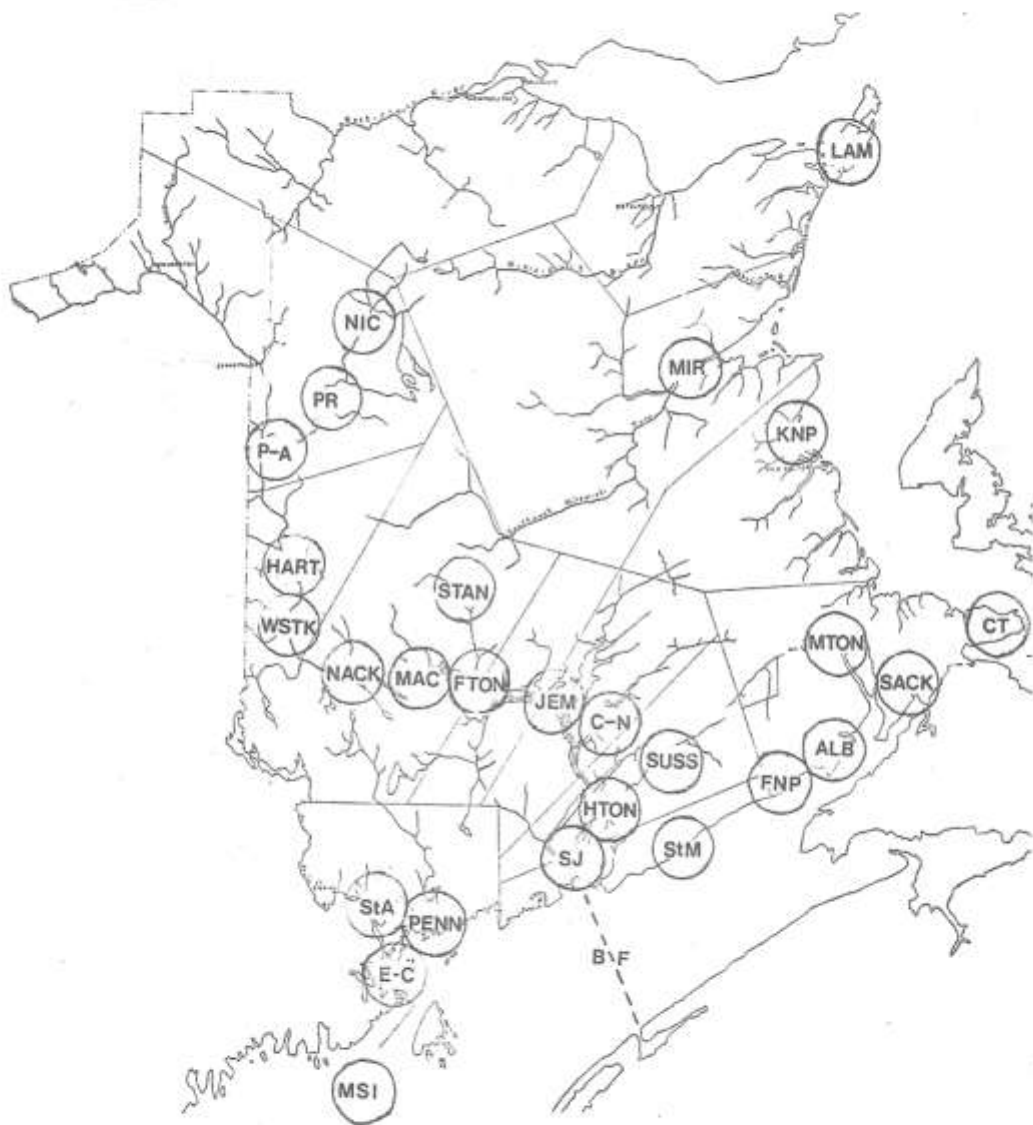




N.B. Naturalist

8(1) February 1977



Christmas Bird Counts 1976-77

1976-77 Christmas Bird Counts

David Christie

Although 28 Christmas Bird Counts were conducted in New Brunswick, this report will deal with only 27, since the results of a Bay of Fundy count on board the "Princess of Acadia" are not available at this time. That count will be reported later. Fewer people took part and they spent less time afield than in the last three years, as can be seen in the accompanying table.

	<u>1972-3</u>	<u>1973-4</u>	<u>1974-5</u>	<u>1975-6</u>	<u>1976-7</u>
Number of Counts	27	27	27	27	27 (28)
Total Participants	289	322	384	374	351
Total party-hours	521	617	660	610	572
Total feeder reports	102	102	113	130	136
Total birds	39,463	67,692	49,688	59,115	42,795
Total species	103	113	103	106	105
Additional species in period	8	9	6	5	4

The total number of species recorded, 105, was average when compared with the past five years and none was new to the record of Christmas Counts in New Brunswick (155 species, plus 8 others in count period).

Overall highlights of 1976-77 were the large numbers of sparrows and of Evening Grosbeaks. A lack of snow during November and early December may have favoured sparrows and other ground feeders. That was ended in southern New Brunswick by a major snow storm on the 17th, the day before the count period began. Numerous lingering summer birds disappeared during cold snaps in the first and second weeks of December, although a few at feeders survived to be counted.

Among waterbirds there was little unusual. A late Great Blue Heron was especially unusual at Fredericton. Three Brant at Eastport-Campobello were unusual there (although numerous at White Head Island this winter). If planned counts at Grand Manan and Lepreau had taken place we might have had more details about Thick-billed Murres which may have been blown in along our shore. A record 64 were seen at Eastport-Campobello, one at St. Andrews and one - a great surprise - in a ferry crossing on the Kennebecasis River at Hammond River-Hampton. Although it didn't count on the list, another thick-bill, quite recently eaten by a predator, was found at Riverside-Albert. Some diving ducks, Common Goldeneye, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter and Red-breasted Merganser, were apparently scarcer than usual.

Most hawks were reported in about average numbers, but Goshawks were seen in only two areas. Sackville had the only substantial number of Rough-leggs as well as 4 Marsh Hawks and a provincial record of 4 Short-eared Owls. The Tantramar Marsh is excellent habitat for all three species. Only two Bald Eagles were counted this year, a disappointment after the pleasing 19 in 1975. Three Merlins (Pigeon Hawks), one Am. Kestrel (Sparrow Hawk) and much more unusual, two Red-shouldered Hawks, were reported. The only other owls were Great Horned, there being not even a mention during count period of Snowy, Barred or Saw-whet.

Ruffed Grouse continue in high numbers for the third year while Spruce Grouse remain typically scarce, at least in the places we count birds. Pheasants, of localized distribution, were found more numerous than in the past three years, but a bit below the long-term average.

Slightly more than average numbers of Rock Doves (pigeons) were counted and for the second year, there was a high number of Mourning Doves, occurring in the milder areas along the Bay of Fundy.

Only a single Pileated Woodpecker was reported, as compared to 9 and 11 in the

last two years. Hairy Woodpeckers continued high for the third year, while the smaller Downy was found in average numbers. Lamoque Island takes the honours for three-toed Woodpeckers, having 2 of the 5 Black-backs and one of the 2 Northern's seen on this winter's counts. A Common Flicker lingered at Cape Tormentine.

Gray Jays were in low numbers, at least in southern N.B., yet a record 52 were found on the Nictau-Riley Brook count. Blue Jay numbers were about average for recent years and Common Ravens were also present in average numbers. On the other hand, Common Crows were in significantly higher numbers than during the past five years (9 eastern and inland counts had their highest number ever) although at just about the average level of 1963-70.

All the small, insectivorous forest birds were scarcer than usual. Black-capped Chickadees were a bit below average numbers but Boreal Chickadees were very low. Both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, as well as Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce, except in a few areas.

Am. Robins lingered in good numbers and there was even a Hermit Thrush at Sackville. A Mockingbird was found on the Moncton count and a Brown Thrasher during count period at Pennfield. Small numbers of Bohemian Waxwings generally began appearing just at the end of the year, although Newcastle-Chatham had 20 on the 19th.

Average numbers of Northern Shrikes were present. Starlings and House Sparrows were less abundant than usual. A new record for Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers was again established - Can you imagine 44?! - at Cape Tormentine. Our hardiest warbler also was found at Cambridge-Narrows and Fundy Park.

Brown-headed Cowbirds were found in average numbers, but moderately high numbers of Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds, and Common Grackles were seen. There were also Eastern Meadowlarks on two counts.

Cardinals - single birds on three counts - were recorded for the fourth year in a row. Two Dickcissels were attending bird feeders and there were Rufous-sided Towhees on five different counts, more than ever before.

Evening Grosbeaks were found in the highest ever numbers on New Brunswick counts, almost twice as many as in 1968, the best previous year. 26 counts recorded them and they visited Mechias Seal Island, the 27th, during count period. Purple Finches, usually scarce in early winter, were seen on most counts and their numbers were greater than in any year since 1964. Woodstock had a record 176. Pine Grosbeaks were widely distributed in moderate numbers.

The remainder of the finches were in small numbers; Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins (except at Hartland and on the Tobique Valley counts) and Am. Goldfinches were moderately scarce. Crossbills, especially the Red, were rare. (To learn where all the White-winged Crossbills and Redpolls were, read Stuart Tingley's note later in this issue on the count at St. Anthony, Nfld.)

Sparrows are unusually common this winter and the counts show it nicely. White-throated and Song Sparrows were each almost twice as common as in the best previous year. A record 25 Songs were at Moncton and, had the naturalists' club not changed the date for the Saint John count, there would probably have been a record of 100+ White-throats there. Tree Sparrows and Fox Sparrows were as common as they have been previously. Dark-eyed Juncos were in moderate numbers, particularly in Albert County where they outnumbered the Tree Sparrows. In addition, Savannah, Chipping, White-crowned and Swamp Sparrows were reported on the counts.

The open country birds were also common. Horned Larks were in as high numbers as last year, and Sackville set provincial records for Lapland Longspurs, 87, and Snow Buntings, 2886! The other counts in eastern New Brunswick also had good numbers of Snow Buntings.

NEW BRUNSWICK CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: DEC. 18, 1976 - JAN. 2, 1977

Bay of Fundy (BF)

On board the "Princess of Acadia". To be reported later.

Machias Seal Island (MSI)

Clear; ground bare. Kathy Russell, Malcolm Russell, William Townsend (non-participant compiler).

Eastport-Campobello (E-C)

Clear; 0-5 cm. snow cover. Sidney Bahrt, William Townsend (compiler).

St. Andrews (St.A.)

Fine and sunny; ground snow covered where drifted, considerable ice on by-roads, freshwater frozen. Mrs. Steve Adamowicz, Mrs. Hollis Bartlett, May Bartlett, Mrs. Lawrence Bartlett, Mrs. Donald Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Langmaid, Mrs. Cecil Lowery, Norman Mais, Tom Moffatt, H. Wills MacCoubrey (compiler), Mrs. Donald McLesse, Mrs. Fred Witter, Richard Saunders, Mrs. Beverley Scott, Mr. & Mrs. David Walker, Mrs. V. Titus.

Pennfield (Penn.)

Sunny; not much snow, ebb & low tide. M.C. Morehouse, Mrs. M.C. Morehouse (compiler), Mr. & Mrs. E.A. Norn, Mrs. H. Russell.

Saint John (SJ)

Clear, 60 cm. fresh snow, freshwater frozen, saltwater open. David Christie, Florence Christie, Joyce Go Iden, Rene Gorham, Stanley Gorham (compiler), Kit Graham, Cecil Johnston, Doris Johnston, Don McAlpine, Gordon Redstone, Marion Rogers, Mary Ross, Dr. & Mrs. Allan Sellars, Marion Sherwood, David Smith, Evan Smith, Millie Widdershoven, Betsy Widdershoven.

St. Martin (St.M.)

overcast, with sunny intervals, lakes and ponds frozen, rivers and brooks open; ground frozen, icy. J.E. Bradshaw, Mrs. J.E. Bradshaw.

Fundy National Park (FNP)

clear, 68 cm. fresh snow inland, 23 cm. at coast, lakes frozen; birch seed crop fair to good, conifers poor. berries and weed seeds fair at coast, poor on highlands. Tracy Black, Bert Buchanan, Les Gray, Norma Gray, Glenn King, Mary Majka, Cheryl Olson, George Sinclair, Sedgewick Sinclair, Barry Spencer (compiler), Marguerite Valotaire Spenser, Brian Townsend, Norman Wentzell.

Riverview-Albert (RA)

Overcast, a few sunny periods in pm; patches of snow and ice in the open; 25 cm. crusted snow in woods; most freshwater frozen. Brenda Burzynski, Michael Burzynski, Tony Burzynski, David Christie, Chris Majka (compiler), Mack Majka, Mary Majka, Mieczyslaw Majka, Susan Rudy, Russell Tilt, Brian Townsend.

Sackville (Sack)

Clear and partly sunny early a.m. later cloudy. 20-25 cm. new snow, heavily drifted in places and blown clear in exposed areas; fresh water mostly frozen, salt water filled with ice flows; abundant weed and grass seeds available in fields and exposed dyke faces; some crop fair. Peter Barikhouse, Gordon Burns, Trevor Cozard, Hinrich Harries, Ron Horsell, Bob Lamberton, Tony Lock, Al Smith (compiler), Ralph Stopps, Stuart Tingley.

Moncton (MON)

Clear, until 3 pm; 30 cm. snow cover; streams open. Mr. & Mrs. Hamilton Baird, Roger Blaquiere, Mrs. A. Burzynski, Mrs. R.E. Carter, David Christie, Albert Cormier, Don Cormier, Yves Cormier, Brian Dalzell, Dr. & Mrs. J.A. Deben, Daryl Doucette, Mrs. Marguerite Hope, Louis Lapierre, Fred Lloyd, Paul Lloyd, Dr. & Mrs. M. Majka, Mrs. Peggy McKinley, Winston Prince, Mr. & Mrs. P.E. Proude, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Quartermain, Mrs. Barbara Swinzer, Brian Townsend, Doug Whitman (compiler).

Cape Tormentine (CT)

Clear, 20-25 cm. soft, new snow, exposed areas blown fairly clear and considerable drifting, fresh water frozen, salt water largely frozen with open leads from Cape Tormentine to Horns Point; generally thin snow cover on open exposed fields afforded good feeding by ground foraging species, good some crop on spruce trees, especially white spruce along the coast. Peter Barikhouse, Trevor Cozard, Hinrich Harries, Ron Horsell, Eleanor Magee, Al Smith (compiler), Stuart Tingley, Ralph Stopps.

Kouchibouguac National Park (KNP)

Clear, 20-63 cm. snow cover; salt water partly open and freshwater frozen. Jean-Guy Chevarie, Roger Daigh, Paul Germain, Denis Godan, Jocelyne Goguen (compiler), Pierrette Goguen, Stephen Knodes, Camel Levesque, Leo Martin, David Robichaud, MacWilliam Savoy.

Newcastle-Charlton (NIR)

A few scattered clouds; all ground and water frozen, 38 cm. of snow. Margaret Adams, Carl Anderson, Barbara Archibald, Marilyn Boston, Edith Boudreau, Mrs. Robert Brunsfield, Bill Campbell, Timmy Charles, Mike Carter, Mrs. Graham Crocker, Phyllis Crowe, Thomas Flynn, Vernon Goodfellow, Andrew Griave, Phyllis Jardine, John Keating, Don LeHeup, Eason Loban, Irene Leggie, Sarah Lounsbury, Nora McKenzie, Anna Rodgers, Theresa Ross, Members of St. Michaels Convent, Jack Scott, Ethy Scott, Mrs. Gordon Stoeves, Daren Sutherland, Doug Underhill, Beverly Van Beek, Mrs. Jac Van Leeuwen, Harry Walker, (compiler), Ian Walker, Lyle Walker, Tom Whalen, Margaret Weston.

Ile Lasequet et Shippegan (LAM)

Sunny, ground covered with 38 cm. snow. Water frozen at the northern side of the island. Hilaire Chasson (compiler), Mrs. Rose-Aline Chasson.

Sussex (Suss)

Sunny, ground frozen with 13 cm snow, water frozen. Thomas Anderson (compiler), Gladys Heckford, David Christie, Harriet Folkins, Isabell Foulger, Beryle Gertan, Gladys Steeves, Brian Townsend.

Huned River - Beapton (RHCN)

Clear and sunny, 15-30 cm. snow cover, ground covered, almost all water frozen. R. Blacqiere, D. Christie, F. Clales, L. Darling, R. Darling, D. Dykeman, Mrs. P. Kelbough, Mrs. W. MacAndrews, D. Malpino, Mrs. G. Sayre, T. Sayre, Brian Townsend, Mrs. M. Widdershoven, E. Widdershoven, C.E. Wilson, Mrs. J. Wilson.

Cambridge-Matticus (C-M)

Sunny, 5 cm. snow on ground; lakes frozen, brooks open. Anna Belyea, Mrs. Harold Belyea, Mrs. Harry Belyea, D.G. Carpenter, Mrs. Lawrence Carpenter, Mrs. Bruce Chase, James Connell, Mrs. Vernon Connell, Knid Inch (compiler), Mrs. Willem McConachie, Mrs. Arthur Perry, Mrs. John Perry, Mrs. Eason Pugsley, Mrs. R.G. Robinson, Mrs. Ernest Sypher, Mrs. Niven Thomas, Mrs. A.R. Walker, Mrs. Frank E. Webb, Miss E. Verden.

Jessej (JEM)

Clear sky; snow cover 20-35 cm. No open water except 2 small areas. Christopher Aden, Hillean Baird, Dr. Gerald Clayden, Lucy Dyer, Melvin E. Moore, Nettie Moore (compiler), Robert Power, Mrs. Ann Sheppard, Dr. Owen Washburn.

Fredericton (FTCN)

Mostly cloudy, some snowflurries. Heavy water and ice conditions over 60 cm. of snow; river 30% open. Mr. & Mrs. Chris Aden, Mr. Walter Adams, John Bauer, W. Bauer, Mrs. H. Elenis, Dr. R. Chalmers, Dr. G. Clayden, Stephen Clayden, Mrs. C.E.J. Cragg, Dr. D. Fowler, Kevin Fowler, Miss Ellen Gregg, Mrs. J. Griffiths, Mr. B. Hageman, Harold Hatheway, Mrs. J. Hayward, Clifford Jones, Nettie Moore, Albert Morris, Miss M. McHair, David Noble, Jean Noble, Prof. Y.S. Cliver, Mrs. J. Peterson, M. Sergeant, Dr. Beverley Schneider (compiler), Prof. Mark Schneider, Mr. & Mrs. Nick Sheppard, Dr. & Mrs. A. Squires, R. Stock, R. Stock Jr., Mrs. Mildred Todd, Dorothy Warty, Dr. W. Warty, Kenneth Washburn, Owen Washburn, Sheila Washburn, Susan Washburn, M. Wetmore, Ronnie Wilson.

Mactaquac (MAC)

Clear, turning cloudy, 40 cm. snow; clear channels below dam. Stephen Bartlett, Linda Dodge, Jeff Gammon, Cliff Jones, Mrs. Keenan, Bruce Martin, Ed Falger (compiler).

Stanley (STAN)

Shifting from cloud and snowflurries to scattered clouds and sun. Ground frozen, 15-30 cm. snow (crust on der) with some few open water holes. E. Hatheway (compiler), Reg Hayes.

Backwic (BACK)

Snowing, 20 cm. fresh snow and 15 cm. of hard, frozen snow. Ford Alward (compiler), Jean Alward, Mark Alward, Evelyn Corey, Sharon Corey, Claire Cronkrite, Dorothy Flewelling, David Given, Hiel Given, Bob Squires, R. Robert Squires, Sr., Lulu Stairs, Mollie Tmil.

	M	S	P	S	S	F	A	S	M	K	M	L	S	H	C	J	F	M	S	N	A	S	H	A	P	P	N	Total
	B	E	S	C	N	J	L	A	T	C	I	A	V	T	N	E	O	A	A	A	C	K	R	R	A	R	C	
Common Loon	2	7	2	1																								12
Red-throated Loon	*				2	*	1																					3
Red-necked Grebe	18																											18
Horned Grebe	27	5	2																									36
Great Cormorant	44	1	16																									61
Great Blue Heron																												1
Canada Goose						*	2	*	2	3																		9
Brent																												3
Mallard	4							*	1	12	5																	32
Black Duck	127	22	17	348	10	8	166	3	47																			957
Pintail										*																		*
Green-winged Teal								2																				2
Greater Scaup	40		16																									96
Common Goldeneye	50	4	3	99	7	2	11	3	1	2																		250
Barrow's Goldeneye																												1
Bufflehead	102	47	24	21																								183
Oldsquaw	40	17	53							81																		250
Common Eider	5	5	200	27						70																		384
White-winged Scoter	14	5	12	1																								32
Surf Scoter	*	45																										45
Black Scoter			50																									62
Common Merganser			10	10	3	1	21	47	2																			294
Red-br. Merganser	36	3	7							2																		48
Goosawk																												4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	*											*	*	*												8
Cooper's Hawk																												*
Red-tailed Hawk																												5

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Woodstock (WEEK)

Cloudy, light snow with sunny periods. No open water, 50 cm. snow on ground. Mrs. Elair Avery, Mrs. Clinton Clark, Mrs. G.F. Clarke, Miss Ruby Clarke, A.R. Connell, Gerald Dammings, Mrs. Hans Epstein, Christopher Flewelling, Mrs. Nelson Flewelling, Mrs. David Fry, Mrs. Marjorie Gray, Mrs. Keith Helmuth, Miss Eason Hine, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth C. Homer, Stephen Homer, Marjory Hubbard, Mrs. W.M. Jones, Dennis Kimball, Mrs. Charles MacDonald, Mrs. Donald Nixon, Dr. G.A. Ginstead, Eric Randall, Michael Rigby, R.J. & Donna Speer, Robert Speer (compiler), Mrs. Robert Speer, Mrs. C.H. (Bud) Stewart, Mrs. Cecill Stewart, Mrs. Donald Stewart, Mrs. Charles Webb.

Hartland (HART)

Cloudy to a snowstorm; water frozen, except for small open spots along stream; snow-covered, 3-5 cm. in fields to 60cm. in forest. Bud Belyea, Donald Kimball, Eva Letsen, Lily Rigby, Michael Rigby (compiler).

Ferth-Andover (F-a)

Clear then flurries and cloudy, river ice covered except rapids. Mrs. George Baird, E.R. Demerbant, F.W. Tribe, M.E. Watters (compiler).

Plaster Brook (PB)

Mostly sunny; river frozen, icy roads, 50 cm. crusty snow. Mrs. Wendell Crawford, Erwin Landauer, Marion Landauer, Mrs. Stephen Sabatich (compiler), Mrs. Delbert Reed, Mrs. Jack Reynolds, Mrs. Harold Skinner.

Mictau-Biley Brook (MBC)

Clear, clouding over, light snow. 50 cm. snow Tobique River frozen with open stretches of water. Mr. & Mrs. Alex Paezer, Mrs. Lorne Diamond, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Howard, Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Kinney, Mrs. Archie Enoilton, Erwin & Marion Landauer, Mr. & Mrs. John McCarty, Wilma Miller (compiler), Rudy and Elisabeth Richter, Blake and Margaret Sutherland.

Food for Young Birds

Vera Hutt of Saint John has had considerable success in raising nestlings brought to her by neighbourhood children. She takes hard-boiled egg, arrowroot biscuit, and dried greens and fruit, moistens it, and mashes it all together.

Newfoundland - Winter Paradise for Birders

Stuart Tingley

I made an incredible 10-day trip to Newfoundland with Davis Finch and Peter Vickery. We did Christmas Counts at Gros Morne, St. Anthony and L'Anse-aux-Meadows. Gros Morne had a record high of 37 species, highlights being 2 Northern Shrikes and ptarmigan numbers about 30 in total including the first Rock Ptarmigan (5) on an eastern North American C.B.C. thanks to Peter Hope who climbed Gros Morne.

St. Anthony tied its old record of 33 species but numbers of individuals exceeded the previous three-years combined. It was the most impressive count I'd ever been on - just incredible finch numbers for such a bleak, forbidding environment. We set 4 new North American all-time highs for Glaucous Gulls (290), White-winged Crossbill (4184), Common Redpoll (3885), and Pine Grosbeak (1847). There was an unbelievable crop of mountain ash berries as well as an overwhelming cone-crop.

At L'Anse-aux-Meadows we were on Cloud 9 with an afternoon flight of Ivory Gulls, a total of 10 seen by the four observers. 30+ had been seen the previous day by local hunters. All in all it was probably my best birding trip ever.