

Québec



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19 Dec (C. Desjardins, B. Charlebois) and Saint-Armand 17 Jan (L. Messier).

A Mute Swan was present at Lacolle 16 Feb+ (P. Savoie, m.ob.). A Cackling Goose lingered at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu until 9 Dec (M. Gauthier, G. Éthier). A Wood Duck, the first in winter for Abitibi, was found at Rouyn-Noranda 31 Dec (R. Gauvin), while a male overwintered at Bécancour (R. Barbeau). A female King Eider was killed by a hunter in the Beauharnois canal, near Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, in mid-Dec (*vide S. Bougie*). Bald Eagles continued their success story, with many overwintering in the Laurentians, along the St. Lawrence R., and around the Gaspé Peninsula. Single Northern Harriers at L'Ascension-de-Patapédia, Gaspésie 18 Dec (L. Martin, *vide C. Pitre*) and at Lac Joannès, Abitibi 15 Jan (L. Jourdin) were notably late so far n. in the province. Single Cooper's Hawks at Bic 7 Dec (GG) and Matapédia 26 Jan–28 Feb+ (ph., J. & L. Michaud) were n. of their normal winter range. For the 2nd consecutive winter, an ad. Red-tailed Hawk of the *calurus* race turned up at Gatineau 15 Dec–29 Jan (A. Cloutier, F. Leduc et al.). Over 20 Gyrfalcons were reported, a good year for this species (*vide PB*).

One of the most intriguing records of the winter involved a Sora present in the Philipsburg sanctuary 1–21 Feb (JG. Papineau, ph., m.ob.). This bird, presumably present since last fall, was feeding in a small stream emptying into a frozen marsh. For the 6th consecutive winter, a Wilson's Snipe overwintered at Val d'Or, Abitibi (C. Siano). A Black-headed Gull at Fatima, Magdalen Is. 19 Feb was a good find for the season (DGG). An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull seen at different locations along Rivière des Mille-Iles 19 Dec (F. Rousseu et al.), 16 Jan (GL, É. Presseau), and 19 Feb (P. Franche, A. Gosselin) had most likely overwintered locally. The only large concentration of Dovekies was counted at Percé, where 4000 were noted 1 Jan (AC, YC). A Black Guillemot was found dead at the airport near LG-3 hydro-dam, James Bay 5 Feb (EP, *vide JR*). This bird most probably originated from the small population that overwinters in Hudson Bay.

An Eastern Screech-Owl's nest already contained an egg 23 Feb, most probably a record-early date for the Region (G. Burelle). A total of over 25 Northern Hawk Owls reported since last fall represented a high

Table 1. Recent Great Gray Owl irruptions in Québec.

Winter Season	Great Gray Owls Counted
1978-1979	ca. 60
1983-1984	350
1987-1988	26
1991-1992	ca. 60
1996-1997	60+
2000-2001	103
2004-2005	ca. 600

Most of Québec experienced a colder-than-normal winter except for the densely populated regions of the south, where the temperature was normal and precipitation levels were generally 20% lower than normal. It was a season highlighted by spectacular irruptions not only of northern owls but also of Red-bellied Woodpecker and Townsend's Solitaire,

species not usually known for their irruptive behavior in the province.

LOONS THROUGH OWLS

Single Common Loons at Percé (AC, YC) and Forillon N.P. (M. Côté, MC. Rancourt), both on 13 Feb, were either overlooked wintering birds or very early migrants. Late Turkey Vultures involved singles at La Martre, Gaspésie



This Great Gray Owl at Hudson, Québec 24 February 2005 was very effective at keeping traffic under 40 km/hr. Unfortunately, in their pursuit of prey along cleared roadsides, many Great Grays are struck and killed by vehicles. Photograph by Pierre Bannon.

count (although still far below the record 200 of winter 2000–2001; *fide* SB). With approximately 600 Great Gray Owls recorded by the end of Feb (*fide* SB, PB), the winter's invasion represented the largest ever recorded in the Region (see Table 1). In contrast to the distribution of birds observed in the 1983–1984 invasion, now the next highest on record, few birds crossed the St. Lawrence R., at least in the Montréal area, suggesting that voles were plentiful n. of the river. Few birds showed any signs of moving back n. in Mar. A least 5 of these rare visitors reached the Gaspé Peninsula in Mar (*fide* PP). An astounding concentration of Great Grays occurred on Ile aux Coudres, Charlevoix, a small area (ca. 60 km²), where 67 birds were counted 5 Feb, with at least 51 still remaining there 20 Mar (JP. Ouellet, M. Laffleur). Short-eared Owls were represented by 4 at Saint-Basile for most of the winter (*fide* PB), 3 at Saint-Alexandre 18 Dec (F. Saint-Denis et al.), and 3 at Carignan 11 Jan+ (PB). At least 15 Boreal Owls were noted s. of the species' breeding range (*fide* PB).

KINGFISHER THROUGH FINCHES

Single overwintering Belted Kingfishers were located at Magog and Rock Forest 4 Feb (B. Turgeon) and Stoke 8 Feb (J. Turgeon). The season's final count of Red-bellied Woodpecker in the Region was an amazing 39 birds, including 27 males, 11 females, and

one of undetermined sex (*fide* PB). Some birds dispersed far e. and n., as shown by 11 in the Gaspé Peninsula (*fide* PP) and one in Abitibi (*fide* LI). Large numbers were also reported in the adjacent areas of the Maritimes and in n. New England. The reasons for this widespread irruption remain unclear at this moment. Normally, only 4–5 birds visit the Region in an entire calendar year. The Region is now overdue for a first nesting record.

The Ash-throated Flycatcher at Bois-de-Lesse Nature Park, Montréal last fall continued through 3 Dec (m.ob.). Tufted Titmice continued to be seen in impressive numbers, most of them e. of the Richelieu R., with 5 reaching the Québec City area (*fide* JL). At least 20 Carolina Wrens were located mostly in s. Québec, including pairs at Baie d'Urfée and Philipsburg (*fide* PB). A Winter Wren successfully wintered at the Montréal Botanical Gardens (S. Robert, E. Samson), while another showed up at Beaconsfield 8 Jan (S. Mathieu).

In addition to the 3 birds reported last fall, 7 more Townsend's Solitaires were discovered during the winter, resulting in the largest irruption ever for the Region. Single birds appeared at Amqui 10 Dec (R. Lang), Sept-Iles 2 Jan through at least 12 Feb (N. Chouinard, B. Poulin), Price 4 Jan (D. Ruest,



This Sora present in the Philipsburg sanctuary, near the Vermont border, 1–21 (here 2) February 2005 was without doubt the most unexpected bird of the season in Québec, presumably a bird present since autumn here. Its feeding territory was limited to a small stream emptying into a frozen marsh. Photograph by Marcel Gauthier.

GG), Alma 8 Jan–28 Feb+ (M. Bourgeois, G. Scullion et al., ph.), Saint-Simon from early Jan through at least 17 Feb (*fide* F. Bourret, m.ob., ph.), Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive 26 Jan (J. Bernier), and Beauport 12–28 Feb+ (JM. Giroux, m.ob., ph.). A Varied Thrush brightened Laval 9 Jan–17 Mar (D. Bellemare, GL, m.ob., ph.). Single Gray Catbirds lingered at Boucherville 13–19 Dec (A. Messier, m.ob.) and at Sainte-Catherine 18 Dec (P. Mitchell et al.). A Brown Thrasher successfully wintered at Cantley (MC. Vanier).

Cedar Waxwings turned up in unusual numbers this winter, e.g., 1800 at Percé 13

Feb (J. Wiseman, D. Cahill). A late Black-throated Blue Warbler delighted many at the Montréal Botanical Gardens 30 Nov–20 Dec (S. Guimond, m.ob.). A late Yellow-rumped Warbler at Beaconsfield 21 Jan was worthy of mention (P. Tarassoff). The Yellow-throated Warbler previously reported at Asbestos was last seen 5 Dec (G. Lacroix). The Yellow-breasted Chat at Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive survived until at least 5 Dec, a new Regional record-late date (G. Desgagnés).

At least 6 Eastern Towhees were known to have wintered throughout the Region (*fide* PB). A Chipping Sparrow overwintered at Saint-Eusèbe, Lower St. Lawrence (M. Beaulieu). A late Field Sparrow stopped at Longueuil 19 Dec (D. Granger, JF. Noulain), and a late Savannah Sparrow was most unusual at Dorion 2 Jan (M. Gabauer et al.). A Harris's Sparrow overwintered at Pointe-du-Lac, a rare occurrence for the Region (R. Landry, m.ob., ph.). A White-crowned Sparrow at LaSarre 19 Dec represented a first winter record for Abitibi (J. Aubé), while singles overwintered at Saint-Hubert (R. Belhumeur) and Sainte-Foy (P. Otis). A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, the 3rd for the Region, was well described at Guyenne, Abitibi 23–25 Dec (M. & B. Rivest, *fide* S. Gagnon). Departing from the expected pattern, Common Redpolls irrupted for a 2nd consecutive year.

Addenda: A Wilson's Storm-Petrel at Bergeronnes 2 Nov 2004 was record late for the North Shore (YA). An American White Pelican was killed by a hunter in a flock of 6 birds s. of LG-3 hydro-dam, James Bay in late May 2004 (ph. EP, *fide* JR). A Turkey Vulture was photographed at Wemindji, James Bay 24 Jul 2004 (*fide* JR). Three imm. King Eiders (2 male, one female) were killed by hunters in Oct 2004 near Montréal, more precisely 2 on Lac des Deux-Montagnes and one at Châteauguay (*fide* P. Brousseau). The song of an Aca-dian Flycatcher was taped at an automatic recording station in

La Mauricie N.P. 18 Jun 2004 (*fide* G. Falardeau).

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