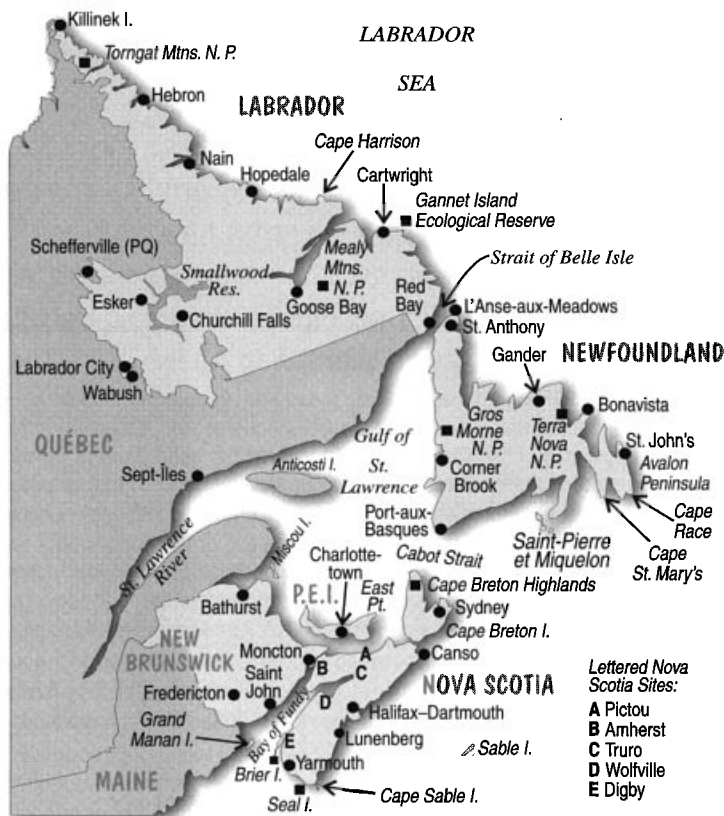


# Atlantic Provinces & St. Pierre et Miquelon



## Bruce Mactavish

37 Waterford Bridge Road

St. John's, Newfoundland A1E 1C5

(bruce.mactavish1@nf.sympatico.ca)

Weather was relatively clement and mild this season, with the stark exception of the landfall of Hurricane Juan, one of Canada's worst ever, which came ashore just after midnight 29 September between Shad Bay and Prospect, NS—essentially a direct hit on Halifax—as a Category 2 storm, with winds of 158 k.p.h. (85 knots, gusts to 185

k.p.h. or 100+ knots), pressure of 973 mb, 40 mm of rain, and a storm surge of over 1.5 m and waves up to 9 m in Halifax Harbour. The storm passed over Nova Scotia and struck Prince Edward I. with sustained winds of 95 k.p.h. (gusts to 139 k.p.h.) in the predawn hours. Hundreds of thousands of Maritimers in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—including many of the Region's most active birders—found themselves without electricity for weeks and with significant property damage, thus the lack of seabird reports associated with this storm. The last time Halifax experienced such weather was 22 August 1893, when the "Second Great August Gale," a Category 3 hurricane, hit St. Margaret's Bay. The fall season produced the usual

colorful list of "routine" rarities plus a few surprises. Pacific Loon, American White Pelican, Swainson's Hawk, Eurasian Whimbrel, White-winged Dove, Say's Phoebe, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, Lawrence's Warbler, Harris's Sparrow, and Painted Bunting were among the rarities found. A foray into unknown seas south of Sable Island, Nova Scotia turned up some very exciting pelagic species—Little Shearwater, Audubon's Shearwater, and Black-capped Petrel. An extraordinary fallout of birds detected in a pronounced, fast-moving weather front on St. Pierre, St. Pierre et Miquelon on 2 October was probably only the tip of the iceberg. Another extraordinary flight was associated with a gale 30 November, which moved Razorbills by the thousands out of the Bay of Fundy.

## LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

An ad. Pacific Loon in partial breeding plumage off Pickney Pt., Yarmouth, NS 16 Sep provided one of the few solid records for the Region as well as one of the earliest (B. McCormick, H. Barnett). Ten Cory's Shearwaters were seen about 75 km se. of Halifax, NS 5–6 Sep (BMT, BMY).

The American White Pelican first reported in Lethbridge, NL in mid-Jul was last seen 10 Aug (m. ob.). What was presumably the same bird was at Miquelon, SPM 21–24 Aug (RE et al.). "Southern" herons were widely reported. There was a distinct late Oct influx of Great and Cattle Egrets. Totals for all species by province were: Great Egret: 10 New Brunswick, 18 Nova Scotia, 2 St. Pierre et Miquelon, one Newfoundland. Snowy Egret: one New Brunswick, 7 Nova Scotia, and one Newfoundland. Little Blue Heron: 7 Nova Scotia. Cattle Egret: 2 New Brunswick, 3 Nova Scotia, 2 St. Pierre et Miquelon, and 3 Newfoundland. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: 5 Nova Scotia.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

A Greater White-fronted Goose was at Memramcook, NB 3–16 Nov (A. Clavette et al.). There were high counts of Snow Goose, 69 on 13 Oct and 49 on 17 Nov, at Cavendish, PEI (DS). A Barnacle Goose with migrant Canada Geese at Waterside Provincial Park, NS 27 Oct was (as always) of unknown provenance (H. Brennan). Eurasian Wigeons by province were one in New Brunswick, 2 in Nova Scotia, and 11 in Newfoundland. Canvasback has always been rare in the Region, with the one report this autumn being of a female at Cape Jourimain, NB 10–18 Nov (m. ob.). Tufted Duck was more numerous than the combined totals for Canvasback and Redhead, with an

**SA** Mactavish, aboard an oil and gas industry vessel working beyond the Continental Slope s. of Sable I., NS 23 Sep–17 Oct had a number of interesting sightings from this ornithologically unknown part of the Atlantic Ocean. Most exciting were 3 **Little Shearwaters**: one 80 km wsw. of Sable Island 23 Sep and 2 together 80 km s. of Sable I. 24 Sep. Each was identified by the pale silvery panel in the secondaries and their coverts, which was visible for prolonged periods under ideal lighting conditions; tiny size; white high on face; and erratic feeding flight. The one previous Canadian record is of a dead bird found on Sable I. 1 Sep 1896; the only other North American record is of a hurricane-wrecked specimen from Sullivan's I., South Carolina Aug 1883 (but see this issue's Middle Pacific Coast regional report). Also rarely reported in Canadian waters but probably regular where seen—just n. of the Gulf Stream—were an **Audubon's Shearwater** 175 km ssw. of Sable I. and a **Black-capped Petrel** 140 km s. of Sable I., both 4 Oct.

early individual at East Pt., PEI 10 Oct (RC), one at New Glasgow, NS 30 Nov (KM), and 6 in St. John's, NL in Nov (m. ob.).

Rare raptors from Prince Edward I. were 2 Cooper's Hawks at East Pt. 10 Oct (RC) and a late Broad-winged Hawk at Miscouche 22 Nov (RC). **Swainson's Hawk** is being identified with greater regularity in recent years. In Nova Scotia, an imm. was photographed at point-blank range sitting on a fence post at Bellisle in mid-Sep (Scott Leslie), another was well seen a Brier I., NS 11–12 Oct (FL et al.), and Newfoundland's 2nd record was at Cape Race 11 Oct (TB, DB, JC). An imm. **Purple Gallinule** was captured in weakened condition near Clarenville, NL 23 Oct (*vide* BMT). Two Sandhill Cranes were seen at Havelock, NB 11–13 Oct (*vide* DC), and 2 more were near Northwest R., Labrador in late Aug (Frank Phillips).

### SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

The pair of nesting American Oystercatchers accompanied by 2 young and an additional pair of ads. left Cape Sable I., NS 7 Sep (MN). Newfoundland and Labrador's 6th American Avocet was at Frenchman's Cove, Burin Pen. for the last two weeks of Aug (BMT et al.). There were three reports of **Eurasian Whimbrel** from Nova Scotia: one at Daniel's Head, Cape Sable I. 31 Aug (EM), one at Hartlan Pt. 17 Oct (FL), and a belated report of one nicely confirmed with photographs from Cape Sable I. 3 May (*vide* SF). The only Marbled Godwit was inland at Windsor, NS 3–23 Sep (RS et al.). The only three reports of Western Sandpiper were from Nova Scotia between 6 Sep and 19 Oct (*vide* SF). There was a fair migration of Baird's Sandpipers, with several in New Brunswick, 15 in Nova Scotia, 6 in Prince Edward I., one in St. Pierre et Miquelon, and 3 in Newfoundland. Buff-breasted Sandpiper likewise staged a typical migration through the Region with 6 in New Brunswick, 12 in Nova Scotia, and 5 in Newfoundland. An odd shorebird well studied and documented with numerous photographs at Bear Cove, Avalon Pen.,

NL 8 Nov was thought to be a hybrid **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** x **White-rumped Sandpiper** (KK, BMT). A Curlew Sandpiper was at Castalia Marsh, Grand Manan I., NB 7 Oct (G. Garneau, M. Turgeon). There was a good flight of Stilt Sandpipers on the w. side of the Region, with 13+ in New Brunswick and 11 in Nova Scotia. Four Ruffs was a bumper crop, with singles at Castalia Marsh, Grand Manan I., NB 21 Sep (B. Schutsky et al.); Inkerman Marsh, NB 22 Sep (M. David); Sable I., NS 29 Sep (ZL); and Brackley North Marsh, PEI 10 Aug (DS). All Long-billed Dowitchers reports were nicely concentrated in late Oct, with one at Sackville, NB 31 Oct (ST), 2 at Morien Bar, Cape Breton I., NS 19 & 25 Oct (SM), and one on Cape Sable I., NS 25 Oct (MN). The first American Woodcock in Newfoundland in several years was captured aboard an oil rig 200 km se. of St. John's on 29 Nov (C. Ryan). Wilson's Phalaropes continue a low-key presence, with 2 in New Brunswick, 3 in Nova Scotia, and one in Prince Edward Island.

Eighteen Pomarine Jaegers flying past Brier I., NS during an exceptional storm on 30 Nov was a high number for the late date (EM). Laughing Gull numbers were slightly above average, with 3 each in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, all in Aug and Sep; but one at St. Anthony, NL 31 Aug was rather far n. (BMT et al.). Little Gull reports were few, and, not surprisingly, New Brunswick was responsible for both: one at Cape Brûlé 13 Sep (N. Belliveau) and an ad. from the Grand Manan ferry 1 Oct (K. Edwards). St. John's, NL had an ad. nominate-race Mew Gull 9 Nov (BMT, JWe) and a first-winter 20–30 Nov (DB). An ad. **Yellow-legged Gull** at St. John's, NL 29 Nov was thought to be the same individual present in Nov and Dec 2002 (PL, BMT). An ad. Sabine's Gull was chummed in e. of Grand Manan I., NB 6 Sep (*vide* DC), while single imms. were seen at sea off Bonavista, NL 30 Aug (BMT) and off Battle Harbour, NL 1 Sep (BMT). The gale of 30 Nov in the Bay of Fundy sent 20,000 Black-legged Kittiwakes past North Pt.,

Brier I., NS in two hours (EM).

Two Forster's Terns were at Cape Sable I., NS 9–30 Nov (MN et al.). A very late Arctic Tern flew past Cape Spear, NL 19 Oct (BMT). Black Tern has become a rarity in the Region, with the season's only sightings being singles at Borden, PEI 1 Sep (L. Homans, B. Martin) and on Miquelon, SPM 2 & 11 Sep (RE). An exceptional feeding concentration of 300 Razorbills at Cape Miquelon, SPM 12 Nov (RE) fits in with the sense of an increase in numbers in the e. part of the Region. However, this was overshadowed by a mind-boggling 5000 Razorbills filing out of the Bay of Fundy past North Pt., Brier I., NS during a great storm on 30 Nov (EM).

### DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

The season's tally of **White-winged Doves** was 5: Alma, NB 19 Sep (Doreen Rossiter), Cape Sable I., NS 24–26 Aug (JN et al.), Sable I., NS 2–7 Sep (ZL), Canso, NS 17–24 Oct (TK), and Burnt Cove, Avalon Peninsula, NL 22–26 (Elizabeth Carew et al.). These represent Nova Scotia's 23rd to 25th records and Newfoundland and Labrador's 4th record. It was an average to good year for Yellow-billed Cuckoo, with totals of 5+ in New Brunswick, 18 in Nova Scotia, 3 in Prince Edward I., 3 in St. Pierre et Miquelon, and 5 in Newfoundland. A late Chimney Swift was at St. Pierre, SPM 28 Oct–1 Nov (LJ et al.).

Red-headed Woodpecker totals were slightly above recent autumn totals, with 4 in New Brunswick and 3 in Nova Scotia. It was an above-average season for Red-bellied Woodpecker: 5 in New Brunswick, 11 in Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland's 2nd ever was at a feeder in Rocky Harbour in the latter half of Nov. The status of **Say's Phoebe** has remained constant through the last three decades in the Region, with the one report for the period being the 16th for Nova Scotia at Bon Portage I. 15 Oct (*vide* BMy). **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, however, have clearly increased as a vagrant in the Region over the past decade, as the total of 3 birds attests: Pointe Verte, NB 11 Oct (Roger Guitard et al.), New River Beach, NB 18 Nov (MJC, Allen Gorham), and the most e. record to date was one videotaped at St. Pierre, SPM 22–24 Nov, a first for the French Islands (LJ). Six birds made an average fall for Western Kingbird, with one in New Brunswick, 4 in Nova Scotia, and one in Newfoundland. For unknown reasons, New Brunswick maintains the lion's share of the Region's **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** records, including this fall's only sighting, an ad. at Cap Lumière 12 Oct (Maria Gauvin).

New Brunswick's eagerly awaited first

# STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS

## Abbreviations used in place names

In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Other abbreviations:

A.F.B.	Air Force Base
B.B.S.	Breeding Bird Survey
C.B.C.	Christmas Bird Count
Cr.	Creek
Ft.	Fort
Hwy	Highway
I.	Island or Isle
Is.	Islands or Isles
Jct.	Junction
km	kilometer(s)
L.	Lake
mi	mile (s)
Mt.	Mountain or Mount
Mts.	Mountains
N.F.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point (not Port)
R.	River
Ref.	Refuge
Res.	Reservoir (not Reservation)
S.P.	State Park
Twp.	Township
W.M.A.	Wildlife Management Area
W.T.P.	(Waste) Water Treatment Pond(s) or Plant

## Other abbreviations and symbols referring to birds and records

acc.	accepted record
ad. (ads.)	adult(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature (s)
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile; juvenile(s)
p. a.	pending acceptance
ph.	photographed
sp. (spp.)	species (plural)
subad. (subads.)	subadult(s)
tape	audio tape-recorded
vt.	videotaped
†	written details were submitted for a sighting
*	a specimen was collected

confirmed **Cave Swallow** was videotaped at Pt. Lepreau 3 Nov (Eileen Pike). Single **White-eyed Vireos** were at Duncan Cove, NS 9–13 Oct (IM et al.) and Bear Cove, Avalon Peninsula, NL 8 Nov (BMT). Totals of **Yellow-throated Vireo**, slightly more regular, were one in New Brunswick and 4 in Nova Scotia. A high 10 **Philadelphia Vireos** at St. Pierre, SPM 2–4 Oct were part of an extraordinary fallout of passerines and probably responsible for the lingering **Philadelphia** there 17–24 Nov (LJ, RE).

The only **Sedge Wren** reported was at Seal I., NS 25 Oct (FL et al.). The most significant of 6 **Marsh Wrens** reported was one at Cappahayden, NL 1 Nov for the 6th provincial record (BM, PL, IJ). The only **Northern Wheatears** were singles at Medway Harbour, *Queens*, NS 18 Sep (NSN et al.) and Sable I., NS 1 Oct (ZL).

### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Four out of the 6 **Blue-winged Warblers** reported were surprising in Oct, beyond the normal dates of this regular vagrant: **Miscou I.** NB 4–6 Oct (RD et al.), **St. Andrews**, NB 16 Oct (Tracey Dean), **Halifax**, NS 1 Sep (AGH), **Jollimore**, NS 7 Oct (*fide* BMy), **Trepassey**, NL 27 Sep (DB), and **St. John's**, NL 8 Oct (TB). A male **Lawrence's Warbler** was well seen at St. Pierre, SPM 2 Oct (LJ), one of the very few records for this hybrid warbler in the Region. The date fits nicely within the range of **Golden-winged Warbler** records in the Region. A **Northern Parula** found freshly dead beneath a window in Cartwright, NL 26 Oct was the first record for **Labrador** (*fide* BMT). A very late **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at **Brier I.**, NS 17 Nov (JUS). **Yellow-throated Warblers** were at **Brier I.**, NS 26 Oct (TP), **Canso**, NS 26 Nov (TK), and **St. Pierre**, SPM 4 Oct (SA). It was an average year for **Prairie Warbler**, with 3 in New Brunswick, 16 in Nova Scotia, and 4 in Newfoundland. **Cerulean Warblers** were singles at **Bon Portage I.**, NS 5 Sep (*fide* MN), **Robert's I.**, *Yarmouth*, NS 6 Sep (JN), and **Cape Spear**, NL 6 Sep (TB). There was a **Worm-eating Warbler** on **Sable I.**, NS 24 Sep (ZL). The only **Kentucky Warbler** was at **Arnold's Cove**, NL 9 Sep (G. Stroud). **Hooded Warblers** were at **Sable I.**, NS 1 Oct (ZL), **Seal I.**, NS 2 & 14 Oct (different individuals; *fide* KM), and **Miquelon**, SPM 8 Nov (LJ). **Yellow-breasted Chat** totals were 3 in New Brunswick, 20 in Nova Scotia, 2 in Prince Edward Island, 2 in St. Pierre et Miquelon, and 5 in Newfoundland.

Significant **Summer Tanagers** were a late one at **Greenwich**, NS 29 Nov (BMy et al.) and one **St. Pierre**, SPM 3–6 Oct (LJ). As

many as 10 **Scarlet Tanagers** were part of the avian fallout at St. Pierre, SPM in early Oct (*fide* RE); a late one was confiscated from the jaws of a weasel at **Cape Spear**, NL 2 Nov (BMT). **Clay-colored Sparrows** were confined to the w. half of the Region, with 6 each in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Newfoundland's 2nd solid record of **Vesper Sparrow** was at **Cape Spear** 7–16 Nov (BMT et al.), possibly associated with the front that brought scores of sparrows (including **Vespers**) to **Cape May**, NJ and **Cape Charles**, VA. It was a fairly good autumn for **Lark Sparrow**, with 2 in New Brunswick, 10 in Nova Scotia, and 3 in Newfoundland. New Brunswick's 5th **Harris's Sparrow** was at inland at **Harvey** 15–21 Nov (DG et al.).

Slightly above-average numbers of **Blue Grosbeaks** were 4 in New Brunswick, 6 in Nova Scotia, and 2 in Newfoundland. **Indigo Bunting** numbers were well above average, with Oct single-day totals reaching 7 in Nova Scotia and 5 in Newfoundland. Occurring before the influx of **Blue Grosbeaks** and **Indigo Buntings** was a remarkable 3 **Painted Buntings** in Nova Scotia, all at feeders: a female at **Marriot's Cove**, *Lunenburg* 13 Aug (D. MacLaughlin), a male at **Sydney** 20–22 Aug (S. Myers, I. Campbell), and a male at **Halifax** 11 Sep (*fide* BMy); these represent the 11th through 13th records for Nova Scotia. It was the biggest **Dickcissel** autumn in years: 3 in New Brunswick, 25 in Nova Scotia, 3 on **Prince Edward I.**, 10+ in **St. Pierre et Miquelon**, and 8 in Newfoundland.

The 3 **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** in the Region were all in Nova Scotia between 12 Oct and 6 Nov (*fide* BMy). A female **Brewer's Blackbird** reported without details at **Vernon**, PEI 19 Oct would be a 2nd provincial record (D. Kennedy). There was a significant movement of **Common Redpolls** noted in New Brunswick and Newfoundland during Nov.

**Contributors** (subregional editors in boldface): Sylvie Allen-Mahé, Pascal Asselin, **Todd Boland**, Dave Brown, **David Christie**, Jared Clarke, Ray Cooke, **Brian Dalzell**, Marcel David, Robert Doiron, Denis Doucet, **Roger Etcheberry**, **Sylvia Fullerton**, Don Gibson, **Andy Horn**, Laurent Jackman, Ian Jones, Tom Kavanaugh, Ken Knowles, Randy Lauff, Fulton Lavender, **Paul Linegar**, Zoe Lucas, **Angus Maclean**, **Bruce Mactavish** (BMT), **Blake Maybank** (BMy), **Ken McKenna**, **Ian McLaren**, Eric Mills, Susann Myers, Alan Murrant, Cathy Murrant, Murray Newell, **Johnnie Nickerson**, Terry Paquet, D. Seeler, Richard Stern, Stuart Tingley, John Wells. 🌱