

# Québec



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**M**igration appeared much less spectacular compared to spring 2004, although there was a notable fall-out on 12 May, mainly in the eastern part of the Region. Sustained easterly winds and cool temperatures in the second half of May, associated with a stationary low-pressure

system in New England, were responsible for a late arrival of the bulk of Neotropical migrants. As soon as the weather improved in late May, migrants rapidly moved through the area, almost undetected. Looking at the weather for the whole season, temperatures were near normal in the St. Lawrence valley but increasingly warmer than average farther north, with temperatures 3° C above normal in the Ungava Peninsula. Precipitation levels were normal in the St. Lawrence valley but below normal in central Québec.

We are very happy to welcome Olivier Barden as one of the editors for the Québec Region. Olivier has been hooked on birding since childhood, and now just short of 20 years old, he has already gained a solid knowledge of Québec birds. We hope his association with our team will last long.

## GANNET THROUGH EAGLES

An ad. Northern Gannet at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 31 May was exceptional for extreme sw. Québec (ph. JM. Legris). Very much the same can be said for a flock of 10 Great Cormorants seen in flight at nearby Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 15 Apr (BB, MM). The Magdalen Is. hosted our only ardeids from the s., with a Snowy Egret at La Martinique 28 May+ (F. Shaffer) and an imm. Little Blue Heron at Grosse-Île 1–30 May (DGG). A single Glossy Ibis showed up at Sainte-Angèle-de-Laval 19–21 May (L. Chiricota, m.ob.). Still rare in the Region, single Black Vultures turned up at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle 18 Apr (G. Pauzé, M. Lebel) and at La Pocatière 30 Apr (C. Auchu, C. Girard). A concentration of 48 Turkey Vultures at Otterburn Park 12 Apr was noteworthy (M. Larramée, C. Côté).

As usual, several Greater White-fronted Geese were detected among goose flocks, but a gathering of 9 individuals at Baie-du-Febvre 10 Apr was quite a surprise (M. Bourrassa, J. Gélinas). A Barnacle Goose at Baie-du-Febvre 6–9 Apr was accompanied by a presumed Canada Goose × Barnacle Goose hybrid (R. & F. Dion, JF. Rousseau, m.ob.). Another Barnacle Goose was found at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 9 Apr (BB, MM). The previously noted Mute Swan at Lacolle continued through 5 Apr, while the Boucherville bird was last spotted 18 Apr. Another appeared at Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois 25 May+ (F. Hilton, A. Quenneville). A first-year swan discovered at Rouyn-Noranda 14 Apr+ was later identified as a Trumpeter Swan from photographs (J. Lapointe, ph. C. Robichaud). The most notable sighting of Tundra Swan involved a flock of about 20 birds seen flying northward over Iberville 30 Apr (M. Gauthier). Only 2 Canvasbacks were encountered, one at Verdun 13 Mar (DD) and one at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 14 Mar (F. Boulet).

The dark ad. *calurus* Red-tailed Hawk that



This first-year swan discovered at Rouyn-Noranda, Québec 14 April (here 25 June) 2005 was identified as a Trumpeter Swan by Jean Lapointe later in the summer, thanks to this photograph. This bird provided the fifth modern record of the species for the province. Photograph by Claire Robichaud.

wintered at Gatineau for the 2nd consecutive year was last seen 17 Apr (C. Gratton et al.), while another dark bird of this subspecies was noted in flight over Léry 6 May (PB). A seasonal count of 80 Golden Eagles was reached at the Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka hawkwatch, a new high for this site (BB, MM).

### CRANES THROUGH CUCKOOS

Sandhill Cranes were well in evidence through the spring, but the star of the season was a Whooping Crane photographed in flight at Maple Grove 3 May, providing the first fully documented record for the Region (PB); probably the same bird was seen flying over the Mount Royal, Montréal 23 May (E. Samson). This bird most probably originated from the new Wisconsin breeding area and was also probably one of a group of 3 located in e. Ontario earlier in spring and the same that showed up in Vermont later in Jun.

A Willet of the w. race provided a Regional record-early date at Beauport 29 Apr (M. Raymond). The only Marbled Godwit of the season was detected at Saint-Barthélemy 13 May (P. Franche, A. Gosselin et al.). A record-high count of 400 Purple Sandpipers at Tadoussac 27 May was outstanding (RP). Always rare in spring, a Stilt Sandpiper stopped at Pabos 17 May (PP et al.). Single Ruffs visited Saint-Colomban 29 Apr–3 May (N. Taillon, m.ob.) and Saint-Barthélemy 12–14 May (L. Simard, m.ob.).

Three Parasitic Jaegers at Sainte-Pétronille (GL et al.) and 5 at Saint-Vallier 23 May (CN) were rare occurrences for the Québec City area. Rare gulls included a second-winter Laughing Gull at La Malbaie 31 May (AC), a very early ad. Black-headed Gull at Chandler 27 Mar (PP et al.), and an ad. Cal-

ifornia Gull at Gatineau 30 Mar–2 Apr (GS, C. Rimmer). The sustained easterly wind late in May resulted in many Arctic Terns being shifted inland, e.g., 300 at Sainte-Pétronille 22 May (GL et al.), 28 at Métabetchouan 23 May (S. Boivin), 16 at Reservoir Beaudet, Victoriaville 23–24 May (DG et al.), 9 at Princeville 23 May (DG et al.), 7 at LaSalle 25 May (F. Grenon et al.), and 12 at Sainte-Catherine 28 May (PB). A well-described ad. Thick-billed Murre was way out of range at Saint-Irénée 28 May (AC et al.). Single Yellow-billed Cuckoos at Ile Sainte-Marguerite, Boucherville 12 May (Y. Gauthier) and at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue 31 May–1 Jun (M. Gahbauer) were worthy of mention.

### OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

Northern Hawk Owl numbers swelled after a surprisingly silent winter provincewide, considering the massive influx in Great Gray and Boreal Owls. The Lower North Shore was particularly affected by this unusual invasion, with 80+ hawk owls counted between Port-Cartier and Mingan in the 2nd half of Mar (YR, CB). Six individuals present at Rimouski 1 Apr represented a record high for the Lower St. Lawrence (L. Messely et al.). The bulk of Great Gray Owls apparently did not retreat until the last days of Mar, as evidenced by 51 individuals still at Île-aux-Coudres 20 Mar (JP. Ouellet, M. Lafleur), but many individuals were easily observable until at least late May, especially in the Lower St. Lawrence. At least 6 were found in the Gaspé Pen. this spring, where only two previous records were known (*fide*

Red-bellied cousin, Red-headed Woodpecker was represented by a single individual at Saint-Alphonse-de-Granby 16 May (J. Lévesque). Following an unprecedented invasion starting in late Oct 2004, Red-bellied Woodpecker numbers remained strong early in the season and gradually plummeted, leaving us once more with no known signs of breeding. One individual not known to have wintered in the area was sighted at Tadoussac 19 May (RP).

Two Eastern Phoebes in mid-Apr in the Magdalen Is. represented the 4th and 5th records for the archipelago (*fide* DGG). An extremely early Great Crested Flycatcher was documented in Gatineau Park 9 Apr, providing a record-early date for the Region (J. Lavallée). A White-eyed Vireo made an appearance at Summit Park, Montréal 11 May (R. & G. Boulet). Overshooting Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are seen almost every spring but rarely stay for more than a few hours; among the 3 noted in the Québec City area, one cooperative female at Neuville was present 12–26 May (CN, m.ob.). In addition to 2 overwintering Townsend's Solitaires recorded into Apr, 3 new individuals were found in Mar and 5 more in Apr (mostly one-day wonders), bringing the total number of this highly dispersive bird in winter to a staggering 18 across the Region since last fall (Table 1). The Varied Thrush present last winter at Laval continued at least until 17 Mar (GL), whereas another was discovered at Aylmer 2 Apr (GS).

### WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

At least 3 male Blue-winged Warblers, 2 of which were seen transporting food, were reported in May at Lac-Brome, where the species nested in the past two years (*fide* JPS). A male Lawrence's Warbler was found 17 May+ at the same location (L. Brown) as last year (G. Poirier), and a female Brewster's Warbler was also reported from the same municipality 11 May (*fide* JPS). Single Brewster's Warblers were also seen at Frelighsburg 13 May (JG. Papineau) and Fitch Bay 18–19 May (S. Rioux, A. Cyr et al.). No fewer than 3 Prairie Warblers

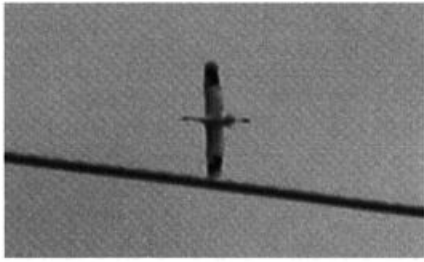
were detected in Montréal this season: a female in the Mount-Royal Cemetery 14 May (E. Milot), a male in the Mount-Royal Park 17–18 May (SD, DD), and a female in the Montréal Botanical Gardens 28 May (M. Bridger). A surprisingly early Yellow-rumped Warbler appeared at Rivière-Saint-Jean, Lower North Shore 28 Mar (CB, YR). Pine Warblers to the n. and e. of their breeding range are less frequent in spring than in fall/winter; a female frequented a feeder at Pabos Mills 12–13 May (JM. Smith, m.ob.),

Table 1. Reports of Townsend's Solitaires in Québec, spring 2005

Location	Date	Observer
Alma	8 Jan-10 Apr	G. Scullion, M. Bourgeois et al.
Beauport	12 Feb-2 Apr	JM. Giroux
Val-David	5 Mar	B. Roy
Tadoussac	10 Mar	RP
Mont-Joli	24 Mar	G. Fortin
Laval-Ouest	1 Apr	GL
Maniwaki	2 Apr	S. Lefebvre, N. Dallaire
Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures	2 Apr	P. Otis, F. Lachance
Montmagny	10 Apr	Y. Bernier, L. Lamontagne
Saint-Jean-des-Piles	19 Apr	Y. Leduc

PP). Boreal Owls seemed uniformly scattered across s. Québec, with many reports sadly—but not surprisingly—pertaining to injured or dead individuals. A census that took place between 22 Apr and 15 May in the Rouyn-Noranda, *Abitibi* area turned up 53 Northern Saw-whet Owls (A. Gasse, R. Deschênes, J. Gagnon, F. Laliberté).

A figure of 1000+ Chimney Swifts at Gatineau 23 May was encouraging for this declining species (J. Dubois, F. Bédard). Once more frequent in the Region than its



This Whooping Crane, the first documented in Québec region, was identified 3 May 2005 from a car as it flew over Maple Grove, a small municipality west of Montréal. The observer just had enough time to stop the car and take a few photographs. Photograph by Pierre Bannon.

while a male was sighted at Jonquière 13 May (C. Samson, D. Côté). A Louisiana Waterthrush at the Gatineau Park in May occupied the same site as last year (C. Savignac). The strong passerine migration of 29 May produced a vagrant Kentucky Warbler at Saint-Georges-de-Beauce (P. Rodrigue, N. Jolin).

Vagrant *Piranga* tanagers were represent-

ed by a second-year male Summer Tanager pausing at Grande-Rivière 7–9 May (fide D. Mercier) and a Western Tanager, also a presumed imm. male, frequenting a feeder at Sainte-Pétronille 18–23 May (R. Bérubé, m.ob.). A male Eastern Towhee at Montbeillard, Abitibi 14–15 May was far n. of this species' typical range (C. Champagne). Away from the usual sites in *Témiscamingue*, single Clay-colored Sparrows were reported from at least five different localities across the Region. A Swamp Sparrow in the Philipsburg sanctuary 6 Mar was probably a wintering bird (A. Labelle, F. Riou). The Lower St. Lawrence recorded a Blue Grosbeak for the 2nd spring in a row, with one at Lac-des-Aigles 20 May (fide G. Rivard). A male Painted Bunting that brightened feeders at Saint-Alexis-de-Matapédia 11–13 May was a first for the Gaspé Pen. and a 9th Regional record (L. Dubé et al.). The Region's only Dickcissel this spring was at Lévis 17 May (G. Drapeau). A House Finch at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé 3 May was well e. of its

ever-expanding range (M. Larrivière).

**Exotics:** a subad. Harris's Hawk, certainly an escapee, was nicely photographed sitting on a lawn at Angers 27 Apr (É. Côté).

**Corrigendum:** the Sandhill Crane reported at Arundel 20 Nov 2004 (N.A.B. 59: 39) should not be considered our latest Regional record: one was recorded at Les Cèdres 5 Dec 2001.

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# New England



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From a birder's standpoint, the 2005 spring season was nothing short of spectacular. However, from the birds' perspectives—especially certain species of seabirds, colonial waterbirds, and insectivores—it was a nightmare. In a nutshell, the season was cool and stormy.

The single most influential weather event was a remarkable series of back-to-back-to-back, slow-moving (at times, stationary) nor'easters that produced persistent northeasterly gales for roughly a week in late May. What made this event especially exciting for birders but very taxing for birds was the late date. Because it coincided with the peak of migration for various pelagic species, many seabirds, especially phalaropes and Arctic Terns, "wrecked" along most east-facing shores. And, because of the persistence of the cold, wet weather associated with the storms, locally nesting birds were impacted. The storms also delayed many migrating passerines.

Rarities abounded, the rarest being a large, dark unidentified swift, the Region's first Clark's Grebe, a Yellow-nosed Albatross, a Dark-bellied Brant, and a Fork-tailed Flycatcher, the latter especially rare in spring. Other notables included multiple Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, White-faced