



A brief summary of this season's visual counts

As both autumn and the migration season draw to an end, so too does volume 3 of The Migration Chronicle. In this issue, which is the last for 2006, we compare some of this year's visual counts data with that of previous years. The 2006 season will be one that will be remembered for its remarkably low number of migrating raptors: with only a few

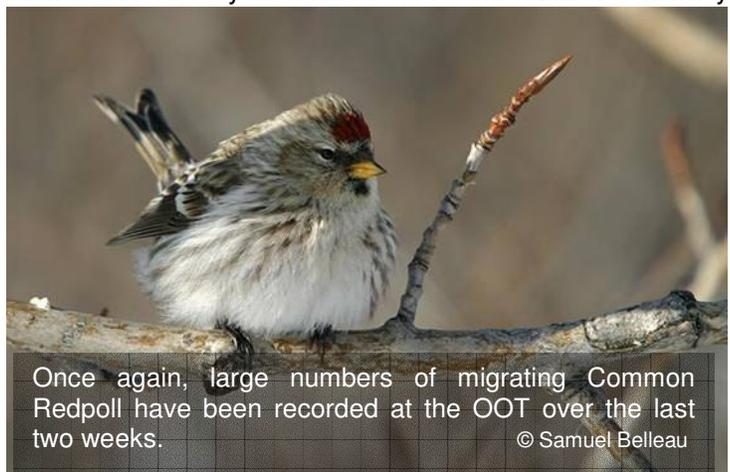


days to go, fewer than 9,000 raptors have been counted. The final figure will be only slightly higher than the all-time low of 7,009 raptors recorded in 1996. The most notable absences this year have been Broad-winged Hawks and Northern Goshawks: the season's totals for these two species are the lowest ever recorded by the *Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac* (OOT). With regards to Broad-winged Hawks, this can be explained, in part, by the fact that the visual counts started nearly two weeks later than in previous years. Based on our existing data, we expected that the removal of ten days from the beginning of the survey in mid-August would have reduced the recorded number of individuals of this species by about 15%.

Nevertheless, even if we take the total number of individuals for this year (439) and add an extra 15%, the resulting figure still remains well below the yearly average of 1,362 individuals. With regards to the Northern Goshawk, the total of 79 individuals is also well below the yearly average of 244. Other observatories in North America have also recorded a sharp decline in Northern Goshawk numbers this year. For example, at the Hawk Ridge Observatory in Minnesota (see hawkcount.org), only 100 individuals were recorded. This is well below the site's ten-year average of 604 individuals for this species. The low number of raptors recorded at the OOT also coincided with extremely poor field condition. Because of the prevailing weather, the sampling effort this year was only 800 hours. This is 22% lower than the yearly average of 1,022 hours.

Happily, there were not only all-time lows this year and we have already mentioned the record number of Turkey Vultures (54) observed (see The Migration Chronicle, vol. 3, no. 6). In addition, the number of Bald Eagles has also continued to increase, and this week a new record of 187 individuals was set. Furthermore, the number of Ospreys recorded was also above average. Finally, two Gyrfalcons were observed during the 2006 season, which is something that has not occurred since 1995.

By contrast, the 2006 passerine counts were high and were dominated by members of the Fringillidae. This was probably due to the exceptional seed crop production in the boreal forest this year. A new



single day record was set on the 19 November: conditions were such that migrating passerines were at low altitude and 18 Hoary Redpolls were recorded among the passing flocks of Common Redpolls. Finally, with regards to coastal birds, the Glaucous Gull migration seems to be delayed this year as only two individuals have been recorded so far. Usually by this time of year the OOT has recorded more than ten individuals. The data for 2006 also suggest that there is an important decline in Greater Black-backed and Bonaparte's Gull numbers.

BUT IT'S NOT OVER YET! Although this is the last issue of The Migration Chronicle for 2006, the visual counts will continue up until the 1 December. The monitoring period has been extended in order to give a better coverage of migrating Golden Eagles, which tend to pass through Tadoussac later than other raptor species. In a few days, you will be able to check the final results of the 2006 season on our Internet site (www.explos-nature.qc.ca/ooot).

THE 2006 TEAM If the OOT can boast the possession of an ornithologically import dataset, it is largely thanks to the loyalty and professionalism of our team of ornithologists. We would like to thank our banders in charge Christophe Buidin and Yann Rochepault, our official counters Samuel Belleau and Samuel Denault and our wardens Stéphanie

Raptor counts		
Species	Weeks 12 and 13 9 to 25 Nov.	Total 2006
Osprey	0	737
Bald Eagle	47	187
Northern Harrier	0	215
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	2843
Goshawk	0	79
Broad-winged Hawk	0	439
Red-tailed Hawk	7	2700
Rough-legged Hawk	22	237
Golden Eagle	9	45
American Kestrel	1	707
Merlin	1	129
Peregrine Falcon	1	74
Gyrfalcon	1	2
Turkey Vulture	0	54
Unidentified raptor	1	29
TOTAL	94	8477

Gagnon and Eric Lehman. We would also like to thank all the volunteers who helped with the extraction of birds from our mist nets, in particular Antonin Bénard and Émilie Germain, who spent the whole of the banding season with us. We would also like to highlight the work of the OOT's scientific committee and the team of the *Corporation Explos-Nature*, of which the OOT is a part. Finally, thank you to all our partners, our numerous sponsors and the Friends of the OOT. The editorial team would particularly like to thank Nicole Dugré for her valuable help in proof reading *La Chronique des migrations*.

BEFORE WE GO If you have appreciated receiving The Migration Chronicle and taking part in this season's migration from the comfort of your home or office, we would like to remind you that you can help maintain and develop the activities of the OOT by contributing to the Friends of the OOT fund. If you are interested, you will find a donation form on our Internet site under the section 'How to help'.

Top-five migrating passerines	
Weeks 12 and 13	Total 2006
White-winged Crossbill (25 535)	White-winged Crossbill (82 952)
Common Redpoll (10 688)	Common Redpoll (42 433)
Snow Bunting (531)	Cedar Waxwing (10 952)
Pine Grosbeak (449)	Pine Siskin (10 083)
American Goldfinch (202)	American Crow (4722)

Everyone at the OOT would like to wish you a wonderful winter and we invite you to join us again next year – the 2007 season will mark our 15th anniversary!

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