

# Atlantic Provinces & St. Pierre et Miquelon



## Bruce Mactavish

With more and more knowledgeable birders living in the Region, more extraordinary birds are being discovered. A Western Reef-Heron at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia was nearly passed off as a Little Blue Heron until a person with recent experience with the species recognized the true identity. Digital photography is also assisting in the identification of major rarities that might have otherwise fallen through the cracks. A swift photographed at St. Pierre by a novice was clearly not a North American species—and was almost certainly a Common Swift from Europe! A hiker on the south coast of Newfoundland happened to be carrying a digital camera when he came upon an unfamiliar bird in a somewhat ratty plumage. The next day, after looking at his pictures, he correctly concluded that it was an immature Fork-tailed Flycatcher.

However, the ease of communication facilitated by the Internet and other new technologies has also led to an increasing laxity in the timely reporting of bird sightings. Let's redouble our efforts to keep editors and records committees informed—posting to a local listserv is just the beginning of documentation, not the end.

## WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

A lone Tundra Swan summered for the 2nd consecutive year at Cape Freels, NL; there are few summer records for the province (KB et al.). Gadwall is rare at any time in Newfoundland & Labrador, but summer records are of particular interest. This year, there was a pair at Port au Port 11-12 Jun (G. Stroud) and a lone male at Long Harbour, Placentia Bay (BMT). The only Eurasian Wigeon re-

ported was a male was in sw. Newfoundland in the Grand Codroy R. estuary during the 2nd week of Jun (BMT et al.). A Tufted Duck stayed Apr–27 Jun at St. Rests Marsh, NB (m.ob.). An unseasonable female Harlequin Duck was in salt water at Peters River, Avalon Pen., NL 16 Jul (J. Clarke et al.); another remained through 21 Jun along Crocks Pt. Rd., NB (m.ob.). As usual a pair of Red-throated Loons nested far s. of the main breeding range at the Isthmus, SPM; a nest containing two eggs was discovered 13 Jun (LJ). An American White Pelican was at Catalone Gut, Cape Breton I., NS 13 Jul (Jerry Spionage); another was seen 13-16 Jul at Richibucto, NB (m.ob.)

The popular bird of the season was unquestionably the dark-morph ad. **Western Reef-Heron** at Glace Bay, Cape Breton I., NS 26 Jun–2 Aug (Monique Vasallo et al.), well documented and seen by many visiting bird-

## HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A pair of Rough-legged Hawks present at their s. breeding outpost at Colombier I., SPM was presumed to have nested (LJ). A **Purple Gallinule** was at Windsor, NS on the unseasonable date of 22 Jun (*vide* IM); a recently dead one was discovered 18 Jul at Bocabec, near St. Andrews, NB (Linda Hirtle). There was an odd influx of Common Moorhens in the first week of Jun, with at least 4 in Nova Scotia and one in n. Newfoundland at Plum Pt. 3 Jun (J. Gibbons). A pair arrived to breed for the 3rd consecutive year at Allisary Creek, Prince Edward I. 3 Jun (DS et al.). A **Sandhill Crane** at Miquelon, SPM 2-5 Jun was only the 3rd for the French archipelago (RE); others were at Salmon R., Digby, NS 10-19 Jul (*vide* UH) and White Beaver Brook, NB 1 Jul (Dwayne Sabine).

A record-high five nests of Piping Plover were found on the Isthmus, SPM (RE et al.).

**SA** **Manx Shearwater** was heard at night on St. Paul I., off Cape Breton I., NS 23-25 Jun (*vide* EM); no evidence of breeding was detected during this time, but it is possible that the species is breeding in Nova Scotia. Manx has been heard at night and found in burrows on Colombier I., SPM for more than a decade, but evidence of breeding is still lacking there. At Middle Lawn I., Burin Pen., NL—the only established breeding colony of the species known in North America—the number of active nests (nests with an egg) has remained very low since the colony's discovery in 1977, despite the relatively high number (100+) of shearwater burrows. The species appears to be increasing every year in se. Newfoundland and around St. Pierre et Miquelon, the center of abundance in the Region—e.g., 200+ off St. Pierre and Colombier I. 2 Jun (PB, LJ).

ers. Common speculation was that this was the same individual present at Stephenville Crossing, NF Jun–Sep 2005. The only other record for the species in North America (n. of the Caribbean) comes from Nantucket I., MA in 1983. Other ardeids were well represented. Nova Scotia had at least 8 Snowy Egrets, while Prince Edward I., St. Pierre et Miquelon, and Newfoundland each had one. Little Blue Herons were at Cape Sable I. 23 Jun and at Pickneys Pt. 2 Jul; Tricolored Herons were at Brooklyn 27 Jun–1 Jul and Martinique Beach; and a Cattle Egret was at Pubnico 9 Jun (*vide* UH). Single Great Egrets turned up in New Brunswick on 2 Jun at St. Rests Marsh (Roger Burrows; plus 3 Snowy Egrets) and 7 Jun at Île Miscou (Bernise & Roland Robichaud). A Turkey Vulture at Mud L., Labrador 28 Jul was one of a slowly growing number of records for that area (Hollis Yetman). A **Least Bittern** at Bell Street Marsh, NB was observed 30 May–27 Jun (Richard Perron, Louis-Émile Cormier, m.ob.). Black Vulture remains an annual summer rarity in the Region: singles were at Dunee **Richmond**, NS 10-12 Jul (Berni Thorycroft), Carr's Creek, Fredericton, NB 28-29 Jun (ph. Georgie Manuel), and Pokeshaw, NB 9 Jul (Bernise & Roland Robichaud).

Two pairs of American Oystercatcher produced 5 young at Cape Sable I., NS, the only breeding site in the Region (JN, MN). Willets well e. of the known breeding range were at Trepassey, NL 9 Jul (Jeff Harrison) and Renew's, NL 16 Jul (BMT et al.). A **bright male Bar-tailed Godwit** was at Stephenville Crossing, NF 5 Jun; this was the 3rd consecutive year that the species has been recorded at this location (BMT et al.). Southbound shorebird migration got a jump start with 19 Lesser Yellowlegs, one Stilt Sandpiper, and a Short-billed Dowitcher at Three Fathom Harbour 25 Jun (SMe). Also early were 7 Whimbrels at Miquelon, SPM 24 Jun (*vide* RE), 2 Hudsonian Godwits at Morien Bar, Cape Breton I., NS 25 Jun (CM, AM), and a Baird's Sandpiper at Three Fathom Harbour 7 Jul (IM). Cape Sable I., NS, famous for the largest concentrations of Short-billed Dowitchers in the Region, recorded 100 on 29 Jun (JN et al.), 3490 on 14 Jul (BS, SS), and 6500 on 25 Jul (BS, SS). A late spring Purple Sandpiper was at Port Morien, Cape Breton I., NS 3 Jun (CM, AM). A juv. Ruff was found at Schooner Pond, Cape Breton I., NS 18 Jul (CM, AM).

## JAEGERS THROUGH TERNS

Subad. Long-tailed Jaegers are known to summer in numbers in offshore areas of s. and e.

Newfoundland; one was seen 2 km offshore near Flint I., Cape Breton I., NS 13 Jun (CM, AM). Laughing Gulls were seen in enormous numbers, mirroring the stark increase in coastal Maine to the southwest: Nova Scotia reported 16 and Newfoundland had at least 20, including 5 n. to L'Anse-aux-Meadows 18 Jul (Dave Milson). Three were reported from St. Pierre et Miquelon (RE). One at East Pt., Prince Edward I. 28 Jun was only the 11th for the province (PLe et al.). A Little Gull was at Summerside, Prince Edward I. 15 Jul (Eric Marcum). Nearly annual as a mid-summer vagrant in the Region, a Gull-billed Tern spent a week at Glace Bay, Cape Breton I., NS 2-8 Jul (CM, AM et al.). Newfoundland's overdue first Roseate Tern was found at Trepassey on the s. Avalon Pen. 11 Jun (Mike Parmenter et al.). The bird was banded—but as it turns out, more than half the Atlantic population of Roseate Tern is banded! Very encouraging was the record 67 Roseate Tern nests with chick on the Brothers I., Yarmouth, NS (TD).

## DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

A White-winged Dove on Sable I., NS in late May was tallied as Nova Scotia's 35th record (*fide* IM)—more than most U.S. states on the East Coast n. of the Carolinas! Another was recorded 19-30 Jun at St. Leonard, Madawaska, NB (Roy & Charlotte LaPointe). Although a routine autumn vagrant, a window-killed Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Trenton, Pictou, NS 26 Jun (Dave MacLean) and another the same day at Chamcook L., NB (Jane & Richard Tarn) added to the very few summer records for the Region. A Boreal Owl calling at Coldbrook, Kings, NS 1 Jul was considered extraordinary (*fide* IM). Two nest boxes with eggs at St. Pierre, SPM were noteworthy (*fide* RE). Single Common Nighthawks outside the breeding range were at Miquelon, SPM 12 Jun (*fide* RE) and in St. John's, NL 31 Jul (Todd Boland).

Red-bellied Woodpecker has virtually invaded the Region since the 1980s. At first, the invasion was characterized by late-autumn influxes and birds wintering at bird feeders. Spring and summer records remained rare but slowly increased over time. As expected, Red-bellied Woodpecker has been confirmed as a breeding species in the Region: a pair present through the summer at Jollimore, Halifax, NS was accompanied by a fledgling in mid-Aug (Fred Creig, *fide* IM). Several Eastern Phoebes singing under bridges in sw. Newfoundland in Jun could represent possible first breeding records in the province, but the sightings were not followed up later (JW et al.). Singing Willow Flycatchers were noted at Bell Street Marsh, NB 6 Jun, at Midgic, NB 8-21 Jun

(both S. Tingley et al.), at Baker L., NB 21 Jun (J. Denys Bourque), and at St. Isidore, NB 10 Jul (Ivy Austin). Prince Edward I.'s 2nd Great Crested Flycatcher was found by breeding bird atlasers at Lady Fane (SMa, DS). Two Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were reported at Phillip Harbour, Guysborough, NS 18 Jun (SB). An imm. Fork-tailed Flycatcher photographed at Mistaken Pt., Avalon Pen., NL 8 Jul was the province's 2nd record (Gene Herzberg).

A Warbling Vireo nest found at Shubenacadie, NS was one of the few actual nests

late spring vagrant (*fide* SMe). A male Scarlet Tanager found at Glencorradale, Prince Edward I. 28 Jun made a rare summer record for the province (PLe et al.). The only Indigo Buntings reported out of range were on Grand Manan I., NB 2 Jun (*fide* Durlan Ingersoll) and at Chamcook, NB 26 Jun (Blaine & Jane Chamberlain). A rare summer Eastern Meadowlark was at West Cape, Prince Edward I. 23 Jun (Eric Marcum). A male Brown-headed Cowbird was well out of range at Goose Bay, Labrador 27 Jun (HY). Others beyond the breeding range were at Cape



This large *Apus* swift, photographed at St. Pierre 2 June 2006, appears to be a Common Swift, which is somewhat huskier in proportions than the similar Plain Swift; the bird apparently lacked the pale throat of Pallid Swift. Photographs by Patrick Boez.

**SA** An all-dark *Apus* swift photographed in silhouette at St. Pierre, SPM 2 Jun (*fide* RE) was probably a Common Swift (*A. apus*). The photographer, unaware of the significance of the sighting, did not know what field marks to look for. The three flight shots clearly show the very long, narrow based, swept-back wings and the very long, tapered tail typical of Common Swift. The shorter-tailed Black Swift, which has rather broader bases to the wings than Common, is ruled out by the photographs. The similar Pallid Swift (*A. pallidus*) and Plain Swift (*A. unicolor*), however, are difficult to rule out from the photographs. The bird lacked the white rump of Fork-tailed Swift (*A. pacificus*), casual in Alaska and a conceivable vagrant to the Region.

The only confirmed records of Common Swift in e. North America come from Miquelon, SPM 23 Jun 1986 and Bermuda 16 Nov 1986, although there are also reports of this genus, in some cases disputed or unresolved, from Pennsylvania (10 May 1996), Massachusetts (14 Jul 1996), and New York (2 Aug 1971), as well as reports of large, dark swifts (not *Chaetura*) from Pennsylvania (15 Nov 1985), Illinois (5 Sep 1951), Ontario (26 Aug 1982; 21 May 2006), Texas (22 & 25 Dec 1987), and Florida (8-9 Jun 1966). Some of the latter are under review, but most are considered unresolvable and may refer to Black Swift or White-collared Swift.

found in the Region (Cheryl Davis). A Carolina Wren singing at Indian Village, Halifax, NS 25 Jun-3 Jul was apparently unmated (BMy); another singing at Edmonston, Madawaska, NB 11 Jul (Gisèle Bourque) was a county first. A Gray Catbird at Goose Bay 5 Jul provided about the 4th sighting for Labrador (BMt). A Brown Thrasher with fledged young reported in early Aug at North Wallace, NS furnished one of perhaps three nesting records for the province (DS).

## WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Cape May Warblers, including ads. carrying food, were surprisingly numerous at Birch I., Goose Bay, Labrador in early Jul (BMt). A singing Yellow-breasted Chat at Pennfield, NB 6-21 Jun was unusual there (Don Gibson et al.). A male Summer Tanager in early Jun at Mira, Cape Breton I., NS was probably a

Race, NF 9 Jul (Cliff Dorant) and St. Pierre SPM 4 Jun (PA). Finches received little mention; White-winged Crossbills were moving through Labrador in small flocks in late Jun (BMt).

**Contributors** (subregional editors in bold-face): Pascal Asselin, Patrick Boez, Ted d'Entremont, Roger Etcheberry, Laurent Jackman, Ulli Höger, Lance Laviolette, Paul Lehman, Paul Linegar, Bruce Mactavish (BMt), Scott Makepeace, Blake Maybank (BMy), Ian McLaren, Susann Meyers, Eric Mills, Cathy Murrant, Alan Murrant, Murray Newell, Dwayne Sabine, Betty June Smith, Sid Smith, Hans Toom, Hollis Yetman. 📧

**Bruce Mactavish**, 37 Waterford Bridge Road, St. John's, Newfoundland A1E 1C5, (bruce.mactavish1@nf.sympatico.ca)