region finally experienced a cooler and wetter spring than normal. Although some warblers were recorded early in mid-April during the only warm spell of the period, most of them were not found in significant numbers until the third week in May, coincident with the passage of a very cold Arctic air mass. This combination resulted in remarkable fallouts everywhere in the Region. In the south, most warbler species could be seen feeding on or near the ground for several days, ideal conditions for their observation. Farther north, large numbers of warblers were seen migrating by daytime in a

westerly direction, probably after drifting too far eastward during the overnight period. For instance, C. Auchu and C. Girard recorded a massive southwesterly movement lasting all day at Les Escoumins on 24 May, while on the same day, C. Samson and D. Côté observed a similar phenomenon at Saint-Fulgence on the n. side of the Saguenay R., where an estimated 7000 warblers were seen flying against strong westerly gales. To a lesser degree, shorebirds were also grounded in late May, producing excellent diversity and some good concentrations, notably in the Lake Saint-Pierre area and in the Lower St. Lawrence.

Casualties among avian populations are not always easy to estimate following bad weather, but this time there was strong evidence that the cold and wet weather of late May resulted in significant mortality among some small land-birds, particularly among swallows. Notably, several observers reported finding dead Purple Martins by the hundreds near nesting boxes.

PELICANS THROUGH OWLS

Continuing a recent trend of increasing spring and summer records, 3 American White Pelicans were detected at Pointe-du-Lac 19-22 May (*fide* SH), 3 at Isle-Verte 24-25 May (R. Lavoie), and 3 at Pointe-Lebel 24 May (J. Murry et al.). A Great Egret at Ormstown 30 Mar established a new Regional early arrival date (L. & H. Boivin), while there was a spectacular increase in the number of breeding birds on Herons' I., where 35 individuals and up to 20 nests were estimated from nearby Sainte-Catherine 21 Apr (PB). Southern

Hérons included single Snowy Egrets at Victoriaville 18-20 Apr (CR) and Baie-du-Febvre 19-22 May (RB, JPR et al.), a Tricolored Heron at Baie-du-Febvre 19 May (JPR, RB et al.), single Cattle Egrets at Bécancour 26 Apr (*fide* SH), Carignan 5 May (A. Messier), and LaSalle 27-28 May (J. Plouffe et al.), a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Rosemère 4-11 May (M. Varin, P. Poissant, m. ob.), a Glossy Ibis at Baie-du-Febvre 20 Apr (LM), 2 in the same locality 22-23 Apr (E. Samson et al.), and finally one at Pointe-Platon 31 May (L. Roy).

A Black Vulture reached Saint-Jérôme-de-Matane 7 May (J. Durette, *fide* Y. Lemieux). A pair of Turkey Vulture was repeatedly seen mating at Saint-Fabien 4 & 23 May, possibly heralding a range extension to the Lower St. Lawrence (R. Pitre, *fide* D. Desjardins), while a total of eight reports involving 10 individuals was high for the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region (*fide* GS).

A Ross's Goose at Rivière-Héva 12 May provided the first record for the Abitibi region (EW et al.). Single Barnacle Geese turned up at Sabrevois 17 Mar, a record-early date (ND et al.), at Deschambault 27 Apr (S. Gosselin), and at nearby Neuville 1 May (G. Poisson, D. Thibault). Two Mute Swans stopped at Baie-du-Febvre 5 Apr (DM et al.), one remaining through 21 Apr (LM), while another one was at Sainte-Foy 20-26 May (R. Richard, F. & R. Dion). Seldom reported in the last few years, single male Tufted Ducks made a brief stop at Saint-Mathias 7 Apr (R. Chartier, m. ob.) and at Rouyn-Noranda 5 May, establishing a first record for the Abitibi region (EW, M. Lessard). A Barrow's Goldeneye at Rouyn-Noranda 5-8 May represented one of few for Abitibi (A. Lefebvre, R. Cloutier).

A fully documented **Common Ringed Plover**, the 3rd for the Region, caused a sensation at Baie-du-Febvre 25-28 May (FG, m. ob.) Among notable features, the complete absence of webbing between the two internal toes was confirmed with a photograph and the bird was also heard giving its typical call. Now annual in the Region, single American Avocets were located at Saint-Michel-de-Bellechasse 18 May (D. Després), Havre-aux-Basques, *Magdalen Is* 20 May (Claude Roy et al.), and Montmagny 24 May (D. Gaumond). Willets included a pair, probably nesting, at Grosse-Ile, *Magdalen Is* 12-20 May (Claude Roy et al.), while one at Saint-Gédéon 19 May (SB et al.) and a remarkable 3 at Saint-Fulgence 26-30 May (C. Cormier, GS et al.) were believed to belong to the western subspecies *inornatus*. Rare in spring, 3 Long-billed Dowitchers were carefully identified at Baie-du-Febvre 4-5 May (FG).

Very surprising was the occurrence of an ad

Band-tailed Pigeon, our 3rd Regional record, at Saint-Fulgence 21-29 Apr (M. Munger, M. Bouchard et al., ph.) Although Snowy Owls are occasionally reported in spring and summer in the Magdalen Is., a total of 5 at Pointe-au-Loup and Grosse-Ile 18-29 May was considered a remarkable number so late in the season (*vide* DGG). Two notably late Great Gray Owls, possibly a pair, were found at Isle-Verte 28 May (L. Simard, S. Duchemin).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH ORIOLES

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird, probably fooled by the mid-Apr warm weather, established a new Regional record early date at Abercorn 20 Apr (R. Gaudreault).

Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Saint-Barthélemy (J. Lamontagne, C. Ducharme) and in the Montréal Botanical Gardens (M. Lemelin) 14 Apr were also record-early for the Region. The Townsend's Solitaire that overwintered at Rivière-du-Loup remained through 13 Apr (m. ob.), while the wintering Varied Thrush at Deschambault was last seen 6 Mar (D. Lavoie). The most outstanding bird report of the season involved a male **White Wagtail**, showing characters of the nominate *alba* subspecies, that made a one-day appearance at Métabetchouan 4 May (SB, m. ob., ph.). This represented a first confirmed Regional record and apparently the 2nd only in Canada (and fourth in North America) for this subspecies. An American Pipit at Saint-Armand 15 Mar was record-early (JGP).

A total of 10 reports for the Golden-winged Warbler was higher than the average for the last few springs (*vide* PB). A Nashville Warbler seen at Summit Park 19 Apr (S. Wees) and a Magnolia Warbler at Laval 21 Apr (G. Lachaine) were both record-early, while a Black-throated Green Warbler at Legardeur 21 Apr tied the earliest Regional date (É. Desjardins). A Kentucky Warbler graced Ile Bizard, Montréal 28 May (L. Turgeon).

A first-year male Summer Tanager was a highlight at Laterrière 7-13 May (P. Simard et al., ph.). Quite difficult to understand was the presence of a male Western Tanager at Squatec 6-20 May, representing the 5th spring Regional record since 1999, all of them from e. Québec (M. Bélanger, m. ob., ph.). The Spotted Towhee that overwintered at Gatineau was last observed 13 Apr (C. Gratton).

A first-year male Blue Grosbeak appeared in late May at Saint-Thomas-Didyme, *Lac Saint-Jean* (L. Caouette). A female **Brewer's Blackbird** at Ville-Marie, *Témiscamingue*, 16 Apr was an excellent find (J. Fréchette). Remarkably, 4 Orchard Orioles were discovered: single ad. males at Saint-Armand 23



Although the species is common in Iceland and Greenland, White Wagtails are almost unknown in eastern North America. This bird photographed 4 May 2002 at Métabetchouan, Québec represents the second record only of the nominate *alba* subspecies in Canada. Photograph by Sylvain Boivin.

SA Michel Gosselin writes: "Juncos have somehow disappeared from the radar screen of field identification ever since the A.O.U. merged most North American forms into one biological species. This situation is unfortunate because these former species belong to different grades of evolutionary distinctiveness, and some are certainly identifiable phylogenetic species. While Oregon and Slate-colored Juncos have a huge intergradation zone in northwestern Canada (under the trade name of *cismontanus*), White-winged and Gray-headed Juncos seem to have very little intergradation with their respective neighbors. The significance of this state of affairs was brought to light when a **Pink-sided Junco** was reported (and photographed) at Saint-Célestin 27 Apr (J. Lampron, S. Deshaies). A sharply-contrasting black mask and extensive pink flanks (merging on the breast, and spreading to the malar stripes), all present on this bird, are distinctive features of Pink-sided Juncos. The larger size of the bird is hard to determine from the photograph. Because the bird had attributes of an imm., it stirred controversy. Oregon and Pink-sided Juncos reported in the East each year are usually *cismontanus*, if not simply female Slate-colored. However, it remains to be shown whether a sharply contrasting black mask and extensive pink flanks are anything but features of genuine Pink-sided Juncos" (see Pictorial Highlights).

May+ (JGP) and at Cap Tourmente 25 May (M. Giroux, L. Bernatchez), and single first-year males at the latter location 26-28 May (JM. Giroux et al.) and also at Beauceville in late May (N. Allaire, *vide* LR). According to most subregional editors, Baltimore Orioles showed up in above-average numbers not only within their range but also n. of their range in the Gaspésie, Lac Saint-Jean, and Abitibi regions.

EXOTICS

Single Bar-headed Geese were reported at Victoriaville 10 Apr (J. Goyette, CR) and at Irlande, near Thetford Mines 21 May+ (DM) Though certainly escapees here, Bar-headed Geese now breed in e. Iceland, having spread there from feral nesters in the British Isles.

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