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Bird Protection
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Protection
des oiseaux
du Québec



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Message du président

by Simon Duval
BPQ President

Bonne année ! Même si l'année 2020 a été plutôt difficile, on commence à voir la lumière au bout du tunnel.

Malgré la pandémie, je suis fier de nos bénévoles et des différents comités qui ont continué à travailler ensemble. Tous ont dû apprendre les rudiments de Zoom ou autre moyen de rencontre à distance, mais nous avons réalisé de belles choses.

On n'a qu'à penser aux très ingénieuses sorties terrains virtuelles organisées semaine après semaine, ou bien les nombreuses lettres de support à des problématiques de conservation de milieux naturels.

Le conseil d'administration continue de se rencontrer neuf fois par année pour traiter de diverses problématiques et nous continuerons de vous soumettre les résumés de ces rencontres.

Pour 2021, on se souhaite bien entendu de pouvoir se revoir en personne, que ce soit sur le terrain ou bien lors de nos rencontres mensuelles.

En attendant, si vous voulez vous impliquer dans un de nos nombreux comités, entrez en contact avec nous à birdprotectionquebec@gmail.com. Nous sommes toujours à la recherche de bénévoles.

N'oubliez pas de profiter de l'hiver ornithologique. Les journées se rallongent tranquillement et on peut déjà rêver aux premiers migrants.

President's Message

Happy New Year! Even if 2020 was rather difficult, we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Despite the pandemic, I am proud of our volunteers and the various committees that have continued to work together. They had to learn the basics of Zoom or other means of meeting at a distance, but we have achieved great things. One only has to think of the very ingenious virtual field trips organized week after week, or the many letters of support for natural environment conservation issues.



Common Redpoll / Sizerin flammé
© 2021 Chuck Kling

The board of directors continues to meet nine times a year to discuss various issues, and we will continue to submit summaries of these meetings to you.

For 2021, we hope to see you in person, either in the field or at our monthly meetings. In the meantime, if you would like to get involved in one of our many committees, please contact us at birdprotectionquebec@gmail.com. We are always looking for volunteers.

Take time to get out and enjoy the birds of winter. The days are slowly getting longer and you can already start dreaming of the first migrants.

Hawkwatching Around Montréal

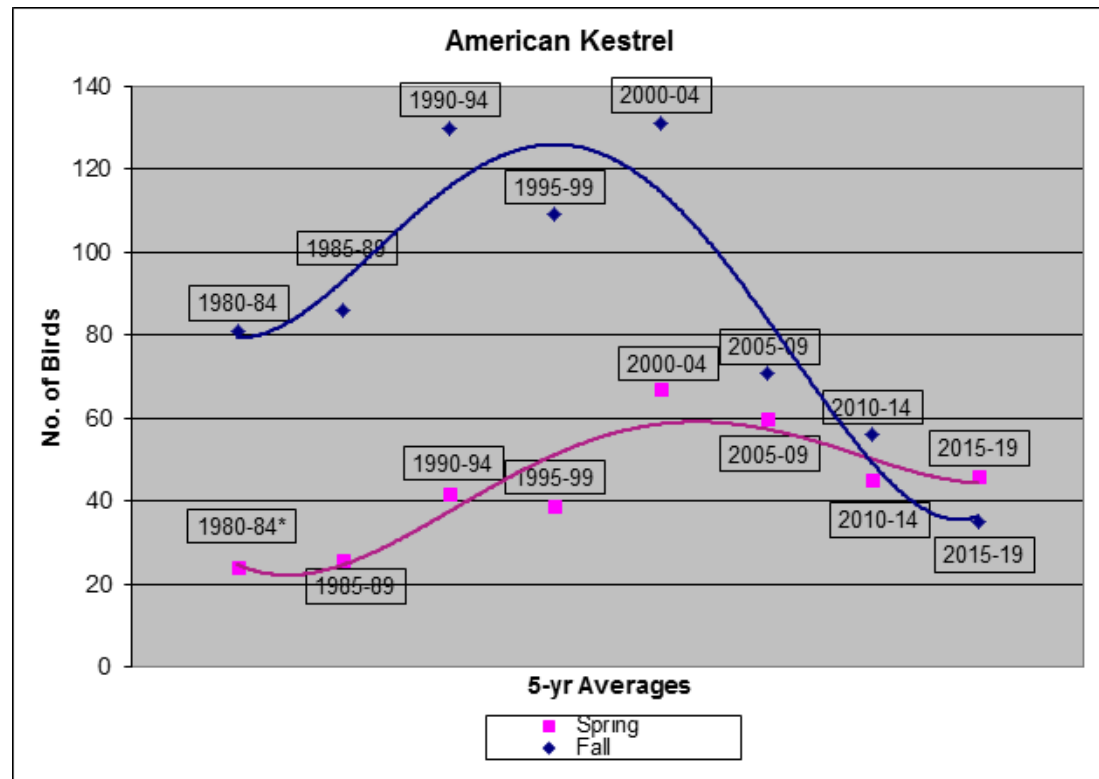
by Bob Barnhurst and Mabel McIntosh

This has been a year of limited birding for everyone due to COVID-19. However, we managed to complete the spring and fall hawkwatches without incident, despite the lockdowns. Early in the spring season we were practically the only car on the road, with whole stretches of highway devoid of traffic.

Recent years have seen a drop in hawk numbers, not the least this year. American Kestrel is one of the species most affected, for reasons still not fully understood.

American Kestrel

A favourite species of many, the American Kestrel is often met with on birding field trips, although less so in the past decade. We still see nesting birds, thanks in part to boxes put up to encourage nesting. Nesting in natural cavities is still seen, but rarely. One natural cavity site frequently observed by birdwatchers is at the St. Anicet area hawksite on Montée Smellie. The birds have been nesting there for a long time. For several years, we have seen two



breeding pairs near the St. Stanislas-de-Kostka hawksite, in this case both using nesting boxes (see picture). The number of young fledged successfully is often largely unknown, but it is a fact that many young hawks rarely make it through their first year. Migration timing of breeding kestrels shows a preference for April but birds are often seen in both March and May. Later migrants are probably those breeding further north of Montréal. In the fall, most birds migrate in September.

The numbers of kestrels seen in migration at the St. Stanislas-de-Kostka and Montréal West Island hawksites since 1980 are plotted as 5-year averages for both spring and fall respectively, in the above chart.

Numbers are relatively modest by comparison to some species. Detailed treatment of the annual data shows an apparent 2-3 year “boom and bust” cycle. This will not be discussed here.



A migrating American Kestrel migrating over the Montreal West Island hawksite, September 2014

What is immediately apparent from the chart is that, until the last decade, the number of American Kestrels seen during fall migration was higher than seen in migration during the spring. This is not unusual as migration patterns differ somewhat between the two seasons and from year-to-year. These insights are one of the values of using long-term data, as we have done in our study. During the last decade, the number of migrating kestrels has fallen drastically in both spring and fall to levels not seen since the 1980s. (The records show the same rise and fall over the past 40 years for many species –see earlier articles). Raptor numbers are tightly linked to prey numbers and their own reproductive cycles, which indicates that the amount of prey available must also be steadily falling. Add to this habitat loss, including

by forest fires, clear-cutting, and urban development, and we have a recipe for disaster. It is a fact that for a balanced ecosystem all species are equally important, including predators.

For the American Kestrel, it is also believed that predation by Cooper's Hawks and Merlins are a possible additional cause for their precipitous declines, although the evidence is still unclear. Many conference and journal papers, including seminars, have been devoted in recent years to solving the puzzle of the decline of the American Kestrel. Professor David Bird, amongst others in the raptor fraternity, has written extensively on American Kestrels over the years. No single reason for the decline has yet been agreed upon.

Our protocol for sighting and recording migrating raptors has remained the same for the last 40 plus years, beginning in 1980. With the help of BPQ and the wildlife department of the Quebec Government, we plan to continue this monitoring for many years to come. We need to be proactive to save the American Kestrel. We all hope that this species, and others, will show an uptick in numbers in the years ahead. Only time will tell.

N.B. All photographs of hawks shown in the Hawkwatching Around Montreal articles were taken at a distance so as not to disturb the birds.



A hunting male American Kestrel at the Montreal West Island hawksite, September 2014

Next time: A summary of sightings of rarely occurring hawks and vultures at the Montreal sites, including Black Vultures, Swainson's Hawks, Gyrfalcons, and even a Mississippi Kite.

Bird Views

A summary of interesting bird sightings in Montréal and around the province of Québec — August - November 2020

by Pierre Bannon

Ross's Goose: a very early migrant was at Saint-Lazare 16 Sep (J. Coté, *ph.*). **Tundra Bean-Goose:** an ad found at Masson 8 Nov sparked an interesting debate on the identification of the different forms composing the Bean-Goose complex (R. Dubois, D. Gélinas, *ph.*). A detailed report was written by Michel Gosselin confirming this second record for the province of Québec. **Pink-footed Goose:** one at Percé 31 Oct-7 Nov (A. Couture et al.). **Barnacle Goose:** an early migrant or possibly an escapee at Masson 12 Sep (R. Dubois, D. Dallaire), and 2 birds at Victoriaville 16-17 Oct (C. Roy et al., *ph.*). **Hybrid Barnacle Goose X Canada Goose:** 2 birds photographed together at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 12-24 Oct (W. Grubert, J. Coté et al.). **Trumpeter Swan:** the pairs at Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois and at Saint-Fulgence lingered until respectively 25 Oct and 28 Oct. A single bird was also reported at Rimouski 20 Sep (L. Saint-Laurent). **Tundra Swan:** 4 birds in Missisquoi Bay 22-23 Nov (T. Jobin) and one at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 29-30 Nov (G & R. Boulet). **King Eider:** a female at Châteauguay 1-5 Nov (M. Pelletier. P. Beaudoin et al., *ph.*).

White-winged Dove: singles at Neuville 22 Aug (G. Poisson) and at Tadoussac 20 Oct-3 Nov (L. Desbordes, *m.ob.*) brought the total for the year at five records. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** the influx of birds noted last summer in southern Quebec continued into the fall but with a shifting towards the NE as far as the Gaspé

Parlons d'oiseaux

Un bilan des observations intéressantes à Montréal et à travers la province de Québec — août - nov. 2020

par Pierre Bannon

Oie de Ross: un migrateur très hâtif à Saint-Lazare 16 sept (J. Coté, *ph.*). **Oie de la tundra:** un ad trouvé à Masson 8 nov a déclenché un intéressant débat sur sa véritable identité (R. Dubois, D. Gélinas, *ph.*). Une analyse détaillée a été rédigée par Michel Gosselin confirmant ainsi cette 2ième présence dans la province **Oie à bec court:** une à Percé 31 oct-7 nov (A. Couture et al.). **Bernache nonnette:** un migrateur hâtif ou possiblement un échappé de captivité à Masson 12 sept (R. Dubois, D. Dallaire), et 2 oiseaux à Victoriaville 16-17 oct (C. Roy et al., *ph.*). **Hybride Bernache nonnette X Bernache du Canada:** 2 oiseaux photographiés ensemble à Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague 12-24 oct (W. Grubert, J. Coté et al.). **Cygne trompette:** des couples sont demeurés à Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois et à Saint-Fulgence jusqu'au 25 oct et jusqu'au 28 oct respectivement. Un oiseau seul a également été signalé à Rimouski 20 sept (L. Saint-Laurent). **Cygne siffleur:** 4 oiseaux dans la baie Missisquoi 22-23 nov (T. Jobin) et un autre à Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu 29-30 nov (G & R. Boulet). **Eider à tête grise:** une femelle à Châteauguay 1-5 nov (M. Pelletier. P. Beaudoin et al, *ph.*).

Tourterelle à ailes blanches: des oiseaux à Neuville 22 août (G. Poisson) et à Tadoussac 20 oct-3 nov (L. Desbordes, *pl.ob.*) ont porté le total de l'année à cinq. **Coulicou à bec jaune:** l'afflux d'oiseaux constaté l'été dernier dans le sud du Québec s'est

Peninsula. In summary, about 10 birds were seen in s. Québec in late Aug–early Sep, but about 30 in eastern Québec in late Sep–early Oct, including a high count of 5 in Forillon NP 3 oct (D. Jalbert, A. Gagnon). **Sandhill Crane**: a flock of 50 flying over Hudson 8 Oct was noteworthy (*vide* W. Grubert). **Hudsonian Godwit**: culminated at 54 indiv in Missisquoi Bay 3–6 Oct (T. Jobin, *m.ob.*), probably a record number for southern Quebec. One bird still there 24 Nov, a new record late date for the province (R. Boulet). **Marbled Godwit**: singles at Ile Fryer (Carignan) 13 Aug (G. Riel, F. Perrera), Gatineau 17 Aug (G. Seutin), and Rimouski 26 Aug–3 Sep (G. Bouchard et al.). **Ruff**: a juv at l'Anse au Lard (Rimouski) 17–20 Sep (B. Arseneau, *ph.*). **Purple Sandpiper**: singles at Réservoir Baskatong 12 Oct (MA. Montpetit, S. Lépine) and in Missisquoi Bay 12 Nov (M. Pelletier) were noteworthy inland records. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**: seen in 10 localities, including one on Missisquoi Bay 12 Sep (N. Osborne et al.). **Long-billed Dowitcher**: seen in 7 localities with a maximum count of 26 birds in Missisquoi Bay 27 Oct (M. Asselin). The last bird was seen in Missisquoi Bay 17 Nov (M. Pelletier). **Red Phalarope**: noted in 7 localities including a bird seen by many 14–16 Sep in Missisquoi Bay. **Pomarine Jaeger**: a bird reached Gatineau 22 Sep–5 Oct (G. Seutin et al.) and probably the same at Sainte-Catherine 15–18 Oct (J. Gagnon, A. Sylvain et al.). **Parasitic Jaeger**: 3 to 4 birds reached the Montreal area 14 Sep–15 Oct (*m. ob.*). **Long-tailed Jaeger**: one reached Gatineau 27–29 Aug (G. Seutin, R. Dubois). **Thick-billed Murre**: 20 off Les Escoumins 13 Nov were noteworthy (R. Pintiaux). **Razorbill**: one at Pointe Yamachiche 29 Sep (M. Bourassa, *ph.*) and one found alive on a Longueuil street were out of place (*vide* G. Vine).

Sabine's Gull: rare in Lanaudière, a bird stopped at Saint-Donat-de-Montcalm 9 Sep (P. André, J. Filiatrault). The Upper St. Lawrence was also visited by singles at Ile des Soeurs 17 Sep (O. Barden), Pointe aux Trembles (Montréal) 17 Sep (Y. Gauthier), Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 4–12 Oct (L. Falcon, M. Manolova), and Ile Perrot 11 Oct (M. Chalifoux, L. Grenier). **Franklin's Gull**:

perpétué durant l'automne, mais avec un déplacement vers le NE jusqu'à la péninsule gaspésienne. En résumé, environ 10 oiseaux ont été aperçus dans le sud de la province vers la fin août–début sept, suivis d'une trentaine dans l'est du Québec à la fin sept–début oct, incluant 5 oiseaux au PN Forillon 3 oct (D. Jalbert, A. Gagnon). **Grue du Canada**: un groupe de 50 en vol à Hudson 8 oct était remarquable (*vide* W. Grubert). **Barge hudsonienne**: jusqu'à 54 indiv. dénombrés à la baie Missisquoi 3–6 oct (T. Jobin, *pl. ob.*), probablement un nombre record pour le sud du Québec. Un oiseau était encore présent 24 nov, une nouvelle date record de départ tardif pour la province (R. Boulet). **Barge marbrée**: des oiseaux à l'île Fryer (Carignan) 13 août (G. Riel, F. Perrera), Gatineau 17 août (G. Seutin), et à Rimouski 26 août–3 sept (G. Bouchard et al.). **Combattant varié**: un juv à l'Anse au Lard (Rimouski) 17–20 sept (B. Arseneau, *ph.*). **Bécasseau violet**: des oiseaux au réservoir Baskatong 12 oct (MA. Montpetit, S. Lépine) et à la baie Missisquoi 12 nov (M. Pelletier) étaient dignes de mention à l'intérieur des terres. **Bécasseau roussâtre**: vu dans 10 localités dont un à la baie Missisquoi 12 sept (N. Osborne et al.). **Bécassin à long bec**: vu dans 7 localités avec un maximum de 26 oiseaux à la baie Missisquoi 27 oct (M. Asselin). Le dernier oiseau a été vu à la baie Missisquoi 17 nov (M. Pelletier). **Phalarope à bec large**: noté dans 7 localités dont un oiseau vu par *pl. ob.* à la baie Missisquoi 14–16 sept. **Labbe pomarin**: un oiseau s'est rendu à Gatineau 22 sept–5 oct (G. Seutin et al.) et peut-être le même à Sainte-Catherine 15–18 oct (J. Gagnon, A. Sylvain et al.). **Labbe parasite**: 3 ou 4 oiseaux aperçus dans la région de Montréal 14 sept–15 oct (*pl. ob.*). **Labbe à longue queue**: un à Gatineau 27–29 août (G. Seutin, R. Dubois). **Guillemot de Brünnich**: 20 au large des Escoumins 13 nov sont dignes de mention (R. Pintiaux). **Petit Pingouin**: un à Pointe Yamachiche 29 sept (M. Bourassa, *ph.*) et un trouvé vivant dans une rue de Longueuil étaient loin de leur aire (*vide* G. Vine).

Mouette de Sabine: rare dans Lanaudière, un oiseau s'est arrêté à Saint-Donat 9 sept (P. André, J. Filiatrault). Le Haut St-Laurent a aussi reçu la visite d'oiseaux à l'île des Soeurs 17 sept (O.

singles at Pointe aux Outardes 8 Aug (E. Hains), in Missisquoi Bay 4–6 Oct (D. Ouellette et al.), and at Victoriaville 24–25 Oct (C. Roy). **Mew Gull (ssp canus)**: an ad of the nominal ssp was nicely photographed at Les Escoumins 10 Nov and again 20 Nov (D. Turgeon et al, ph.). **Slaty-backed Gull**: an ad was photographed at distance on Lake Osisko (Abitibi) 16 Nov, a third record for the province (M. Marsan). **Caspian Tern**: 49 tallied in Missisquoi Bay 5 Aug represented the largest count since 1955 in the province (O. Barden). **Forster's Tern**: one on Missisquoi Bay 3–6 Oct (JG. Papineau et al.). **Wilson's Storm-Petrel**: 2 birds well seen at Québec City 5 Aug (R. Besançon et al.). **Leach's Storm-Petrel**: one well described at Lévis 28 Aug (G. Lemelin). **Magnificent Frigatebird**: an adult female was nicely photographed at La Malbaie 10 Sep, a third record for the province (C. Lepage, M. Robert). Hurricane Laura could have been one of the explanations for the presence of this seabird here. **Northern Gannet**: a weakening juv found in a parking lot at Louiseville was brought to a rehabilitation centre in late Nov (M. Descôteaux). **Double-crested Cormorant**: a flock of 5,000 birds on Missisquoi Bay 5 Oct was noteworthy (P. Bannon, S. Labbé). **American White Pelican**: 2 at Drummondville 10–30 Aug (J. Verville), and possibly the same 2 at Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville 15–29 Aug (P. Messier et al.). **Little Blue Heron**: a juv at Saint-Bonaventure 12–25 Aug (F. Bourret et al.), 2 at Sainte-Anne-des-Monts 14 Aug (M. Daudelin) and finally one at Maria 20 Oct (C. Lamarre, ph.). **Black Vulture**: about 12 birds reported, including a pair hanging around the Saint-Armand area in the last 2 weeks of Aug (*m.ob.*) and single late birds at Dundee 20 Nov (D. Harvey, S. Harvey, *ph.*) and at LaPêche 25–30 Nov (C. Detellier, *ph.*). Also possibly up to 6 birds hanging around the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula throughout the period. **Swainson's Hawk**: a juv dark-morph nicely photographed at Saint-Maurice-de-l'Échourie (Gaspésie) 22 Sep (V. Cotton) and most probably the same bird in Forillon NP 25 Sep (S. Robert, P. Berthe). Otherwise, a very high-flying hawk photographed by L. Lemay 20 Oct at Sainte-Catherine was suspected to be a Swainson's Hawk by S. Denault and later

Barden), à Pointe-aux-Trembles (Montréal) 17 sept (Y. Gauthier), à Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka 4–12 oct (L. Falcon, M. Manolova), et à l'Île Perrot 11 oct (M. Chalifoux, L. Grenier). **Mouette de Franklin**: des oiseaux à Pointe aux Outardes 8 août (E. Hains), à la baie Missisquoi 4–6 oct (D. Ouellette et al.), et à Victoriaville 24–25 oct (C. Roy). **Goéland cendré (ssp canus)**: un ad de la ssp nominale a été photographié aux Escoumins 10 nov puis à nouveau 20 nov (D. Turgeon et al, ph.). **Goéland à manteau ardoisé**: un ad photographié à distance sur le lac Osisko (Abitibi) 16 nov, une 3^{ième} présence dans la province (M. Marsan). **Sterne caspienne**: 49 dénombrées à la baie Missisquoi 5 août représentaient le décompte le plus élevé au Québec depuis 1955 (O. Barden). **Sterne de Forster**: une à la baie Missisquoi 3–6 oct (JG. Papineau et al.). **Océanite de Wilson**: 2 oiseaux à Québec 5 août (R. Besançon et al.). **Océanite cul-blanc**: un bien décrit à Lévis 28 août (G. Lemelin). **Frégate superbe**: une femelle ad. très bien photographiée à La Malbaie 10 sept, une 3^{ième} présence au Québec (C. Lepage, M. Robert). L'ouragan Laura pourrait expliquer la présence de cet oiseau ici. **Fou de Bassan**: un juv affaibli trouvé dans un stationnement à Louiseville a été transporté dans un centre de réhabilitation à la fin nov (M. Descôteaux). **Cormoran à aigrettes**: un regroupement de 5,000 oiseaux à la baie Missisquoi 5 oct était notable (P. Bannon, S. Labbé). **Pélican d'Amérique**: 2 à Drummondville 10–30 août (J. Verville), et peut-être les 2 mêmes à Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville 15–29 août (P. Messier et al.). **Aigrette bleue**: un juv à Saint-Bonaventure 12–25 août (F. Bourret et al.), 2 à Sainte-Anne-des-Monts 14 août (M. Daudelin) et finalement un à Maria 20 oct (C. Lamarre, *ph.*). **Urubu noir**: environ 12 oiseaux signalés, dont un couple à Saint-Armand au cours des 2 dernières semaines d'août (*pl. ob.*) et des oiseaux tardifs à Dundee 20 nov (D. Harvey, S. Harvey, *ph.*) et à LaPêche 25–30 nov (C. Detellier, *ph.*). Possiblement près de 6 oiseaux autour de la péninsule gaspésienne durant la période. **Buse de Swainson**: un juv de forme sombre photographié à Saint-Maurice-de-l'Échourie (Gaspésie) 22 sept (V. Cotton) et probablement le même au PN de Forillon 25 sept (S. Robert, P.

confirmed to be a juv dark-morph Swainson's Hawk by Bryan Sullivan, coauthor of *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors*.

Red-headed Woodpecker: after the welcomed influx of adult birds reported last summer, fall was enlightened by an amazing number of juveniles: one at Ayers Cliff 28 Sep (S. Norrie), one at Saint-Donat 28 Sep (M. Roy), 2 at Dollard des Ormeaux (Montréal) 2-3 Oct (L. Alarie), one in Mount Royal Park 9 Oct (S. Coté Bourgoïn), one at Saint-Alphonse-de-Caplan (Gaspésie) 19 Oct (H. Cyr, J. Lamarche) and one at Côteau-du-Lac 13 Nov (M. Jackson). Were these birds born in the province where breeding has not been confirmed for a decade? **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** this species continued to make progress in the province. This time, breeding was confirmed in Gatineau Park where an ad male was seen with a juv 1 Aug (G. Seutin). Many birds wandered east including one as far as Sept-Iles 17 Oct-29 Nov (I. Calderon). **Ash-throated Flycatcher:** one at Cap-aux-Meules (Iles de la Madeleine) 7 Nov (B. Vigneault, A Couture, A. Richard, *ph.*), a second record for the province. **Western Kingbird:** single birds at Saint-Pascal 6 Aug (F. van Oordt La Hoz), at Cap d'Espoir 6 Sep (A. Couture, Y. Cyr) and at Rivière-au-Renard 21 Oct (C. Dufresne). **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** one at Cap d'Espoir 15-18 Nov, a record late date for the province (L. L. Collin). **Say's Phoebe:** one feeding on the beach at Portneuf-sur-Mer 11-13 Sep (J. Normand, G. Tremblay et al.). **Vermilion Flycatcher:** a 1st year male at Saint-Thomas-Didyme 20-27 Oct; found dead 28 Oct (G. Dion, C. Bellemare, *m.ob.*), a second record for the province. **White-eyed Vireo:** a bird banded at the McGill Bird Observatory 20 Aug remained in the area until at least 2 Oct (S. Duval). Another bird was at Châteauguay 29-31 Oct (S. Sévigny, M. Arcand, *m.ob.*). **Warbling Vireo:** one banded at Tadoussac 26 Oct (PA Dumas, J. Roy-Drainville) established a record late date for the province. **Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** a bird at Laterrière 10 Aug was a first record for the Saguenay region (N. Boutin, Y. Darveau). **Cave Swallow:** one at Les Escoumins 12-13 Nov (R. Pintiaux, *m.ob.*). **Sedge Wren:** one photographed at the Parc-agricole du Bois-de-la-Roche (Montréal) 5 Nov, a record

Berthe). Par ailleurs, un oiseau photographié très haut en vol par L. Lemay 20 oct à Sainte-Catherine s'est avéré être une Buse de Swainson de forme sombre tel que soupçonné par S. Denault et confirmé par Bryan Sullivan, co-auteur du *Crossley ID Guide: Raptors*.

Pic à tête rouge: après l'afflux bien accueilli d'adultes l'été dernier, l'automne fut suivi par un nombre surprenant de juv: un à Ayers Cliff 28 sept (S. Norrie), un à Saint-Donat 28 sept (M. Roy), 2 à Dollard des Ormeaux (Montréal) 2-3 oct (L. Alarie), un au mont Royal 9 oct (S. Coté Bourgoïn), un à Saint-Alphonse-de-Caplan (Gaspésie) 19 oct (H. Cyr, J. Lamarche) et un à Côteau-du-Lac 13 nov (M. Jackson). Ces oiseaux sont-ils nés au Québec où il n'y a eu aucune confirmation de nidification depuis 10 ans? **Pic à ventre roux:** cette espèce continue sa progression au Québec. Un mâle ad accompagné d'un juv 1er août a confirmé la nidification à Gatineau (G. Seutin). Plusieurs oiseaux se sont dispersés vers l'est dont un aussi loin que Sept-Iles 17 oct-29 nov (I. Calderon). **Tyran à gorge cendrée:** un à Cap-aux-Meules (Iles de la Madeleine) 7 nov (B. Vigneault, A Couture, A. Richard, *ph.*), une 2^{ième} présence dans la province. **Tyran de l'Ouest:** des oiseaux à Saint-Pascal 6 août (F. van Oordt La Hoz), à Cap-d'Espoir 6 sept (A. Couture, Y. Cyr) et à Rivière-au-Renard 21 oct (C. Dufresne). **Tyran à longue queue:** un à Cap d'Espoir 15-18 nov, une nouvelle date tardive record pour le Québec (L. L. Collin). **Moucherolle à ventre roux:** un s'alimentant sur la plage à Portneuf-sur-Mer 11-13 sept (J. Normand, G. Tremblay et al.). **Moucherolle vermillon:** un mâle de 1^{re} année à Saint-Thomas-Didyme 20-27 oct; trouvé mort 28 oct (G. Dion, C. Bellemare, *pl.ob.*), une 2^e présence au Québec. **Viréo aux yeux blancs:** un oiseau bagué à l'observatoire d'oiseaux McGill 20 août est demeuré sur place jusqu'au 2 oct (S. Duval). Un autre oiseau a séjourné à Châteauguay 29-31 oct (S. Sévigny, M. Arcand, *pl.ob.*). **Viréo mélodieux:** un oiseau bagué Tadoussac 26 Oct (PA Dumas, J. Roy-Drainville), une date record pour la province. **Hirondelle à ailes hérissées:** un oiseau à Laterrière 10 août constituait une première présence au Saguenay (N. Boutin, Y.

late date for the province (R. Millot, K. Collin). **Carolina Wren:** vagrants reached Rimouski 4–13 Aug (A. Florea, V. Giroux), Rouyn–Noranda 11–18 Aug (C. Dion), Pointe–des–Monts 14 Aug (F. Hareau, D. Tétreault), Percé 26–27 Sep (A. Couture, Y. Cyr) and Cap–de–Bon–Désir 22–25 Oct (D. Turgeon et al.). **Northern Wheatear:** singles at Ptarmigan Bay (Dolbeau–Mistassini) 30 Aug (D. Lavoie), and at Pointe–aux–Outardes 2 Oct (JP. Barry). **Mountain Bluebird:** a male photographed at Ivujivik (Nunavik) 9–20 Sep, by far the northernmost ever reported in the province (M. Vachon). **Townsend’s Solitaire:** single birds found at Gatineau 4–5 Oct (C. Blanchette et al.), at Sherbrooke 15 Oct (J. Mongeau), at Bic NP 22 Oct–22 Nov (Y. Beaulieu), at Cap–de–Bon–Désir 24 Oct (É. Wilmot, S. Boivin), at Brigham 31 Oct (M. Perron), at Sept–Îles 13 Nov (JF. Laporte), at Québec City 14 Nov (C. Kimber), at l’Anse–au–Griffon 22 Nov (V. Gaillard, L. Desbordes) and at Beauceville 22–30 Nov (F. Lavoie) for a grand total of 9 birds.

Grasshopper Sparrow: breeding was confirmed at Litchfield (Pontiac) where an ad and 2 juv were nicely photographed 6–7 Aug (M. Baril). A very late and out of range bird visited Cap d’Espoir 15 Nov (A. Couture, Y. Cyr). **Lark Sparrow:** singles in Forillon NP 9–11 Sep (M. Harnois, C. Kovacs), at Chandler 11–16 Oct (JR. Lepage et al.) and at Rivière Madeleine 9–14 Nov (G. Blanchette). **Golden–crowned Sparrow:** one at Rimouski 31 Oct–7 Nov (V. Giroux, A. Florea, *m.ob.*), a fourth record for the province. **Nelson’s Sparrow:** 2 found on Ile Gagné (Montréal) 21–23 Sep (E. Brisson–Curadeau, O.A. Pelletier), one at Vinton (Pontiac) 27–28 Sep (R. Dubois, D. Gélinas), 2 at Grenville–sur–la–Rouge 1 Oct (J. Bouvier, D. Corbeil), and one at Pierrefonds (Montréal) 8 Oct (O. Barden). **Spotted Towhee:** a male at Grande–Rivière 25–30 Nov (A. Leblanc). **Yellow–breasted Chat:** singles at Chandler 12 Sep (JR. Lepage), Québec City 25 Sep (G. Garant), Pointe des Monts 4 Oct (J. Ibarzabal, A. Caughlan, B. Drolet), Cap Tourmente banding station, banded 11 Oct and again 12 Oct (M. Landry, T. Gianoli et al.). **Yellow–headed Blackbird:** an imm or female stopped at Chapais 15 Nov (D. Gamelin). **Prothonotary Warbler:** 3 birds reported, all in e. Québec: the first was banded

Darveau). **Hirondelle à front brun:** une aux Escoumins 12–13 nov (R. Pintiaux, *pl. ob.*). **Troglodyte à bec court:** un photographié au Parc–agricole du Bois–de–la–Roche (Montréal) 5 nov, une date de départ record pour le Québec (R. Millot, K. Collin). **Troglodyte de Caroline:** des oiseaux se sont aventurés à Rimouski 4–13 août (A. Florea, V. Giroux), Rouyn–Noranda 11–18 août (C. Dion), Pointe–des–Monts 14 août (F. Hareau, D. Tétreault), Percé 26–27 sept (A. Couture, Y. Cyr) et Cap–de–Bon–Désir 22–25 oct (D. Turgeon). **Traquet motteux:** des oiseaux à la baie Ptarmigan (Dolbeau–Mistassini) 30 août (D. Lavoie), et à Pointe–aux–Outardes 2 oct (JP. Barry). **Merlebleu azuré:** un mâle photographié à Ivujivik (Nunavik) 9–20 sept, de loin le plus au nord signalé au Québec (M. Vachon). **Solitaire de Townsend:** des oiseaux trouvés à Gatineau 4–5 oct (C. Blanchette et al.), Sherbrooke 15 oct (J. Mongeau), PN du Bic 22 oct–22 nov (Y. Beaulieu), Cap–de–Bon–Désir 24 oct (É. Wilmot, S. Boivin), Brigham 31 oct (M. Perron), Sept–Îles 13 nov (JF. Laporte), Québec 14 nov (C. Kimber), l’Anse–au–Griffon 22 nov (V. Gaillard, L. Desbordes) et Beauceville 22–30 nov (F. Lavoie) pour un grand total de 9 oiseaux.

Bruant sauterelle: nidification confirmée à Litchfield (Pontiac) où un ad et 2 juv furent photographiés 6–7 août (M. Baril). Un oiseau très tardif et très loin de son aire a visité Cap–d’Espoir 15 nov (A. Couture, Y. Cyr). **Bruant à joues marron:** des oiseaux au PN Forillon 9–11 sep (M. Harnois, C. Kovacs), à Chandler 11–16 oct (JR. Lepage et al.) et à Rivière Madeleine 9–14 nov (G. Blanchette). **Bruant à couronne dorée:** un oiseau à Rimouski 31 oct–7 nov (V. Giroux, A. Florea, *pl.ob.*), une 4^{ie} présence dans la province. **Bruant de Nelson:** 2 trouvés à l’Île Gagné (Montréal) 21–23 sept (E. Brisson–Curadeau, O.A. Pelletier), un à Vinton (Pontiac) 27–28 sept (R. Dubois, D. Gélinas), 2 à Grenville–sur–la–Rouge 1^{er} oct (J. Bouvier, D. Corbeil), et un à Pierrefonds (Montréal) 8 oct (O. Barden). **Tohi tacheté:** un mâle à Grande–Rivière 25–30 nov (A. Leblanc). **Ictérie polyglotte:** des oiseaux à Chandler 12 sept (JR. Lepage), Québec 25 sept (G. Garant), Pointe des Monts 4 oct (J. Ibarzabal, A. Caughlan, B. Drolet), et un

at the Coin du Banc banding station (Percé) 2 Sep (A. Cristiano et al.), the second was seen at Rimouski 3 Sep (G. Gendron, D. Ruest) and the third at Franquelin 18 Sep (G. Labrie, *ph.*).

Connecticut Warbler: one at Mansonville 16 Oct was a first occurrence for the Eastern Townships (R. Carswell). **Blackburnian Warbler:** one photographed at Brossard 3 Nov (M. Manolova) was late and most likely only the third ever for this month. **Yellow-throated Warbler:** singles at Sept-Îles 12-13 Oct (Y. Duchesne, *ph.*), at Québec City 2-30 Nov (S. Blais, *m.ob.*) and at Pointe Saint-Pierre 6 Nov (D. Jalbert, A. Gagnon). **Prairie Warbler:** one in Forillon NP 18 Oct (D. Jalbert, A. Gagnon). **Summer Tanager:** a male at Lévis 22 Oct-15 Nov (M. O'Neill, *m.ob. ph.*). **Western Tanager:** a well-described bird made a brief stop in Pointe-Saint-Charles (Montréal) 2 Nov (MC Morin, G. Bolduc). **Northern Cardinal:** a multitude of birds was involved in a huge movement towards eastern Québec and the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean this fall; a male reached Chevery 8 Nov (S. Vatcher), the furthest east ever reported for the species on the Lower North Shore, while almost every village along the Gaspé coast was visited by the species. **Painted Bunting:** a female at l'Anse-au-Griffon 13-17 Nov (C. Côté, *ph., m.ob.*). **Dickcissel:** at least 30 indiv were reported in the province, many of them on the Gaspé Peninsula.

Please report your interesting bird observations by email to pbannon@videotron.ca

bagué à l'observatoire d'oiseaux du Cap Tourmente 11 oct et bagué à nouveau 12 oct (M. Landry, T. Gianoli et al.). **Carouge à tête jaune:** un imm ou une femelle s'est arrêté à Chapais 15 nov (D. Gamelin). **Paruline orangée:** 3 oiseaux signalés, tous dans l'est du Québec: le premier bagué à la station de baguage de Coin du Banc (Percé) 2 sept (A. Cristiano et al.), le second observé à Rimouski 3 sept (G. Gendron, D. Ruest) et le 3ième à Franquelin 18 sept (G. Labrie, *ph.*). **Paruline à gorge grise:** un oiseau à Mansonville 16 oct constituait une première mention en Estrie (R. Carswell). **Paruline à gorge orangée:** un oiseau photographié à Brossard 3 Nov (M. Manolova) semblait être seulement la troisième mention en novembre. **Paruline à gorge jaune:** des oiseaux à Sept-Îles 12-13 oct (Y. Duchesne, *ph.*), Québec 2-30 nov (S. Blais, *pl.ob.*) et à Pointe Saint-Pierre 6 nov (D. Jalbert, A. Gagnon). **Paruline des prés:** une au PN Forillon 18 oct (D. Jalbert, A. Gagnon). **Piranga vermillon:** un mâle à Lévis 22 oct-15 nov (M. O'Neill, *pl. ob. ph.*). **Piranga à tête rouge:** un oiseau bien décrit s'est arrêté à Pointe-Saint-Charles (Montréal) 2 Nov (MC. Morin, G. Bolduc). **Cardinal rouge:** un nombre difficilement estimable d'oiseaux furent impliqués dans un déplacement spectaculaire vers l'est du Québec et vers le Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean cet automne; un mâle s'est même rendu à Chevery 8 nov (S. Vatcher), le point le plus à l'est jamais atteint par l'espèce sur la Basse Côte Nord, tandis qu'un nombre sans précédent de villages de la côte gaspésienne ont été visités par l'espèce. **Passerin nonpareil:** une femelle à l'Anse-au-Griffon 13-17 nov (C. Côté, *ph., pl.ob.*). **Dickcissel d'Amérique:** au moins 30 indiv signalés dans la province, dont plusieurs dans la péninsule gaspésienne.

Signalez vos observations intéressantes par courriel à pbannon@videotron.ca

Volunteering for the Bluebirds

by Barbara MacDuff

On a warm November day, 12 Eastern bluebird nest boxes were installed at the Montréal Technoparc. The nest boxes were used in a research project at one time, and were in the hands of Lyman Entomological Museum at McGill. They were about to throw the boxes away, but board members Kyle Elliott and Kristen Lalla were able to step in and save them.

Barbara MacDuff, past president and member of BPQ's Conservation Committee, acquired the nest boxes from Kristen, who is the committee chair. The committee agreed that this would be a worthwhile project and provided funds for the purchase of metal poles to attach to the boxes.

Thanks to Claude Cloutier, a BPQ director, who repaired the nest boxes, and installed them with the help of Jim Harris and Joël Coutu.

Eastern bluebirds have been seen in the Technoparc but are not known to nest there. We eagerly await spring to see if a pair of bluebirds will decide to raise their family in one of the boxes.



Claude Cloutier and Joël Coutu installing a Bluebird nest box
© 2020 Barbara MacDuff



Eastern Bluebird / Merlebleu de l'Est © 2020 Chuck Kling

Welcome to Our New Members

by Darlene Harvey,
Membership Secretary

We are happy to begin the New Year by welcoming the following new and returning members:

Marilyn Howell, Otto Breski-Thompson, Lars Breski-Thompson, Jennifer Drummond, Catherine Balfour, Chantal Paul, Martin Joyal, Ryan Young, Bruce Campbell, Kathrin Kaiser, Wendy Conn, Anne Harper, Lidija Rozitis, Martial

Thomas, Patricia Owens, and Frédérique Tremblay.

We look forward to meeting you in person once Covid regulations deem it safe for us to resume our group activities. In the meantime, be sure to join us for our Zoom monthly lectures and don't forget to join our Song Sparrow e-list to connect with other members (<https://groups.io/g/bpqsongsparrow>) and to follow us on Facebook.

To Our Life Members

We are truly grateful to those of you who have shown such strong support for our organization by becoming Life Members of BPQ.

Because we don't have a reason to contact you every year at renewal time, we do want to be sure that we don't lose touch! Please don't forget to send any address or email updates to bpqmembership@gmail.com so you continue to receive news about BPQ projects and plans.

Bienvenue aux nouveaux membres

Nous sommes heureux de commencer une nouvelle année en accueillant de nouveaux membres et d'anciens membres qui ont renouvelé leur adhésion :

Marilyn Howell, Otto Breski-Thompson, Lars Breski-Thompson, Jennifer Drummond, Catherine Balfour, Chantal Paul, Martin Joyal, Ryan Young, Bruce Campbell, Kathrin Kaiser, Wendy Conn, Anne Harper, Lidija Rozitis, Martial Thomas, Patricia Owen., et Frédérique Tremblay.

Nous sommes impatients de vous rencontrer une fois que les règles liées à la Covid nous permettront de reprendre nos activités de groupe de façon sécuritaire. En attendant, n'oubliez pas que vous pouvez assister à nos vidéoconférences mensuelles sur *Zoom*, vous inscrire à notre liste d'abonnés virtuels du *Song Sparrow* pour vous connecter avec d'autres membres (<https://groups.io/g/bpqsongsparrow>) ainsi que nous suivre sur Facebook.

À nos membres à vie



American Robin / Merle
d'Amérique © 2021 Chuck Kling

Nous sommes vraiment reconnaissants envers ceux et celles d'entre vous qui ont manifesté un engagement assez fort envers notre organisation pour devenir membres à vie de POQ.

Bien que nous n'ayons aucune raison de vous contacter chaque année au moment du renouvellement, nous voulons être sûrs de ne pas perdre le contact avec vous! N'oubliez pas de nous faire part de tout changement d'adresse ou de courrier électronique à bpqmembership@gmail.com afin que nous puissions continuer de vous tenir informés des plans et projets de POQ.

Call for New Directors

If you like what BPQ does and would like to see the organization continue to carry out its excellent work, or if you have new ideas you would like to bring to our organization, you may decide this is your year to join the BPQ board of directors.

Our board comprises 19 members, including the president, vice-presidents, treasurer, and secretary. All directors are elected by BPQ's members for two-year terms and can serve for a maximum of ten years before taking a year-long break. We are continually seeking new directors as at the end of each year, some directors will have completed their terms and will step down from the board.

If you are interested in joining the board, you must be a member of BPQ in good standing and be nominated by two other members. All nominations must be received by early to mid-April. Contact us at birdprotectionquebec@gmail.com for details.

Last Call – BPQ Grants New Deadline – January 31 at 6:00 p.m.

This new (earlier) deadline is to accommodate applications to other funding opportunities later in the year that require matching funds. Results will be announced by the end of February. Also, please see revised guidelines (<https://pqspb.org/bpqpoq/research-grants/>). Send applications to Mélanie Guigueno (melanie.guigueno@mcgill.ca).

Dernier Appel – Nouvelle date limite pour les subventions POQ – 31 janvier 2021 à 18h00

Cette nouvelle date limite (plus tôt) est destinée à permettre la présentation des demandes pour d'autres possibilités de financement plus tard dans l'année qui nécessitent des fonds correspondants. Les résultats seront annoncés avant la fin du mois de février. Veuillez également consulter les lignes directrices révisées (<https://pqspb.org/bpqpoq/research-grants//?lang=fr>). Envoyez les demandes à Mélanie Guigueno (melanie.guigueno@mcgill.ca).

Our Upcoming Presentations via Videoconference

Join us for our next two presentations via video conference. All are welcome! All our regular monthly presentations are free of charge.

For security reasons, you must register in advance. You'll need to create a Zoom account and download the Zoom app to your desktop, mobile, or tablet if you haven't done so already. All this is free of charge. For more details, click [here](#).

Registration Information

- For our February presentation, RSVP before noon on February 1 via this [link](#).
- For our March presentation, RSVP before noon on March 1 via this [link](#).
- You will receive confirmation via email containing the meeting link and a unique password once the BPQ Zoom team has approved your registration.

Questions?

Please contact the BPQ Zoom Team at bpq-zm-admin@pqspb.org

Our Enduring Fascination with Birds' Eggs



**Robert Montgomerie,
Queen's University**

Mon, Feb 1, at 7:00 p.m.

Birds' eggs are some of the most variable and beautiful natural objects, but only recently has there been any attempt to explain why they vary so much in size, shape and colour.

In this talk, Bob will explore the history of collecting eggs for food, pleasure and science, highlighting some of recent research on this topic. Despite the vast collections of birds' eggs in museums and private collections around the world, there has been precious little research done on those collections, save the very useful discovery that pesticides were responsible for the thinning of the eggshells of birds of prey.



Common Murre eggs © 2015
Didier Descouens Creative
Commons Attribution-Share Alike
4.0 International licence [https://
creativecommons.org/licenses/
by-sa/4.0/deed.en](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en).

Recently, however, several research groups in Australia, Canada, the USA and the UK have made use of those egg collections to look at the evolution of eggs and colours. Experimental studies

on the colours of American Robin and Common Murre eggs, and comparative analyses of the shapes of all birds' eggs will be highlighted in this presentation.

Dr. Bob Montgomerie is Professor Emeritus and Research Chair in Evolutionary Biology at Queen's, where he has been on the faculty since 1980. He grew up in the wilds of downtown Toronto where he was introduced to birds in the 1960s by both professional and amateur ornithologists at the Royal Ontario Museum and at Long Point Bird Observatory.

He obtained his Ph.D. in 1979 from McGill University for studies on the foraging ecology of Mexican hummingbirds. Bob's research on sexual selection and parental care in birds has taken him around the world to study diverse species in the high arctic of Canada, Alaska, Iceland and Scandinavia, in Australia, New Zealand and the Cook Islands, and in the tropical forests of Central America.

He has published 200 scientific papers as well as an award-winning book on the history of ornithology since Darwin *Ten Thousand Birds*, coauthored with Tim Birkhead and Jo Wimpenny. He wrote or coauthored seven of the species accounts for the *Birds of North America* and ten of the accounts and two chapters in the recent *Birds of Nunavut*.

Wildlife Across an Atomic Landscape

The Ecological Consequences of Radiation for the Flora and Fauna of Chernobyl and Fukushima

**Timothy Mousseau,
University of South
Carolina**

**Monday, March 1, 2021, at
7:00 p.m.**

Dr. Mousseau's presentation will focus on his studies of the ecology of mammals, plants and especially birds in Chernobyl and Fukushima and how exposure to radiation has impacted distributions, abundances, and diversity of organisms living in these highly contaminated landscapes.

The expanse and scale of radioactive contaminants from the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters offer a nearly unique



opportunity to study the consequences of mutagens on natural populations. Studies show substantial increases in mutation rates, developmental abnormalities (including tumours, cataract, and smaller brains), and infertility that likely underlie significant declines in population densities and biodiversity in the most radioactive areas of these regions.

Ironically, because of reduced human disturbance and hunting pressures, a few species appear to be thriving despite the radioactive hazards in the region. These seemingly contradictory findings will be discussed and reconciled.

Timothy Mousseau, PhD, is a Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina. His education includes a MSc from the University of Toronto, and a

PhD from McGill University. He was a NSERC postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Mousseau is an internationally renowned expert on the effects of ionizing radiation (IR) on living systems. He was among the first biologists to initiate research at Fukushima in July 2011, and has been working at Chernobyl since 1999, with more than 110 publications on this topic (>220 in total).

Questions of particular interest include radiation effects on mutation rates, biodiversity, microbiome diversity, fertility, and evolved adaptations to chronic, low-dose radiation exposure. His research has been featured in the NY Times, the Toronto Star, 60 Minutes, Quirks and Quarks, and several National Geographic and Animal Planet TV specials. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), The Explorers Club (FN), and the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS).

Kyra Emo

The BPQ Board of Directors regrets to inform the membership of the passing of a long-standing BPQ member, former director, secretary, and member of numerous BPQ Committees over the years, Kyra Emo. Here is her obituary from the Montreal Gazette. We extend our condolences to her family members and friends.

Kyra Emo - Obituary

We are saddened to announce the passing of Kyra Emo (nee Defries), peacefully at age 90, on Dec. 12, 2020, in Victoria, B.C.

Kyra was predeceased by her beloved husband, Dr. Wallace Brooks Emo, and is survived by her three daughters; Carolyn Emo, Didi (Diane) Henderson, and Gail Emo, along with her grandchildren Leah, David & Kelly Henderson, Rae, David & Clare Gillese, and great-grandson Theodore Wallace Henderson.

Kyra obtained her BSc '53 at McGill University, and went on to a long career in Administration at McGill. She was an enthusiastic birder, ski patroller, ski instructor, and her love of music & life is her legacy.

Condolences and memories are welcome at: <http://Remembr.com/kyra.emo.nee.defries>

BPQ members shared their condolences and many fond memories of birding with Kyra EMO over our email forum, *The Songsparrow*, remembering her as a lovely person, an active and enthusiastic member who was always willing to pitch in, and great fun to bird with. Jeff Harrison, past president and current director of BPQ commented, "Kyra was certainly part of a long tradition of volunteering which has always been a strength in our organization."

Margaret Arnaudin, author of BPQ's history book *A Bird in the Bush* wrote, "I was told that Kyra was a geologist, very expert, but was unable to advance in her field, perhaps for reasons of gender. Apparently there is a chapter devoted to her in Marika Ainley's book: *Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science*.

"Everyone knew Kyra – she was a regular on field trips. One time, for some reason, we ended up as a party of two on a Philipsburg trip. We saw a Red-necked Grebe on Missisquoi Bay – a thrill for both of us. I wonder if she remembered that day. I certainly do. She was a great birding companion. It was nice to see all the lovely pictures of her."

BPQ's 85th Annual Montréal Christmas Bird Count – Report

by Sheldon Harvey

Bird Protection Quebec Montréal
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator

This is a preliminary report on the results of BPQ's 85th Annual Montréal Christmas Bird Count that was held on Saturday, December 19th. Once all of the numbers are finalized and submitted to Birds Canada and Audubon, the detailed report will be issued and made available to everyone on their respective websites.

This year we had 19 teams; a total of 70 participants, covering 22 different sectors within the Montréal count circle. The circle is 24 km. wide and is centred at the corner of Sherbrooke Street West and Westminster Avenue, in Montréal West.

I'm very pleased to report that we ended the day with a total of 78 species recorded. That number surpasses our high species count of 77 achieved in 2012. The total number of birds recorded this year was 16,108.



Eastern Screech-Owl / Petit duc maculé © 2020 Chuck Kling

Some highlights included 1 Common Loon, 1 Barrow's Goldeneye, 1 Great Blue Heron, 4 Bald Eagles, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 3 Iceland Gulls, 2 Glaucous Gulls, 10 Eastern Screech-Owls, 1 Great Horned Owl, 1 Snowy Owl, 1 Barred Owl, 6 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 6 Tufted Titmouse, 2 Hermit Thrush, 1 Snow Bunting, 1 Hoary Redpoll, 1 Fox Sparrow, 1 Marsh Wren, 2 Harlequin Ducks, 1 Red Crossbill and 1 Red-winged Blackbird.

There were 14 species of ducks and geese recorded, including large numbers of Canada Geese, Mallards, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Common Mergansers.

A number of northern species appeared this year including Dark-eyed Junco, Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll, White-winged Crossbill and Red Crossbill. Strangely, though, neither Evening Grosbeaks nor Pine Siskins, were observed by any of the field teams.

Some of the more common and populous species were Rock Pigeons–2,320; Herring Gulls–901; American Crows–812; Black-capped Chickadees–717; European Starlings–2,170; House Sparrows–1,390.

Sadly, due to COVID restrictions, we were unable to hold our traditional compilation get-together at the Montréal West Curling Club. However, we did organize a Zoom video compilation meeting following the count that attracted an excellent turnout.

The CBC is an important citizen science project. I thank all of the participants and feeder watchers who contributed to another successful count, given the unique challenges facing us this year. Sadly, some Christmas Counts, including three in nearby eastern Ontario, were cancelled this year due to logistical issues linked to COVID. BPQ is fortunate and grateful to have had a full complement of participants and field teams willing to complete the task, not only for BPQ's Montréal CBC, but also for the BPQ Hudson CBC, while abiding by COVID restrictions.

End of 2020 Field Trip Report

by Wayne Gruber
Chair, Field Trip Committee



Pine Grosbeak © 2020 Chuck Kling

To end off 2020, our year of "Virtual Field Trips," the BPQ Field Trip Committee issued a series of six challenges to the birding community under the umbrella heading of **November Big Birding Event**. This consisted of individuals and couples compiling Big Month, Big Day, Big Sit, Backyard, and Lifers lists as well as a photo competition. Twenty-eight people participated in one or more events, with

prizes awarded to the top three finishers in each group. Some prizes were supplied by Bird Protection Quebec. For the additional prizes, we would like to once again thank the following companies and organizations for their support and their generous contributions.

- Brome Bird Care <https://bromebird-care.com/>
- Nature Expert <https://nature-expert.ca/en/>
- Regroupement Québec Oiseaux <https://quebecoiseaux.org>
- Birds Canada <https://www.birdscan-ada.org/>

As November is not always considered an optimal birding month, we hope the November Big Birding Event allowed participants an opportunity to see it from a different perspective.

Weather-wise, the month could be described as a "Tale of Two Conditions." For much of its first half—sunny skies and abnormally warm conditions predominated with temperatures reaching into the low and mid 20s °C on several days. This may have caused a false sense of security in some potential participants believing they had an abundance of good weather birding time left in which to complete their lists. Then, suddenly it all changed. To paraphrase

Gordon Lightfoot, "the skies of November turned gloomy" and conditions more typical for the month set in.....grey skies, single-digit highs and breezes with a northerly component became more the norm. Definitely more challenging birding conditions and our "Big Sit" participation especially may have suffered as a result.

The following is a breakdown of results with events listed in a random order.

Big Month

Fifteen people in twelve groups submitted their month-long tallies for this challenge. Altogether 122 species were noted with some very interesting sightings including Ross's and Cackling Goose, King Eider, Black Vulture, Short-eared Owl, and Saw-whet Owl. Sixteen species were seen by all groups. In addition to the "usual suspects," Common Merganser and Common Raven were part of the sixteen. Common Redpolls and three other species fell one participant/group short. At the other extreme, 31 of the 122 species were seen by only one team.

The three birders accumulating the highest number of species were Wayne Grubert (82), Marcel Gahbauer (71) and Tom Long (62).

Backyard

This challenge proved to be our most popular with 18 participants at 14 locations. Birders were asked to count all species observed from their own properties. A respectable 63 species were tallied with American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee and Northern Cardinal being part of everyone's backyard list. Six other species, Canada Goose, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin and American Goldfinch were missing from only one property each. Some special sightings included Canvasback, Ruffed Grouse, several owl species, Peregrine Falcon, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Swainson's Thrush and a good representation of "winter" finches.

Montréal's West Island proved the hotspot for this event with Ann and Peter Tarassoff registering 33 species in Beaconsfield, and Jean and Richard Gregson notching 30 in Baie d'Urfé. Heading slightly off island, Wayne Grubert rounded out the top three spots with 27 in Hudson.

Big Day

If nothing else, our November Big Birding Event reinforced the reasons why Big Days are usually held in the month of May and not this late in the autumn. With

some valiant effort our 14 participants (11 groups) managed to find a total of 93 species during their day long counts. But all birders who have attempted a Big Day in springtime know this total is far short of what even one team can accumulate at that time of year. Not surprisingly Canada Goose and Black-capped Chickadees were found by every team with Mallard and American Crow found by 10 of 11.

Top three positions were claimed by Wayne Grubert (48), Marcel Gahbauer (39) and the team of Darlene and Sheldon Harvey (36).

Big Sit

As mentioned in our introduction, participation in this event may have suffered because those who procrastinated early in the month were suddenly faced with a downturn in weather conditions. Motivation wanes at the prospect of sitting in one spot for several hours with single-digit temperatures, cool winds, and grey skies.

As a result only three entries were received for this challenge and so these birders take top honours. Wayne Grubert managed 27 species at the marshes in St. Etienne, Ron Rind had 11 at the Morgan Arboretum and Diane Cameron rounded out this list with 7 species in Ogden, QC.

Lifers

An interesting category in that we cannot estimate how many people actually took part in this challenge. After all, the vast majority of birders are always on the lookout for new species whether they actively chase rarities or not. We do know that three participants were successful in their quests with Jill Savouré leading the list by finding four new species: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bohemian Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak and American Tree Sparrow. Monique Boivin and Darlene Harvey managed one "lifer" each. Interestingly, they found the same species but we assume different individuals since their birds were approximately 100 km apart as the Black Vulture flies.

Photo

Judging a photo competition is never easy but one involving birds is even more of a challenge. Composition, action, difficulty of capture, artistic impression and rarity of subject are just some of the many qualities of any individual photo that can be analyzed. How these attributes are weighted is an individual preference. For this reason we asked four judges to choose their top 3 picks from 55 pictures received from 13 photographers. To emphasize the difficulty of this task we ended up with 15 photos garnering at

least one vote for the top three positions. In the end a point system based on rankings gave us our three top photos.

- **1st Place:** American Kestrel from David Bird
- **2nd Place:** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher from Ron Rind
- **3rd Place:** Horned Grebe from Tom Long

These photos along with further details can be viewed on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/birdprotectionquebec/posts/3551399628228612>

The Field Trip Committee would like to thank Pierre Bannon, Chuck Kling, Jean de Marre and Doug Fisher for their role as judges. All accepted the task without hesitation and completed it within a strict timeline. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

We would again like to thank all of our participants. We hope you enjoyed the month of birding as much as we liked reading about your observations.



American Kestrel / Crécerelle d'Amérique — “fluffy, fragile, and lethal” © 2020 David Bird – Winning photo of the Field Trip Committee Photo Contest.

By pure chance, the American Kestrel is the star of this issue of *The Song Sparrow*, as the subject of this stunning photo taken in Martin Edwards Reserve, Amherst Island, by Dr. David F. Bird, past professor of limnology at UQAM, and of the lead article, written by Bob Barnhurst and Mabel McIntosh. It is a favourite of Dr. David M. Bird, professor emeritus of ornithology at McGill, who made this species the focus of numerous research projects.

Upcoming Virtual Field Trips and Challenges

The Field Trip Committee has been carefully following COVID-related recommendations and restrictions related to travel and gatherings, and in particular those prepared by Regroupement QuébecOiseaux and validated by the Direction du Sport et du Loisir du Ministère de l'Éducation. <https://quebecoiseaux.org/index.php/fr/covid-19>, and it would seem that 2021 will at least start with a continuation of our Virtual Field Trips.

They are working on a few ideas including participation in the 24th annual Great Backyard Bird Count to be held Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2021. Details, as they become available, will be presented on our BPQ website, Facebook page and the Songsparrow IO Group email list.