

Atlantic Canada



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December was mild, and January was the warmest on record. As Nova Scotia subregional editor Hans Toom put it: "I was somewhat astonished by the recent news that January was the warmest in our historical record. So quickly we adapt to change, as do our birds, that this can happen without my notice. Our home, situated at the tree line above Chebucto Head, was a challenge for many overwintering birds (in the past) such as Mourning Dove and Dark-eyed Junco, but not this year. The junco, usually gone by early December, never left, and the doves normally devastated by winter are surviving in good numbers. Our regular winter denizen, American Tree Sparrow, has been leaving for northern climes at least a month earlier than in previous years. Overall, the diversity of bird life out here on the southern end of the Chebucto Peninsula is the lowest I've witnessed."

Writing from Labrador City in mid-March, veteran northern observer Gordon Parsons asked: "Why so few? The birds in general seem to have left early, and few winter birds turned up. We did get about 100 or so Bohemian Waxwings at peak for a week or two, maybe 50 for a month or so and then 25 for last month, still lots of dogberries on the trees. Only this month have a few Common Redpolls been seen, Boreal Chickadees can be counted on one hand, same for Pine Grosbeaks and White-winged Crossbills, low numbers of Gray Jays even! Common Ravens seem to be holding their own, and no Snow Buntings yet." In Newfoundland, writing about finches, Bruce Mactavish said simply "Poor year, none common." The same held true for most of the rest of the Region, except for central and northern New Brunswick,

where tens of thousands of White-winged Crossbills gathered to feast on a tremendous cone crop provided by White Spruce, Red Spruce, and Balsam Fir.

Beginning in mid-December, clouds of Bohemian Waxwings and American Robins descended on St. John's to gorge on a huge crop of Mountain Ash. Mactavish painted the scene of 28 December: "Stopped the car under a rain of orange waxwing droppings. Wires lined with Bohemians, tree tops full, roofs covered, dogberry trees with masses of hovering waxwings, snow beneath the trees red with berries. There was no Sharpie in the area, but every few minutes the flock would take to wing with a roar, circle and wheel about, and float back down to the wires and trees in fantastic moving shapes, as good as any huge shorebird flock or African finch scene. The combined twittering calls changed in volume, depending on the action of the birds. I know we've seen massive flocks like this and bigger in the past, but this was awesome—in the true meaning of the word." He estimated about 3000 birds in the flock.

Long-time Audubon Christmas Bird Count editor for Atlantic Canada, Ian McLaren, observed: "Counts of regularly wintering passerines were mostly within or below recent ranges except for European Starling, with the most since 1999, and more pleasantly, a record high for Black-capped Chickadees. It was not a waxwing winter. Many partially migrant sparrows may have fed well and left, with those remaining less reliant on concentrations of food and shelter, and counts were well below average for recent years. Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak were scarcer than they have been in a decade or more, and the 10 Red Crossbills in St. John's 26 December were the second fewest since 1990-1991. House Sparrows continue to decline, with this year's count being the lowest since 1990-1991, even with smaller effort in earlier years."

The total species observed per province was average or above: New Brunswick 159 (ten-year average: 162; Stuart Tingley), Nova Scotia 204 (ten-year average: 194, Blake Maybank), Prince Edward Island 115 (David Seeler), Newfoundland & Labrador 135 (Jared Clark), and St. Pierre et Miquelon 96 (Roger

Etcheberry). A "depths of winter" tally during February turned up 151 species in Nova Scotia, about 75 per cent of the entire period list (Patricia Chalmers). Many thanks to Lance Lavolette of the Nova Scotia Bird Society for providing access to their timely reports, and to Roger Etcheberry at St. Pierre, for his ever-concise missives.

Abbreviations: A.P. (Avalon Peninsula, NF); C.B.I. (Cape Breton I., NS); C.S.I. (Cape Sable I., NS); G.M.I. (Grand Manan I., NB); H.R.M. (Halifax Regional Municipality, NS); NF (insular Newfoundland); P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island); SPM (Saint Pierre et Miquelon, France).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

The maximum count of 1500 Canada Geese on P.E.I. came from Vernon River 2 Feb (DK), down from the peak of 5000 in 2006. The largest wintering flock in Nova Scotia is consistently found in H.R.M., where there were 4000 at West Jeddore 21 Feb (Lucas Berrigan). A pair of Trumpeter Swans was found at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 8 Dec (MN), while 2 swans at Goose Flats, Pembroke, Yarmouth, NS 14 Jan (Eric Ruff) were thought to be



This remarkable image of an immature Great Cormorant eating a sculpin in Miquelon harbor, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, was fortuitously captured 14 January 2007. In recent years, twenty or more have wintered here. Photograph by Roger Etcheberry.

Tundra Swans. At least 12 Eurasian Wigeons passed the winter in St. John's, NF (m.ob.), while 5 were at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 2-11 Feb (MN). Prince Edward Island remains the undisputed winter headquarters for Gadwall in the Region, with 40 tallied at Chappels Creek, Queens 18 Feb (JDM). A count of 70+ Green-winged Teal, including 3 Eurasian Teal, was the Region's largest 12 Dec at Kellys Brook, St. John's, NF (AH). Superior counts of Mallard were 975 at Moncton, NB 16 Dec (C.B.C.) and 889 at Lunenburg, NS 2 Jan

(C.B.C.). A count of 863 American Black Ducks was a record high at Grand Barachois, Miquelon, SPM 15 Dec (RE, PB); a total of 4696 at Wolfville, NS 16 Dec was also impressive, with next largest tally being 2573 at Pictou Harbour, NS 1 Jan (both C.B.C.). At least 212 Northern Pintails at St. John's, NF 26 Dec (C.B.C.) far exceeded all other flocks in the Region. A Blue-winged Teal was at New Minas, Kings, NS 15 Dec (JT), while another returned for a 3rd winter at Saint John, NB (JGW), another for a 2nd winter at St. Pierre, SPM (RE), and yet another was found on the St. John's, NF C.B.C. 26 Dec. A hen Northern Shoveler was at St. Pierre, SPM 6-10 Dec (PB, PA).

A dead Canvasback was found in late Feb at Quispamsis, Kings, NB (Joe Steele), while a live one was at The Hawk, C.S.I. 13 Dec (MN). Best counts of Redhead were 10 at Oyster Bed Bridge, PEI in early Jan (DS) and 15 at Pictou Harbour, NS 12 Feb (FL). There were 22 Ring-necked Ducks at Lower Sackville, H.R.M. 12 Dec (John Belbin). At least 10 Tufted Ducks passed the winter in St. John's, NF (m.ob.). Pictou Harbour, NS, which is kept partially open by warm water from a power plant, harbors the largest wintering flocks of waterfowl in the Region, including 5000 Greater Scaup 12 Feb (FL). The top tally of Lesser Scaup was about 90 on the Halifax-Dartmouth C.B.C. 17 Dec. There were 55 Harlequin Ducks at Sober I., H.R.M. 17 Feb (KM). A nice evening flight of 1185+ Long-tailed Ducks passed Point Prim, Annapolis, NS 23 Jan (JK), moving out of Annapolis Basin to raft on the open ocean overnight. A flock of 750 White-winged Scoters off the e. side of the Isthmus of Miquelon 15 Dec (RE) was the largest reported. Good counts of Black Scoter were 645 at St. Peter's, Richmond, C.B.I. (C.B.C.) and 350 off Daniels Head, C.S.I. 18 Jan (JN). Best counts for Barrow's Goldeneye were 110 on the Dalhousie, NB C.B.C. and 60 at Cocagne Bridge, Kent, NB 28 Jan (Roger LeBlanc); one at Grand Barachois, SPM 8 Dec-14 Jan was, remarkably, a new species for the islands (LJ). The favored early winter haunt for Hooded Merganser is the Northumberland Strait shore of Nova Scotia, where 250 were present at Haliburton Gut, Pictou 3 Dec (KM); a good count for Prince Edward Island was 34 at Black Pond W.M.A., Kings on the same date (DO, DS). A huge mob of 4451 Red-breasted Mergansers in Pictou Harbour 1 Jan (C.B.C.) must have been consumed much fish, with help from 932 Common Mergansers there. Some 465 Common Mergansers at Campbellton, NB 7 Jan were thought to be feeding on smelt (Margaret Doyle). The largest count of

Ruddy Duck in the Region was 22 at Bissett L., Dartmouth, H.R.M. 10 Dec (BMy).

A large flight of alcids observed 14 Dec from Brier I., NS included a Pacific Loon meticulously described by Maybank; there are about 10 previous sightings for the province. A Pied-billed Grebe at MacLellan Marsh, Pictou, NS 16 Dec (KM) was late for an inland site, which would normally be iced over. Numbers of Red-necked Grebe seemed down



A few Golden Eagles have wintered annually in coastal Albert County, New Brunswick since at least the mid-1970s, but this adult female 21 January 2007 near Riverside-Albert was the first to be documented by photograph. Photograph by David Christie.

around the French islands, with a maximum of 17 at St. Pierre, SPM 1 Feb (BL). The largest count in Nova Scotia was 58 at St. Peter's, Richmond, C.B.I. 16 Dec (C.B.C.). A Sooty Shearwater seen off the e. coast of Miquelon, SPM 17 Dec (Frederic Disnard) was a first winter record for the islands. Northern Gannets have been a regular feature of early winter and midwinter since the early 1990s, before which time they were scarce. Some now remain at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy all winter, where there were 100+ at Southern Head, G.M.I. 7 Jan (Larry Small) and 50 off Campobello I., NB 9 Jan (NF). Double-crested Cormorant is showing the same trend: a tally of 32 Double-crested Cormorants in usually frozen Pictou Harbour, NS 1 Jan (C.B.C.) would have been unheard of 20 years ago. Christmas Bird Count numbers of Double-crested Cormorants (46) surpassed those of Great Cormorant (32) in New Brunswick.

A Great Blue Heron rescued 16 Jan at Nigadoo, Gloucester, NB died that night (Luc DeRoche), but one far inland at Fredericton 31 Dec was apparently healthy (Sandra Lowman). Latest report was of one at C.S.I. 20 Jan (MN). The only Great Egret to make the period was seen 12 Dec at Pomquet, Antigonish, NS (*vide* RL). An American Bittern at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 2 Feb likely made it through the winter (JN). Glossy Ibis does not appear in

the winter report often, but one just made it at Port Maitland, Yarmouth, NS 1 Dec (MN). The only Black Vulture reported was at the East Prince County landfill, PEI 22 Dec (Finton MacKinnon). From all reports, there appear to be about 50 Turkey Vultures wintering in sw. Nova Scotia, with 30 reported at Yarmouth 13 Dec (Levi Cliche); the farthest e. was at Lunenburg 28 Jan (K. Lantz).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

An imm. Bald Eagle at Murray River, PEI 21 Jan chased a plastic milk bottle across the ice and eventually caught it. Half an hour later, it was seen flying around with the bottle stuck in its talons (Tim Sutton). A count of 447 (222 ad., 205 imm.) eagles on the 26th Cyril Coldwell Raptor Count 4 Feb in Kings, NS was close to the average of about 400 (Jim Wolford). A few Cooper's Hawks winter in New Brunswick, and likely in Nova Scotia, but they are seldom reported in the latter province; thus an imm. 16 Dec and 7 Feb at Port Williams, Kings, NS (Richard Stern) and an ad. at Pubnico, Yarmouth, NS 13 Jan (JH) were notable. The only Broad-winged Hawk report came from Mill L., H.R.M. 3 Dec (HT). Fifty-eight Red-tailed Hawks were enumerated on the aforementioned raptor count in Kings, NS. The only solid report of a Golden Eagle was an ad. female photographed at Shepody River Dam, Albert, NB 21 Jan (DSC). Wintering American Kestrels have an odd habit lately of only revealing themselves near the end of the period: reports of singles came from Biscay Bay, NF 23 Jan (DSH), Grand Pre, Kings, NS 24 Feb (JH), Riverside-Albert, Albert, NB 25 Feb (Woody Gilles), and Cocagne, Kent, NB 26 Feb (Jules Cormier). Five Gyrfalcon reports were received, all of single birds: from East Point, PEI 13 Dec (VL), Grand Pre, Kings, NS 14 Dec (BMy), St. John's, NF 26 Dec (C.B.C.), Portugal Cove South, NF 30 Jan (DSH), and Canso, Guysborough, NS 4-5 Feb (TK). At least 5 Peregrine Falcons wintered in Nova Scotia, and a like number on the A.P. (m.ob.), with at least 2 ads. and one imm. around St. John's. One at Saint John, NB 9 Jan was identified as the *turdus* subspecies (RB).

Ring-necked Pheasant does best in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, where 300 were tallied on the Wolfville C.B.C. 16 Dec. Ruffed Grouse are apparently at a high in their population cycle throughout the Maritime provinces, as evidenced by 47 on the Caledonia, Queens, NS C.B.C. 17 Dec; 37 on the Eskasoni, Richmond, NS C.B.C. 26 Dec; and 13 at Monticello, Kings, PE 16 Feb (Gerald MacDonald). They even came into backyards in cen. New Brunswick, with 9 (2 males) attend-

SA Gray Partridge has just about died out in Nova Scotia, with only a few remaining in the Truro area. Good counts are still obtained in agricultural e. Prince Edward Island, where coveys of 8-15 birds were not hard to find this winter (*vide DS*), especially near harvested grain fields. Salt is not used extensively on island roads, which may explain why they persist there. The prevailing sentiment is that the Nova Scotia birds have died of toxicosis caused by eating road salt.

ing a bird feeder at Nasonworth, York, NB late in the period (Wendy Rogers). There are still no solid reports of Wild Turkey breeding in sw. New Brunswick, but they are getting very close, with several reports in neighboring Washington, Maine this past summer, within 64 km of the international border. When they do get here (as happened in Ontario, soon after they arrived from New York state in the early 1980s), wildlife officials in New Brunswick will likely begin importing more (possibly from Ontario). Sharp-tailed Grouse still persist in e. Prince Edward Island, where a few were introduced from Ontario in the 1980s. A flock of 12 was found along Souris Line Rd., Hermanville, Kings 15 Jan (Warren Foulkes).

A few more American Coots than usual survived winter in the Region, with 5 making it into spring at St. John's, NF (BMT), where one or 2 is the norm. As many as 16 were found at Bissett L., Dartmouth, NS 10 Dec (BMy), with 7 still at nearby Sullivans Pond in late Feb (m.ob.). The first known successful wintering of a Sandhill Crane in the Region occurred at a farm in Bridgewater, Lunenburg, NS 1 Dec-28 Feb+, where the owner took an interest in keeping it alive (*vide UH*). Probably fewer than 100 American Woodcocks winter in far sw. Nova Scotia, with a few reported every winter from this area. There were singles near Tusket, Yarmouth, NS 16 Jan and along Canaan Rd., Yarmouth, NS 6 Feb (Paul Gould), while one that attempted to cross an open cove was accosted in mid-air and eventually killed by crows at Atwoods Brook, C.S.I. 11 Feb (Terry Crowell). Two Wilson's Snipe were doing well at Portugal Cove South, NF until 20 Feb (DSH), when one flew into utility wires. It was rescued and fed an earthworm substitute (squid). A Greater Yellowlegs in n. Nova Scotia at Apple River, Cumberland 15 Jan was unusual for that locale. The last of 3 Lesser Yellowlegs present through Dec at C.S.I. was seen 11 Jan at The Hawk (JH).

A flock of 30 Red Knots 8 Dec at Grand Barachois, SPM had been reduced to 10 birds near Miquelon Village by 7-11 Feb (LJ). Nova Scotia could not muster more than 5, at Cherry Hill Beach, Lunenburg 29 Dec (Sylvia Fullerton). An extraordinarily late flock of 22

Semipalmated Sandpipers passed through C.S.I. 2 Dec at Daniels Head (MN). Late White-rumped Sandpipers in the Region are probably crippled, as was the case with 2 near Cape Race, NF 3 Dec (BMT), one of which made it to the C.B.C. 23 Dec., and another at C.S.I. on the C.B.C. 16 Dec. Purple Sandpiper numbers appear to be down by more than half over the past 25 years or so. Whereas 100-200 birds used to winter on Machias Seal I., NB (through the 1980s), the best count this winter was 70 on 21 Jan (Ralph Eldridge). However, 118 on the Miquelon C.B.C. 17 Dec was



Rescued from a snow drift in Moncton, New Brunswick 1 February 2007, this immature Atlantic Puffin appeared almost 23 years to the day after the only previous record for this inland location (and only a mile away): 31 January 1984. Photograph by Danny Doiron.

said to be record high (*vide RE*). Fewer than 250 Dunlins likely winter in sw. Nova Scotia annually, with up to 127 at C.S.I. 3 Dec (MN) and 26 as far e. as Three Fathom Harbour, H.R.M. 17 Feb (Robert Lindsay). A healthy bird was an unusual sight foraging in a grassy ditch at the St. John's, NF airport 14 Dec (BMT); 3 at Grand Barachois, SPM 11 Feb (RE) were likewise unexpected there. A Semipalmated Plover at Renewes, NF 3-9 Dec (BMT et al.) appeared to be healthy. A flock of 3 Killdeer at a ball diamond in Clarks Harbour, C.S.I. 2 Jan (MN) was down to one by 7 Feb (JC).

GULLS THROUGH OWLS

Six Mew Gulls (all of the nominate subspecies) passed through St. John's harbor during the period—"standard numbers" according to Mactavish. One at a sewage lagoon in Charlottetown, PEI returned for its 3rd winter 11 Jan (DO). A "classic ad." Thayer's Gull was photographed in Sambro Harbour, H.R.M. 18 Feb (HT). Two Yellow-legged Gulls spent the winter in St. John's, along with at least 3 ad. Slaty-backed Gulls—confirmed as distinctly different individuals by wing tip pattern: one 26 Nov-Mar (m.ob.), one 31 Dec only (Paul Linegar), and one 22 Jan-26 Feb (BMT, Ken Knowles). Previous provincial records of Slaty-backed include just 2 ads. and a third-winter bird Jan-Apr 2006. The best count of Lesser Black-backed Gull was of 15-20 at the Robin Hood Bay dump near St. John's 10 Dec (BMT, Jared Clark). Black-headed Gull was commonest in Halifax harbour, with 113 found on the local C.B.C. 17 Dec. An estimated 2500 Bonaparte's Gulls off East Pt., PEI 14 Dec (DO, VL) was a good count for the island, while at least 4500 were still in Head Harbour Passage, Charlotte, NB 9 Jan (NF). Five Little Gulls came to light: an ad. 3 Dec at East Point, PEI (DO, DS); an imm. at Sinclair I., Pictou, NS 9 Dec (KM); an ad. off Swallowtail Light, G.M.I. 17 Dec (JGW); an imm. at Canso Causeway, Inverness, NS 28 Dec (DMQ); and an ad. at Pictou Harbour, NS 30 Dec (KM). An ad. Ivory Gull that begged for food at Quidi Vidi L., St. John's, NF 20 Jan-early Feb (m.ob.) became a virtual pet, feeding on various meats

supplied by visiting birders. One at nearby Portugal Cove South 27 Feb+ came into a backyard kennel to pilfer dog food (DSH). Good counts of Black-legged Kittiwake were made in the outer Bay of Fundy, with 15,615 counted at North Pt., Brier I., NS 14 Dec (BMy) and 5100 in Head Harbour Passage, NB 9 Jan (NF). The only Forster's Tern was found at West Pubnico, Yarmouth, NS 7 Jan (MN), while an ad. Common Tern in alternate plumage was at Ogden's Pond, Antigonish, NS 2 Dec (BS).

Oddly, the highest numbers of Dovekie were found in the w. part of the Region early

SA Further evidence of the northward spread of avian cholera in the past three years was an outbreak along the e. coast of Newfoundland in late Jan. Initially, 6 dead gulls were diagnosed with the disease, including Great Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Black-legged Kittiwake. Many more sick gulls were reported at various offshore sites, though other marine species were not clearly affected. Public announcements suggested that people avoid contact with birds suspected of being infected with avian cholera. The disease was said to pose "minimal risk" to humans (Hugh Whitney, Chief Provincial Veterinarian).

in the period, with 3346 moving past North Pt., Brier I., NS 14 Dec (BMy). In contrast, they were "virtually absent" throughout the period around St. Pierre, with only 4 found on the St. Pierre C.B.C. 28 Dec (RE). At least 8215 Razorbills were in the impressive Brier I. flight 14 Dec, but very few Atlantic Puffins, as would be expected, given that they winter farther offshore.

Six brave (or foolish) Mourning Doves were huddled in a spruce tree at Labrador City 17 Feb (GP), while one that wintered at a feeder in St. Lewis (EL) was likely one of very few to do so on the s. Labrador coast. An indication of how far they have come in 50 years: 5536 were tallied on Nova Scotia Christmas counts and 3856 on New Brunswick counts. A White-winged Dove at Stoney Island, C.S.I. 16 Dec (JC) was about the 40th for the province. Quite unusual, and not noted annually, was a live Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Canso, NS 13 Dec (TK). There were a few Snowy Owls in Dec in Newfoundland, such as 6 along the Cape Race Rd. 3 Dec (BMT), but none were reported in Jan or Feb. There were a few elsewhere in the Region, with about 10 reports each in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. An injured Long-eared Owl found in Stephenville, on the w. coast of Newfoundland, 6 Feb (*vide* Joe Brazil) was subsequently taken to a rehabilitation center in St. John's; it furnished just the 2nd record for the province. Uncharacteristically, the best one-day count of Short-eared Owl came from the A.P., where there were 2 at Portugal Cove South and one at Trepassey, both 23 Jan (DSH).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH CHICKADEES

A hatch-year male Ruby-throated Hummingbird 1-4 Dec at a feeder in Ballantynes Cove, Antigonish, NS (*vide* BMy) was most unusual for the month, anywhere in Canada. Belted Kingfisher posted a record high of 45 found on Christmas counts in Nova Scotia, while 4 were found at Cape Broyle, NF 19 Jan (BMT) and 2 at Barachois, Westmoreland, NB 3 Jan (Norm Belliveau). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at a feeder in Hantsport, Hants, NS 6 Dec+ (Marion Fulton) was returning for its 3rd winter; another was seen 24 km away at Canning, Kings 12 Feb (MG). Northern Flicker is staying in greater numbers farther north in winter: there were 15 at Charlottetown, PEI and 37 at St. John's, NF (both 26 Dec on C.B.C.); Nova Scotia Christmas counts detected 128, about the 15-year average. A tally of 95 Pileated Woodpeckers on the counts was the 2nd highest ever, an indication that

the species is moving into more urban habitats. The mild weather favored at least 4 Eastern Phoebes in Nova Scotia: 16 Dec at Wolfville (JT), 19-21 Dec at Lockeport, Shelburne (DC), 10 Jan at Greenwich (BF), and 19 Jan at Milton, Queens (DP). A Say's Phoebe at Antigonish W.M.A. 17 Dec (BS) furnished about the 20th provincial record.

Up to 20 Common Ravens were enticed to a feeder supplied with roadkill (such as Coyotes and Bobcat) in Antigonish, NS throughout the winter (RL). A Bell's Vireo at Seaview Park, Halifax, NS 6-12 Dec (David Currie, Azor Vienneau) provided only the 3rd record for the province and the 2nd in winter. Bohemian Waxwing distribution was spotty, but only the A.P. of Newfoundland saw truly impressive numbers, with 7500+ estimated in the e. end of St. John's 12 Jan (BMT). A few



A rewarding find for a day of winter birding was this perky Say's Phoebe in a frozen cattail marsh, found on the Antigonish, Nova Scotia Christmas Bird Count 17 December 2006. Photograph by Bruce Stevens.

made it to the Maritimes, and late in the period, with maxima of only 25 at Gagetown, NB 18 Feb (Don Gibson), 100 at Vernon River, PEI 10 Feb (DK), 140 at New Victoria, C.B.I. 15 Jan (Clive & Theresa MacDonald), and 75 at Port Medway, Queens, NS 11 Feb (BMy). Although widely scattered, there were likely half as many Cedar Waxwings Regionwide, such as 80 in Charlottetown, PEI 18 Feb (JDM), 150 in St. John's, NF 15 Dec (BMT), 20 at Wolfville Ridge, NS 2 Feb (BF), and 10 at St. Pierre, SPM 29 Jan (SAM).

An Eastern Bluebird was unique at Murray Harbour, PEI 10 Dec (Virginia Jackson); two or three years may pass between winter reports in the whole Region. Five Hermit Thrush reports surfaced in Nova Scotia, but

the farthest n. was one eating Mountain Ash berries at Marys Pt., Albert, NB 1 Jan (DSC). One that came faithfully to a feeder 1-28 Feb+ at Crousetown, Lunenburg, NS showed a preference for rolled oats and finch seed but ignored raisins, blueberries, chopped apple, and grapes (Nellie Snyder).

A Northern Mockingbird at St. Pierre Village, SPM 26 Jan (LJ) was notable, as was a record high of 550 European Starlings there 30 Dec, counted from a photograph (PB). Two Carolina Wrens at a feeder in Summerside, PEI 19 Jan-14 Apr+ (Bob Mulligan) was amazing, considering the location, and the fact that this province got its first record just last spring in Charlottetown. One surfaced in Nova Scotia at Canning, Kings 19 Jan+ (MG), and 5 was the total in New Brunswick, with 2 at Fredericton and one each at Hammond River, Moncton, and Memramcook. A House Wren was found at Portuguese Cove, Halifax, NS 25 Dec (TPA). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was still at Lockeport, NS 18 Dec (DC). Quite a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets are attempting to winter, and some are succeeding, with the help of feeders, as far n. as Sackville, NB 26 Jan-10 Mar (Kathy Popma). Others were found at Maximeville, PEI 25 Jan (Fred & Gisele Martin), at Campbellton, Restigouche, NB 16 Dec (*vide* Irene Doyle), and at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 10 Feb (MN), the latter bird not attending a feeder. Boreal Chickadee was "more regular" than usual in Pictou and Antigonish, NS (JK) as well as in the rest of the Maritimes (m.ob.); the species was "fairly common and well reported" on St. Pierre (RE).

LARKS THROUGH FINCHES

The best counts of Horned Lark were 125 at Grand Pre, Kings, NS 14 Dec (BMy) and 100 at Earnscliffe, Queens, PEI 29 Dec (DS, JDM). American Pipit is increasing across the Region, albeit slowly, with good winter counts of 20 at Long Beach, Cape Race, NF 14 Jan (DSH), 24 at Hartlens Pt., H.R.M. 23 Feb (Suzanne Borkowski), and one at East Pt., PEI 7 Jan (DS).

At least 12 Orange-crowned Warblers were reported in Nova Scotia, about normal, with the farthest n. being at a feeder in St.

SA Four Redwings in the Region is a lot, with 3 in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia's 2nd at Brooklyn, Queens 2-8 Dec (DP et al.). Starting 2 Dec (AH) and continuing into late Jan (BMT), there were at least 2 with the huge American Robin flocks in St. John's. (American Robins in St. John's numbered at least "several thousand" and were present until all the Mountain Ash berries were eaten [in the first week of Feb]; there were also quite a few along the Bay of Fundy shore at St. Martins, NB, where 100+ were starting to take foods other than Mountain Ash 28 Jan [TS]). Another Redwing was found by a WINGS tour group on the barrens at Cape Race 20 Jan (BMT, Jon Dunn). "Great to see a wild Redwing instead of one of those city slickers," remarked Mactavish, who added that "Redwing has (now) become part of the Winter Avalon Avifauna."

Anselme, *Westmoreland*, NB 30 Dec+ (Gilles Bourque). A Nashville Warbler was at Bissett L., Dartmouth, NS 7 Jan (TPA). Yellow-rumped Warbler is being found more often at feeders, with one returning for its 3rd winter at Fredericton, NB 21 Jan (John McLoughlin) and 40+ at Cape Tormentine, NB 3 Jan+ (m.ob.). By all accounts, 2500+ must winter along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia between Cape Breton I. and Brier I. Two were found in "a wild state on the hills of St. Pierre" 14 Jan (Patrick Hacala). The only Yellow-throated Warbler report came from Heatheron, *Antigonish*, NS 15 Dec–15 Jan+ (*vide* RF). A Yellow Palm Warbler at Sackville, NB 16 Jan and 4 Feb (Anthony Erskine) provided one of fewer than five winter records for the province. An Ovenbird was late at Gaspereau, *Kings*, NS 11 Dec (Phil Taylor). Two male Common Yellowthroats were found together at Canning, *Kings*, NS 16 Dec (Angus & Stella MacLean). A Wilson's Warbler (*w. subspecies*) was found in Halifax, NS 2 Dec (TPA), while one that persisted until 26 Dec in St. John's, NF (m.ob.) was not identified as to subspecies. Accompanying the latter were 2 exceptionally late Yellow Warblers along an "enriched" stream bed (BMT). A Yellow-breasted Chat at a feeder in Miramichi City, NB 30 Dec (Fred & Susan Hare) was notably far n. for the season.

Lapland Longspur was nowhere common, with maxima of 23 at Cherry Hill Beach, NS 13 Dec (JH, DP) and 17 at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 1 Feb (JN). Excellent flocks of Snow Buntings were 1522 on the St. Leonard, NB C.B.C. 28 Dec and 2500+ at Cadman Corner, *Westmoreland*, NB 29 Jan (Ron & Linda Steeves). An enviable feeder flock at Portugal Cove South, NF grew from 70 birds 14 Jan to 150 by 11 Feb (DSH). Seven at Wabush 17 Feb (GP) made one of very few winter reports for interior Labrador. A Harris' Sparrow tarried at a feeder in East LaHave, *Lunenburg*, NS 18 Jan–28 Feb+ (Dave Watson). A White-crowned Sparrow at Marys Pt., *Albert*, NB 18 Jan (DSC) was of the subspecies expected here in winter, namely *gambelli*. A White-throated Sparrow made it until the end of Feb at a feeder in Labrador City (*vide* GP). Two Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported without details in Nova Scotia: one at Hebron, *Yarmouth*, 24 Dec (MN) and another along West Sable Rd., *Shelburne* 7 Jan (David Young). A Golden-crowned Sparrow photographed at St. Pierre village, SPM 3 Dec–28 Feb+ was an overdue first record for the French islands (SAM, PB).

A Grasshopper Sparrow was a rare find at Point Lepreau, *Charlotte* NB 16 Dec (RB, Eileen Pike, Janet Whitehead). A leucistic

American Tree Sparrow, first noted 13 Feb (DSC) at Riverside–Albert, NB, was returning for its 3rd winter. The only Clay-colored Sparrow report came from Canso town, NS, where one survived the winter at TK's prolific feeder. Single Field Sparrows are not unusual in winter in the Region, but 2 at two locations were notable, at Barachois, *Westmoreland* NB 28 Jan+ (Angela Leger) and at St. Andrews, NB 27 Jan+ (DG, James Goltz, Shirley Sloat). Single Vesper Sparrows were noted at Daniels Head, C.S.I. 7 Feb (JN) and Grand Pre, *Kings*, NS 24 Feb (JH). A Lark Sparrow passed the winter at KM's feeder in Springvale, *Pictou*, NS 9 Dec+ and began singing in late Mar. Unusual were 3 Eastern Towhees together at Jol-



This Harris' Sparrow at a feeder in East LaHave, Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia furnished only the second record for the province (here 24 January 2007). Photograph by Angus MacLean.

limore, Halifax, NS 15 Dec+ (m.ob.); the easternmost of this species was a male at Witless Bay, NF 2 Mar (Chris Ryan).

Western Tanagers were noted at several sites in the Region, but only one survived the period, at West Pubnico, NS 1 Jan+ (Ethelda Murphy); other singles were at Eskasoni, C.B.I. 26 Dec (DMQ), at Newcombville, *Lunenburg* 28 Nov–early Dec (*vide* JH), and at Quispamsis, *Kings*, NB 15 Dec–9 Jan (Susan Tait). A Summer Tanager was present at St. George mid-Nov–9 Jan (Gail Mullen). A flock of 4–5 Dickcissels made it through the winter at a Canso, NS feeder (TK), and 2 were at St. Andrews, NB 1 Feb (Steve & Gail Smith). Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks turned up at Ferryland, NF 3 Dec (AH) and St. Pierre village, SPM 28 Dec (Joseph Beupertuis). A Black-headed Grosbeak was photographed at Goose Cove, near St. Anthony, NF 10 Jan (Darlene Rice) for a first provincial record. It had been present since late Dec. Northern Cardinal is doing well in suitable habitat in New Brunswick, with 48 found on the Hammond River C.B.C. 2 Jan (JGW), where there were but 12 in 2001. Single Indigo Buntings were at Liverpool, NS 12 Dec (JH) and Saint John, NB 3 Feb (Colin Eyben). A male Paint-

ed Bunting was a show-stopper far e. at Grande Etang, *Inverness*, C.B.I. NS 25 Nov–19 Jan (Damien & Melissa Welsh). A Baltimore Oriole was notably far n. at a feeder in St. Anthony, NF 16 Dec (*vide* EL). Only a single male Yellow-headed Blackbird turned up, at Port Williams, *Kings*, NS 3 Feb (M. Luke-man). A flock of about 20 Red-winged Blackbirds (15 females) was a lot for New Brunswick, found at a Sussex feeder 31 Jan (Bill Winsor). A male made it through a tough winter on the s. coast of Labrador, coming to a feeder at St. Lewis 18 Jan+ (EL), leaving only when a female arrived 25 Apr! A Rusty Blackbird was feeding in a salt marsh, probably on intertidal invertebrates, at Marys Pt., NB 1 Feb (DSC). Brown-headed Cowbirds numbered 27 at Montague, PEI 30 Dec (C.B.C.) and 21 at Atwoods Brook, C.S.I. 23 Jan (JN).

Pine Siskins were scarce in the Region, except for nw. New Brunswick, with ~200 on several C.B.C.s there. In cen. Newfoundland, numbers began to build in mid-Feb, with 40 at a Gander feeder 12 Feb and 90 by 24 Feb (JKB). A good count of 48 American Goldfinches was made 19 Dec at a feeder in St. Pierre Village, SPM (PB). Common Redpoll vanished into the taiga this winter, with very few making it to the Maritimes and even to w. Labrador, where the high count was only of 35 at Labrador City 27 Jan (GP). Best count for insular Newfoundland appears to have been 50+ at Gander 24 Feb (JKB). Pine Grosbeak was uncommon at best throughout the Region, with no more than 10 seen at any one time (m.ob.). The absence of Red Crossbills from Nova Scotia Christmas counts for the first time since 1969 "...raises serious questions about our regional population" according to venerable Audubon C.B.C. editor Ian McLaren. A "moderate" number seems to have wintered in the Caledonia highlands of *Albert*, NB, with indications of later breeding in Apr (DSC). White-winged Crossbill was abundant in n. and cen. New Brunswick, with 500–1000 per day easily found in *Madawaska*, *Restigouche*, and *Gloucester*. The top count of Evening Grosbeak was 100 at Mount Pearl, St. John's 14 Jan (*vide* BMT). Numbers in the Region have fallen back to 1950s and 1960s levels (IAM), much lower than the peaks found in the 1970s and 1980s.

Addendum: Not previously mentioned in these pages was discovery of the most significant wintering site for White-winged Scoters in the Region, in Passamaquoddy Bay, NB. On 29 Jan 2002, during a Harlequin Duck survey, 3900+ were found off Davidson Head, Deer I. (Dedreic Grecian).

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There were two seasons during the period. The first half of the winter was balmy with almost no ice on rivers and no snow on the ground, at least in the south, until mid-January. The second half was much more frigid, although there was no large amount of snow on the ground at any time. In summary, average temperatures ended up above normal despite a cold February, and overall precipitation was below average. The avifauna of early January seemed more like that of late November in southern Québec. The mild conditions of early winter resulted in a lot of late migrants trying to winter in the Region.

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

A group of 4 Greater White-fronted Geese (2 ads., 2 imms.) lingered at Lévis 2-27 Dec (OB, MR, ph.); one was at Sherbrooke 9 Dec (SR, Y. Charette), while up to 2 at Chambly 4 Dec-10 Jan provided the Region's 2nd record ever for Jan (R. Chartier et al.). Thousands of Snow

Geese were reported in s. Québec until late Dec, while 2 wintered at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (*fide* PB). A Ross's Goose at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 17 Dec provided a new Regional record-late date (SR). Cackling Geese were widely reported in Dec; one lingered at Saint-Mathias until 10 Jan (RB et al.) and another at Laval as late as 14 Jan, providing a new record-late date for the Region (GLa, ÉP). Canada Geese were ubiquitous in s. Québec, including the Gaspé coast, until mid-Jan; probably one of the most notable sightings was a lone bird in Mont-Tremblant Park 7 Jan (L. Cadieux). A Mute Swan turned up at La Malbaie 17-25 Jan (S. Tremblay). At least 4 Wood Ducks, 50 Gadwalls, 3 Green-winged Teal, and 2 Ring-necked Ducks appear to have successfully wintered in s. Québec (*fide* PB). A male Wood Duck at Val d'Or 22 Jan was only the 2nd found in Abitibi in winter (A. Lefebvre). A flock of 52 Harlequin Ducks at Gascons 11 Feb was certainly noteworthy (A. Couture, Y. Cyr), but 30 at Bergeronnes 18 Feb was a truly exceptional number for that location (MD). The three scoter species were reported more regularly this winter in the Gaspé Pen. (*fide* PP), while a Surf Scoter at Bergeronnes 18 Feb was remarkable (MD). Wild Turkeys now seem well established n. of the St. Lawrence R. especially in the Rigaud-Saint-Rédempteur area, where 56 were counted 25-27 Feb (P. Tarasof, N. Felx). An escaped Lady Amherst's Pheasant strutted around Bonaventure for a few weeks from 10 Feb+ before it was captured (F. Leblanc).

Late Horned Grebes included singles at Saint-Fabien-sur-Mer 6 Jan (G. Gendron) and at Longue-Pointe-de-Mingan 13 Jan (C. Leblanc). Ten Red-necked Grebes at Gascon 10 Jan were noteworthy (D. Lavoie, JRL), while one at Old Harry 6 Jan was apparently the first in winter for the Magdalen Is. (C. & J. Roy). One of the most curious sightings of the winter was a Northern Fulmar flying over

a highway at Saint-Pierre-Montmagny 27 Dec (C. Auchu, C. Girard). The observers kept track of the bird from their car and could even record its speed as 70 kph. Rare in midwinter, single Double-crested Cormorants were located at Old Harry 4 Feb (JC. Richard) and at Carleton 10 Feb (CL). Great Blue Herons were still widely reported in Jan, but one at Val-des-Monts 5 Feb appeared to be the latest (*fide* C. Lewis).

VULTURES THROUGH OWLS

Single Turkey Vultures at Disraeli 7 Jan (D. McCutcheon, R. Jacques), Roxton Ponds 9 Jan (M. Gauthier), and Saint-Gabriel-de-Brandon 10 Jan (R. Prévost) were late. Bald Eagles were numerous almost everywhere in s. Québec, including in the Gaspé Pen. Late or likely wintering Northern Harriers included singles at Saint-Basile 1 Feb (RB), Yamachiche 11 Feb (S. Houle, J. Bouvette), and Saint-Clet 20 Feb (W. Grubert). Single Cooper's Hawks were e. of their winter range at Pabos 23 Jan (PP, G. Roy) and at Amqui late Dec-mid-Feb (R. Lang). No fewer than 5 Red-shouldered Hawks were detected in Feb, including 3 at Laval 10 Feb+ (LS, P. Simard, GLa, J. Bégin); these birds appear to have been very early migrants. A *calurus* Red-tailed Hawk showed up at Gatineau for the 3rd consecutive winter (A. Cloutier et al.). Rough-legged Hawks were found wintering in good numbers as far n. as in the L. Saint-Jean area and in the Abitibi region, where up to 14 were tallied n. of L. Abitibi in Jan (*fide* LI). An American Kestrel at Saint-Narcisse 24 Dec was the latest ever for the Lower St. Lawrence region (R. Bélanger).

A record-late Virginia Rail amazed birders at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré 20-21 Jan (F. Shaffer, C. Maurice). Several American Coots lingered until mid-Jan, including one at Saint-Mathias 13 Jan, one at Île aux Fermiers 14 Jan, and 4 at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 14 Jan (PB). Three Sandhill Cranes present since last