

Québec



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The Region enjoyed an extraordinary summer. Warm temperatures, plentiful sunshine, and few rainy days were the norm. The weather was especially warm in the western half of the province, where some of the highest temperatures

were recorded, oddly, along the Hudson Bay coast—e.g., 37° C at Kuujuaq, near the mouth of the Great Whale River on 12 July. Eastern Québec was not as warm, and temperatures there were closer to normal. Precipitation levels were below average in both western and eastern Québec but near normal elsewhere.

Natural phenomena that could have had a negative impact on breeding success included forest fires in June in the Abitibi and Lac Saint-Jean regions and a very cool and wet five-day interval 14-18 June in the south. This period of bad weather apparently forced many swallows to abandon their nests.

GREBES THROUGH HAWKS

Only three pairs of Horned Grebes were found in the Magdalen Is., the only locality in e. North America where the species has been nesting regularly (*vide* DGG). A Red-necked Grebe at Hull 11 Jul was notable for the date (F Bédard). A Manx Shearwater seen from the Matane ferry 17 Jun was the earliest ever reported in the Region (E. Samson, A. Lacasse). A Leach's Storm-Petrel at Rivière-Ouelle 28 Jul was unusual so far w. in summer (CA, CG).

Field studies made on behalf of the Canadian Wildlife Service in 2004-2005 have considerably enriched our knowledge on the Regional status of Least Bittern. Notably, at least 60 calling males were located in the sensitive L. Champlain watershed near the U.S. border (P. Fradette et al.). A Snowy Egret lingered at Havre-aux-Basques 28 May-24 Jun (AR, DGG), while a Tricolored Heron graced Grosse-Ile 23-24 Jun (JC. Richard, m.ob., ph.). Single Glossy Ibis were noted at I. Saint-Bernard (Châteauguay) 8 Jun (D. Gendron et al.) and I. aux Fermiers 12 Jun (G. Passavy, D. Soares). A concentration of 25 Turkey Vultures at Sacré-Coeur on the North Shore 19 Jul was worthy of note (J. Croteau).

At least 6 Mute Swans turned up in the Region (*vide* PB). The imm. Trumpeter Swan present since Apr at Rouyn-Noranda spent the summer locally, molting into ad. plumage (*vide* LI). It was a good summer for Eurasian Wigeon in the province, with at least 7 males reported (*vide* PB). At least 5 female Red-breasted Mergansers were very successful raising their broods in the Lachine Rapids in Jul (PB, JC. Sorel). This species was not known to nest in the Montréal area 10 years ago. A Swainson's Hawk at Saint-André-de-Kamouraska 1 Jul was described as an imm. of the dark morph (JPO, ML). Summering Rough-legged Hawks were encountered at I. Sainte-Marguerite 18 Jun (Y. Gauthier), Saint-Nicolas 18 Jun (G. Martineau), and Gaspé 17 Jul (CA, CG).

CRANES THROUGH CUCKOOS

Summering Sandhill Cranes are increasingly

reported in the s. part of the Region; the 2 ads. at Frelighsburg 28 Jul+ were particularly noteworthy (JPS). An ad. **Wilson's Plover**, nicely photographed at Grosse-Ile, *Magdalen Is.* 8 Jun, provided a first Regional record (AR, CB, J. Brisson et al.). A Piping Plover was spotted at Moisie 4 Jun, the only individual outside the *Magdalen Is.* (B. Duchesne). Up to 6 Willets congregated at Grosse-Ile, where they have nested in the past few years (*vide* DGG). A group of 15 ad. Short-billed Dowitchers at Sainte-Martine 10 Jul included at least 5 *hendersoni* (PB, R. Barbeau, D. Paquette, ph.). An ad. Long-billed Dowitcher at Rouyn-Noranda 26 Jul represented a first for *Abitibi* (R. Deschesnes), while 2 ads. stopped at Baie-du-Febvre 30 Jul (LM).

Early to mid-Jun brought several interesting gulls. Laughing Gulls included an ad. at Pointe Yamachiche 11 Jun (MB, JG), an ad. at Saint-Irénée 18 Jun (AC), and a first-summer bird at La Malbaie 19 Jun (JPO, ML). It was a fine summer for Franklin's Gulls; a first-summer bird was at La Malbaie 4-12 Jun (R. & F. Dion), 2 at Pointe Yamachiche 11 Jun (J. Brunelle, MB, JG), an ad. at Sainte-Catherine 12-13 Jun (JS. Guénette, R. LeBlanc) followed by a first-summer bird there 17-18 Jun (S. Harvey, G. Éthier), and finally an imm. at Victoriaville 30 Jul (CR). Two first-summer Little Gulls visited Sainte-Catherine 18 Jun (G. Zenaitis, F. Hilton, PB), with 3 there 19 Jun (M. Raymond et al.). An imm. Black-headed Gull made an appearance at Saint-Irénée 18-24 Jun (AC), while 8 present at Havre-aux-Basques in late Jul were more expected (SD). An ad. California Gull, apparently of the subspecies *albertaensis*, was photographed at La Malbaie 5 Jun (AC, JPO, ML). As anticipated, Lesser Black-backed Gulls were quite numerous in *Charlevoix* in Jun, with a high count of 13 individuals 24 Jun split between the traditional sites of La Malbaie and Saint-Irénée (LM, OB). More unusual records included an ad. at Roquemare 15 Jun, a first for *Abitibi* (S. Guimond), 2 imm. at Mont-Louis 16 Jul (CA, CG), and one at New Richmond 17 Jul (LS). A first-year Sabine's Gull appeared at Saint-Irénée 4 Jun (AC et al.). An ad. Black-legged Kittiwake was out of range at Sainte-Catherine 18 Jun (R. Boulet, LS, J. May et al.). Only one Roseate Tern was discovered in the *Magdalen Is.* 22 Jun (F. Shaffer, AR).

Common Murres are doing extremely well in the St. Lawrence estuary: one was at Pointe-au-Pic 5 Jun (AC et al.), 15 at I. aux Lièvres 7 Jul (RP et al.), one at Rivière-Ouelle 8 Jul (CA, CG), and 35 between Tadoussac and Les Escoumins 15 Jul (RP et al.). Since 1977, the number of nesting birds at I. Corossol (Sept-Îles) has increased from 3 to 522 (*vide* JFR). Moreover, in the past two years, up to 150 presumably nesting birds

have been estimated near two rocky islands off Rivière-du-Loup (*vide* JFR). Always rare in summer, single Yellow-billed Cuckoos showed up at Elgin 4-5 Jun (JM. Béliveau) and I. Sainte-Marguerite 18 Jun (L. Dumais, S. Gervais).

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

Single Snowy Owls summered at the Barachois de Malbaie, *Gaspésie* 2 Jun+ (J. Chateauvert et al.) and Dune du Sud, *Magdalen Is.* 30 Jun (P. Poirier, CB). Considering the fairly good number of Great Gray Owls lingering into spring, it was somewhat surprising to receive only three reports of the species this summer, the first at Rimouski 11 Jun (R. Pitre) and others near Sainte-Croix-de-Lotbinière 4-19 Jul (A. Desrochers, L. Roy) and at Saint-Aubert-de-l'Islet 26 Jul (PA. Lamontagne, Y. Bernier).



California Gull is increasingly reported in the Québec Region. This adult (center), photographed 5 June 2005 at La Malbaie, was suspected to be of the subspecies *albertaensis*. Photograph by Alain Cote.

Still struggling in the breeding season, Red-headed Woodpecker was represented by a single ad. at Île-Bizard Nature Park 5-27 Jun (VL, A. Labelle). Red-bellied Woodpecker seems equally lovelorn, as all reports were of single individuals: Sainte-Luce 3 Jun (F. Castonguay), Île-Bizard Nature Park 7 Jun (S. Robert, G. Laperrière), Saraguay Park, Montréal 10 Jun (M. Sardi), and Cap-Saint-Jacques Nature Park 20 Jun (VL). A Great Crested Flycatcher at Saint-Fulgence 20 Jun (F. Gagnon) was n. of its breeding range, whereas a singing Eastern Phoebe 14 Jun at Maicasagui R., *Abitibi* was quite out of place in boreal forest nearing the 50th parallel (Y. Cossette).

Part of a continuing program to reintroduce the species into suitable pasture habitat in Breckenridge, 2 ad. and 5 juv. Loggerhead Shrikes raised in captivity were released 29 Jul and 3 Aug (G. Desjardins et al.). A well-described ad. Loggerhead Shrike at Thetford Mines 1 Jul was most surprising (G. Routhier). Rather few Carolina Wrens were reported throughout the summer, but evidence of nesting came from Baie-d'Urfé (R. Gregson) and Saint-Timothée (PB); 2 territorial wrens at Percé 25 Jul were most interesting from this far e. location (P. Lambelin, *vide* YA). A

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher carrying food at Godmanchester 16 Jul was noteworthy; singles were also noted 30 Jul at Sainte-Catherine (D. Demers) and Port-Saint-François (LM). Nocturnal counts from Saint-Fulgence yielded numerous northbound Gray-cheeked Thrushes, including a rather late individual 20 Jun (C. Cormier).

WARBLERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

The Lac-Brome Blue-winged Warbler saga continued this summer, starting with the sighting of a male Blue-winged accompanied by a female Brewster's Warbler actively feeding 3 fledglings 11-12 Jun (JPS). Farther to the w., Godmanchester has hosted a similar situation, with a Blue-winged Warbler present 29 Jun-3 Jul (M. Bertrand, R. D'Aoust) and a Brewster's Warbler seen carrying food 24 Jun (PB, D. Ouellette); both birds were sighted in the same location 10 Jul (PB, R. Barbeau). Conversely, Golden-winged Warbler sightings are increasingly rare in recent years; the species is clearly far less numerous and widespread than it was two decades ago, when Blue-winged Warblers and hybrids were considered vagrants to s. Québec. A tally of 11 male and 2 female Connecticut Warblers made at Normandin 23 Jun was a record-high count at a single location for the Lac-Saint-Jean population of this species (D. Lavoie). The Gatineau Park Louisiana Waterthrush continued 3-4 Jun (D. Dallaire, J. Dubois).

Clay-colored Sparrows continued to fare well in the Region, with a minimum of 16 individuals reported provincewide, a number of which were suspected of breeding (*vide* PB). A singing Field Sparrow at Saint-Fulgence 28-29 Jun represented a 4th record for the *Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean* (N. Duchesne et al.). A Grasshopper Sparrow at Tingwick was seen for most of Jun (J. Ducharme, m.ob.), and a singing individual was detected 25-26 Jun at La Pocatière (CA, CG), both quite distant from the species' restricted breeding range in our Region. A Le Conte's Sparrow at Saint-Georges-de-Beauce 5-7 Jul was far se. of typical areas (L. Légaré, M. Labrie), but even more surprising were 2 singing birds at Pointe-à-la-Croix 1 Jul, representing a first record for *Gaspésie* (A. Rivard). An ad. White-crowned Sparrow feeding 2 young at Plétipti L. near the 51st parallel, *Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean*, was s. of the known breeding range as mapped in the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Québec* (GS).

Northern Cardinals pursued their expansion into feeder-laden neighborhoods, with extremes at Évain, *Abitibi* 6 Jun-20 Jul (M. Lessard et al.) and Cap-aux-Meules, *Magdalen Is.* 9 Jul (CA. Gaudet et al.). A one-day-wonder female Blue Grosbeak appeared at the Barachois de Malbaie 12 Jun (JR. Lepage, D. Jalbert, D. Mercier). Red Crossbills were

reported at a number of locations across the Region in late Jun and Jul, chiefly e. of Québec City, and juvs. were frequently sighted at feeders.

Corrigendum: The Yellow-throated Warbler reported at Asbestos in early winter 2004 (N.A.B. 59: 235) was last seen 13 Dec rather

than 5 Dec (G. Lacroix, *vide* D. Gagné).

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New England



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In marked contrast to May, which was notably cold and wet, June was warm (despite extreme high and low temperatures) and very dry, with rainfall in Boston 4.5 cm below normal. Early in June, Boston temperatures averaged over 9° F degrees above normal, and conditions were generally hot and humid. This pattern changed abruptly in mid-month, with nearly a week of unseasonably cold temperatures that averaged almost 12° F below normal. During the hot spell, a record-high monthly minimum temperature was set of 75° F, shortly fol-

lowed by a maximum monthly low of 54° F. July was generally sunny and less than a degree cooler than normal. The 8.5 cm of rain that fell in Boston was practically normal. Most of the problems encountered by nesting birds this year occurred during the first half of June or during May, when conditions were unseasonably harsh.

As is usually the case when late-spring conditions are cold, wet, and windy, there was serious mortality and nest failure among early-nesting species, particularly among coastal breeders (e.g., Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, and terns), aerial foragers such as Purple Martins, and cavity nesters such as Eastern Bluebirds. There were also indications that several waterbird groups, especially long-legged waders, Piping Plovers, and terns attempted to re-nest after the destructive weather events of May.

Breeding highlights featured new state nesting records of Ruddy Duck in Maine, Sedge Wren in Rhode Island, and Mourning Warbler in Connecticut, along with an assortment of stunning Regional rarities, including Red-billed Tropicbird in Maine, Magnificent Frigatebird, White-faced Ibis, two Little Stints, and Bridled Tern in Massachusetts, and Black Rail in Connecticut. All in all, an interesting summer season, punctuated by ups and downs across the board.

Abbreviations: M.A.R.C. (Massachusetts A.R.C.), M.D.F.W. (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife), N. & S. Monomoy I. (Monomoy N.W.R., Chatham, Barnstable, MA), Noman's Land (Dukes, MA), Plum I. (Parker River N.W.R., Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA), South Beach (Chatham, Barnstable, MA), U.S.F.W.S. (United States Fish & Wildlife Service).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Several Red-throated Loons were recorded in s. New England waters, including 3 in Massachusetts (B.O.) and one in Rhode Island (CR). More unusual, although becoming increasingly frequent in early summer, was a Pacific Loon in breeding plumage off Noman's Land 2 Jun (JH, AK). A tally of 42 Common Loons migrating at Provincetown 9 Jun (BN) reflects how late some of these n. interior nesters are still moving. Vermont again set a new state record for the number