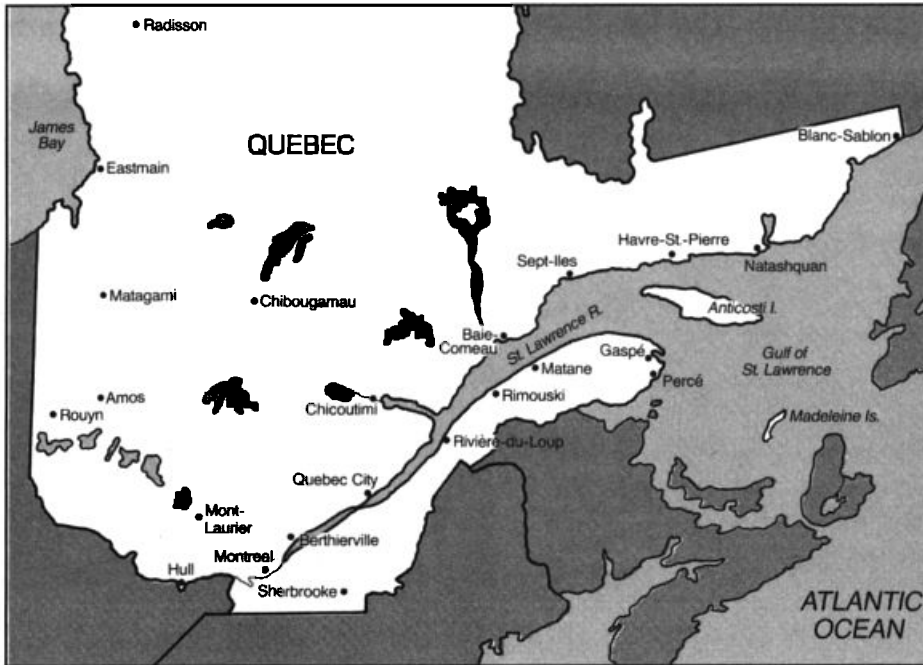


Québec



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Summer 2002 was generally warm and dry, with the exception of the first half of June that turned out cool and wet in the South. Breeding success was presumed to be good, although negative impacts were locally expected in some adverse circumstances. For instance, major fires destroyed nearly 250,000 hectares of boreal forests north of Lake Saint-Jean and east of James Bay in early July. Although the impact on nesting birds cannot be assessed now, it remains possible that at least a certain proportion of the birds had

enough time to replace their lost broods.

An avian cholera outbreak on some islands of the St. Lawrence Estuary in June was responsible for the death of 6000 Common Eiders, mostly incubating females. According to authorities, it was the biggest outbreak of disease on Québec wildlife in 30 years, but overall the eider duck population was not at risk. The species is abundant in the estuary and the Gulf of St. Lawrence and has rebounded from large outbreaks of disease in the past.

On a more encouraging note, surveys conducted by the Canadian Wildlife Service in the southern James Bay region produced remarkable finds. Not only this area is already well known as a major stopover for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl, but it also appears to be an important and highly productive breeding ground for many species of special concern. Various reports from the Nunavik region of Québec by biologists of the Canadian Wildlife Service and by others also contributed new insights into the Regional distribution of some species. These efforts led to the discovery of two new breeding species for the Region: the Pectoral Sandpiper and the Dunlin. A third species, the Orchard Oriole, was also found nesting in the southern part of the Region for the first time.

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

LOONS THROUGH OWLS

A Pacific Loon in nearly complete breeding plumage was spotted from the Rivière-du-Loup/Saint-Siméon ferry 11 Jun, bringing the total of summer records to at least 8 in the St. Lawrence Estuary (CA, CG). Wilson's Storm Petrels were abundant throughout Jul, as shown by counts of around 100 individuals made off Cap d'Espoir and Percé, Gaspésie, on several occasions (D. Cahill, R Bourget et al.) and 50 between Bergeronnes and Trois-Pistoles, in the St. Lawrence Estuary, 24 Jul (R. Barbeau). To everyone's surprise, American White Pelicans were seen almost daily in the Region. Two birds first appeared at Léry 3 Jun (A. Leduc). Two birds (the same?) moved to the Lachine Rapids 8 Jun, where they remained all summer (PB, m ob.). Two were seen in flight over Montréal 13 Jun (AM), and 2 were reported at Notre-Dame-du-Nord, *Témiscamingue* 18 Jun (J Larouche, *vide M. Lessard*). Singles were spotted at Neuville 8 Jul (P. Savard et al.), Yamachiche 9 Jul (F. Rousseau, J. Gélinas), Saint-Antoine-de-Tilly 13 Jul (A. Guimond, K. Bergeron), and Deschambault 14 Jul (R. & F. Dion). A total of 4 was reported at Sainte-Catherine in the Lachine Rapids 15 Jul (F Gauthier), and one was seen again in flight over Montréal 24 Jul (*vide ND*). Single Snowy Egrets visited Sept-Îles 4 Jun (JFL), Drummondville 25 Jun (J. Bourdeau), and Saint-Mathias 29-30 Jul (AM, m. ob.). An imm. Little Blue Heron graced Lachenaie 24-28 Jul (JP. Hameury, m. ob.), while an ad Tricolored Heron at Percé 20 Jul was a nice find (L. Simard et al.).

Unusual in summer, a Ross's Goose appeared at Baie-du-Febvre 17 Jul+ (M. Moscini, C. Nadeau). An out-of-range Tundra Swan remained at Sept-Îles for most of the summer (JFL, m. ob.). The discovery of 3 Northern Shovelers at Puvirnituk, *Nunavik* 6-13 Jul, about 1000 km n. of their range, was difficult to explain (JaL), but even more puzzling was the finding of a female with 7 ducklings at L. Puvirnituk 5 Aug (JoL, RC). More expected, a Green-winged Teal and its brood were found near Polemond R., between Puvirnituk and Inukjuak 6 Aug, contributing a further extension to the breeding range (JoL, RC). Quite unexpected so far n. was the occurrence of 5 Redheads (3 males and 2 females) at Brisay 5 Jun (RC). Female Ruddy Ducks accompanying ducklings were found e of their known range, at Saint-Pamphile 15-17 Jul (JG. Chouinard et al.) and at Neuville 26 Jul (E. Bernard, E. Martel). The severe drought in the Canadian Prairies was suggested as a possible explanation for the dispersal



This Scissor-tailed Flycatcher appeared at Cap Tourmente 3-4 June 2002, one of two present in the province this season. Photograph by Michele Lafleur.

of some of the above-mentioned ducks so far away from their regular breeding range.

Two imm. Golden Eagles at Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley 24 Jun were notable so far s in summer (C. Côté, M. Laramée). A C.W.S. survey conducted in the s. James Bay region produced a remarkable 198 Yellow Rails 21-26 Jul, most of them in Boatswain Bay and Cabbage Willow Bay (MR, FS, BJ, LR). A Virginia Rail was heard at night 24 Jul in Boatswain Bay, well n. of its breeding range (MR, FS), while one at Port-Menier 22 Jul apparently furnished a first record for Anticosti I. (E. Presseau, G. Lachaine). A Common Moorhen at Barachois 2 Jun was apparently the first reported since 1914 in the Gaspésie region (O. Lévesque et al., *vide* PP). An American Coot at Sept-Îles 13 Jun represented one of very few for the North Shore (B. Poulin). While Sandhill Cranes were still consolidating their breeding range in several localities of nw. Québec, an ad. accompanied by a half-grown young near L. Gamain in the w. part of La Vérendrye Wildlife Reserve 7 Jul

probably provided the southernmost breeding record in the Region (F. Lamy, R. Lavigne, *vide* DT, M. Renaud).

A pair of American Golden-Plover displaying and copulating near Polemond R. in early Jun provided the first sign of breeding in the Region (B. Andres et al.). A total of 7 Killdeer acting as they were nesting was seen at Blanc-Sablon 11 Jul (S & R. West). The only known breeding record at this n. locality occurred in 1980. A nest of Lesser Yellowlegs containing 2 eggs at Brisay 2 Jul represented one of very few found in the Region (RC, JFS). Willets nested again in the Magdalen Is., where 4 ads. and at least one young were detected near Grosse-Île 16 Jul (DGG). A few Marbled Godwits showing agitated behavior were discovered in the s. James Bay region in late Jul, but an unequivocal breeding record is still awaited in the Region (MR, FS, BJ, LR). An ad. **Pectoral Sandpiper** with a downy young at Polemond R. 5 Aug provided the first breeding record for the Region (RC). Although the **Dunlin** has also been nesting near Polemond R. apparently

since 1997, it was not until this year that the good news reached the birding community. This summer, a nest was discovered 27 Jun followed by two others on 8 Jul (J. Hughes, JoL). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Rimouski 15 Jul was record-early for a southbound migrant (G Bouchard), while a Ruff in the same locality 4 Jun was most probably a late northbound migrant (R. Saint-Laurent). Two Wilson's Snipe at Puvirnituk 6-13 Jul were more than 500 km n. of their known range (JaL).

Up to 20 Little Gulls in Rupert Bay in early summer represented an impressive number (PL, P. Brousseau), while a flock of 12, including a juv., in early Aug furnished strong evidence of local breeding (YA, A. Morrier, J Ibarzabal). Five Bonaparte's Gulls at Brisay 2 Jul were somewhat e. of their range (JFS). An ad. Sabine's Gull in alternate plumage at Les Escoumins 15 Jun was noteworthy (CA, CG). Two Snowy Owls summering at Grosse-Île were not totally unexpected (DGG, Claude Roy, m.ob.), but one at Saint-Samuel-de-Horton all summer was very unusual so far s (C. Provencher, C. Ducharme). The nest of a Great Gray Owl built on a cliff along La Grande R. in Jun provided a very significant range extension for the species (*vide* PL). Very unusual for the Lower St. Lawrence in summer were 2 Great Grays at Sainte-Luce 14-15 Jun, with one remaining all season (*vide* RF) and one at Isle-Verte 23 Jun (S. Duchemin).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH ORIOLES

A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher put on a nice show for the photographers present at Cap Tourmente 3-4 Jun (P. Caron, m. ob.), and another one was well described at Saint-Timothée 24 Jul (S. Yelle). A nest of Warbling Vireo at Saint-Gédéon 25 Jun represented a first for the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region (C. Cormier, GS). For the 2nd consecutive year, a pair of Carolina Wren nested at Île des Sœurs, *Montréal*, where 5 individuals were present 28 Jul (PB). A pair showing agitated behavior was also reported in the Mount-Royal Cemetery 29 Jul (E. Samson); a pair at Cap-Rouge near Québec City all summer raised the possibility of local nesting (*vide* YA). A House Wren at Sept-Îles 18 Jul was out of range (JFL). Two singing Sedge Wrens at Saint-Eugène-de-Guigues, *Témiscamingue* 8-22 Jul most probably nested there, as suggested by the sighting of an individual carrying food (JF). A Northern Wheatear stopped at Pointe-au-Boisvert, on the North Shore, 2 Jun (G Lemelin et al.). An adventurous American Robin reached Puvirnituk 6-13 Jul (JaL), while a Gray Catbird at Sakami (LG3 dam) 18 Jun was almost 1000 km n. of its range (SD). A

Northern Mockingbird about 150 km n. of Lebel-sur-Quévillon in early Jun was unexpected so far north (M. Poulin). Bohemian Waxwings still made the news this summer; a flock of 12 was found at Brisay 3 Jun, but the ultimate proof of breeding in the Region is still awaited (RC, JFS).

Extralimital warblers included a male Blue-winged Warbler that stopped at Bromont 16 Jun (BH), a singing male Prairie Warbler also at Bromont 8-13 Jun (JM. Béliveau, m. ob.), a Worm-eating Warbler on Mount Mégantic 5 Jun (K. Clark), and a Yellow-breasted Chat at Wakefield 24 Jul (*vide* DT). Two Vesper Sparrows at Carleton 4 Jun were considered rare for the Gaspésie region (R. Caissy). Le Conte's Sparrows were doing extremely well in the Témiscamingue region, as shown by counts of 16 at Fugèreville 23 Jul, 6 at Saint-Eugène-de-Guigues 22 Jul, and 2 at Notre-Dame-du-Nord 29 Jun (JF), but a count of 181 individuals in the s. James Bay region 21-26 Jul was outstanding (MR, FS, BJ, LR). Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were also surprisingly abundant in the same area, with 422 individuals counted mostly in Cabbage Willow Bay and Boatswain Bay (MR, FS, BJ, LR). According to these observers, several thousand birds were probably nesting there. Two recently-fledged birds on Île aux Fermiers near Montréal in late Jul provided a long-awaited and definitive breeding record for this site, where the sparrow has showed up annually for more than two decades (J. Perras et al.). Single White-crowned Sparrows at Sorel 18 Jun (C. Geoffroy) and at Sacré-Cœur-de-Marie, near Thetford Mines 5-7 Jul (L. Lemoine) were well s. of their breeding range.

A pair whose both members were carefully identified as Western Meadowlarks nested successfully at Saint-Eugène-de-Guigues, Témiscamingue 8-22 Jul, raising at least 2 young (JF, ph.). One of the highlights of the summer was the discovery of the first nests ever reported in the Region for the **Orchard Oriole**. One was discovered 25 Jun at Saint-Armand, where 3 young were successfully fledged 3 Jul (JG. Papineau et al., m. ob.). A second nest was discovered at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Montréal 26 Jun, a mere 24 hours later; 4 young left this nest 29 Jun (B. Barnhurst, R. Perreault, m. ob.). In addition, an ad. male was seen at Cap Tourmente 6 Jun (R. Lepage, *vide* JM. Giroux), and an apparent juv. at Saint-Hubert 28 Jul (R. Belhumeur). The Baltimore Oriole was reported from several localities in Gaspésie throughout Jun, and breeding was finally confirmed at Restigouche 2 Jul, a first for this region (C. Pitre).

ADDENDUM

The Black-headed Grosbeak present at Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval last winter continued through 22 Mar (ME. Lepage, J. Marcotte, *vide* MR).

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New England



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Early summer in New England was cool, wet, and relatively sunny this year. In the Boston area, temperatures averaged slightly below normal for the second month in a row, a situation that had not existed in southern New England since late in 2000, and rainfall in Bean Town was 3.9 cm above the average. In marked contrast, July was hot, dry, and sunny, and the average Boston temperature of 75.1° F made the month the 12th hottest in 132 years. An extreme heat wave in early July significantly helped bring up the month-long average. Not

surprisingly, the month also ranked 22nd as the driest in 132 years, with measurable amounts of rain having fallen on only seven days.

The impact of this rather disparate early summer weather on breeding birds was definitely reflected in some early-season nesting failures in Bald Eagles, quite possibly Massachusetts tern breeding success, and Eastern Bluebird productivity. Given the known mortality for closely monitored species such as bluebirds, it seems quite likely that other less carefully monitored cavity-nesting species may also have taken a hit as a result of the cool, wet weather in June. Otherwise, things seemed pretty normal among Regional breeding populations, in addition to some notable successes. The nesting of Sandhill