

Species: Lesser Black-backed Gull
(Vernacular Name)

Larus fuscus

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): Dec. 19, 1976 & other dates Time Bird Seen: 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Locality: gravel pit about 6200 N. Lowell Bird first observed 12/12/76
Nearest Town: Westminster County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPH

Many other observers. First observed 12/12. I first observed it early am 12/14

Optical Equipment: 7x35 binoculars and 20 x scope

If photographed, type of equipment used: 35 mm Exacta with 400mm lens and 2x adaptor = 1K

Light Conditions: Excellent, bright sun

Distance from bird (how measured): closest was approximately 275 ft. measured on lens

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: almost completely adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Sitting and standing on the ice near open water along with a couple hundred Ring-billed and a few Herring Gulls. Occasionally the whole flock would get up and fly around a little and then settle back down on the ice again. This bird seemed to stay a slight distance from the others usually at or near the edge of the whole flock.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

This bird could easily be picked out from all the others by its dark back and upper wings either flying or sitting. It was just slightly larger than the Ring-billed and smaller than the Herring Gulls. Besides the dark back and wings the bird had a yellow bill with a red spot on the lower mandible. The tail was all white as well as the complete underparts. The head was white with a few specklings of brownish on top and upper neck with a few slashings of the same color on sides of breast just in front of the wings as seen in sitting position. The eyes were yellow and the legs were gray as seen with the sun behind me, but seeming to have just a shade toward flesh color with the sun at right angle to me. When flying, the wings showed much white on the trailing edge. This white also showed when bird was sitting and wings folded. I believe this to be the southern subspecies of the Lesser Black-backed Gull.

5 color slides are included inclosed with this report.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

If it called I could not tell it from any of the others.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

An old gravel pit with an island in the center, vegetated with grasses and weeds. The lake is used in summer as a bathing area. A line of willows covers the southern shore. A house and sandy beach is on the east shore.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

The only other black-backed gulls are Great Black-backed which is much larger and the dark phased Western Gull which is also somewhat larger and has reddish legs. The Slaty-backed Gull is between the Great and Western in size.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen many Great Black-backed and Western Gulls. Never have seen this species before.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Robbins Birds of North America, Petersen's Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe, and consultations with numerous people who also observed the bird in question.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Harold R. Holt SIGNATURE: DATE: 12/28/76
Street Address: 2001 W. 92nd Ave Sp. 716 Town and State: Denver, Colo. ZIP: 80221

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 1450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

N-23-75

 RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD A NEW STATE RECORD ACCEPTED REJECTED

Species: Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 13 December 1976

Time Bird Seen: 1130 to 1500

Locality: Lake Sangreco, on Lowell Blvd. just north of Regis College

Nearest Town: Denver of Westminster

County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Bruce and Jaennie Webb (1st found it), Patty Echelmeyer, Jo Trainor, Joe Roller, Mildred Snyder, Arnie Silverman, Steve Larson, Barry Knapp, Mike Pogue, Ward Chadwick, Ray Olson, Christine Bonney, Jack Reddall, Harold Holt, Hugh Kingery and probably others

Optical Equipment: 10 X 50 binoculars, 15-60X Zoom telescope

Peter Gent

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: perfect, with sun shining on the bird from behind the observers

Distance from bird (how measured): minimum estimated distance 75-100 yards

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult-winter

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Most of the time the bird stood, sat, slept or preened while among a flock of gulls (mostly Ring-billed, some Herrings and at least 1 each of California and Thayer's) on the ice of the lake. The bird was seen to swim in the open patch of water, and sometimes bathe. It occasionally flew some around the open water of the pond. At times it would leave the pond entirely and go elsewhere, but it remained at the pond during the entire time I observed it.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

A medium-sized gull, distinctly larger in direct comparison with Ring-billed Gulls and a little smaller than the Herring Gulls. Head and neck seemed to be less thick and heavy than those of the Herring's. Bill was long (at least as long as the head from nape to base of bill), thin (very distinctly thinner than the Herring's bills) with only a very slight gonydeal angle. Bill yellow with a fairly sizeable red spot on the gony. Eye pale. Head, neck and entire underparts white with an indistinct pale gray area on face and a few indistinct grayish streaks on the nape. Mantle very dark slate-black, very conspicuously much darker than mantles of all the other gulls. White spots on the tips of the primaries and a white trailing edge, and one or two of the scapulars had a white edge. Underside of wings were whitish except underside of primaries, which were quite grayish, not showing a sharp or distinct boundary with the white portion. Also a white trailing edge on underside of primaries. Tail white, unmarked. When sitting, the primaries extended to just beyond the tail. Legs pale yellow. When on the water, it seemed to sit lower in the water (especially the breast) than the Ring-billed Gulls.

Below is a refinement of a sketch I made in the field.



(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

None heard.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Fairly small, private gravel pond in mixed urban, rural, industrial area.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Herring, California, Thayer's, Ring-billed, Glaucous-winged, etc. all very easily eliminated by very dark back.

Western Gull-Has strong pinkish legs, much larger(larger than a Herring), with a much heavier bill and a pronounced gonydeal angle. Very unlikely to wander this far from salt water.

Yellow-legged Gull (Larus occidentalis wymani-subspecies of Western and probably a full species)-Has yellow legs, but much stronger yellow color than legs of this bird. Also larger, with heavier bill and more pronounced gonydeal angle, also quite unlikely to wander this far from the coast(Gulf of California).

Slaty-backed Gull-Larger, has pink legs and quite unlikely in Colorado.

Great Black-backed Gull-Much larger, much heavier bill and more pronounced gonydeal angle, pink legs, even darker mantle(jet black rather than dark slaty-black).

Judging by the color of the mantle, this bird probably represents the southern(British) subspecies, L. f. graellsii.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have seen many Herring, California and Ring-billed Gulls in Colorado. I have also seen many Westerns in California. I have never seen a Yellow-footed Slaty-backed, Great or Lesser Black-backed Gull(although I did see a probably adult Lesser Black-backed in Texas in March 1975).

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard European guides(Peterson and Bruun). Two photos of a Texas Lesser Black-backed that appeared in Audubon Field Notes(Vol. 24, No. 3, June 1970, pp.519-~~55~~ 520)also consulted(appeared to very similar to the Colorado bird). Confirmed the identification.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Robert Andrews

SIGNATURE: Robert Andrews DATE: 15 Jan 1977

Street Address: 1390 So Ivy Way

Town and State: Denver, Colo 80224 ZIP:

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD NEW STATE RECORD ACCEPTED REJECTED

Species: LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus fuscus

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 13 December 1976

Time Bird Seen: approx. 0915 to approx. 0900

Locality: San Graco Lake (Denver, Colorado) Lowell Blvd S. of 64th Street

Nearest Town: within city limits of Denver

County: Denver

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Bruce Webb	Boulder, Colorado	
John Cooper	1041 Field Street Lakewood, Colorado	237-4855

Optical Equipment: 6x24 Trinovid Binoculars, 60x B&L Spotting Scope

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Excellent, clear sky

Distance from bird (how measured): estimated 600 feet

Number of Birds Seen: One (1) Sex: ♂ Plumage:

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Resting on ice in flock of Ring-billed Gulls, ducks, and geese

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

Size: larger than surrounding Ring-billed Gulls. Seemed to be same size as Herring Gulls and definitely smaller than Great Black-backed Gull.

Plumage: black and white. Upper surface of wing black, continuing across back. White head, tail and breast.

Bill: yellowish

Legs: yellow

NOTE:

This bird was apparently first observed and identified by Bruce Webb, on 12 December 1976.

Seen subsequently by various observers during same week.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Pond created by removal of gravel. Bird sitting on ice surrounded by Ring-billed Gulls and a few Herring Gulls. Ducks and Canada Geese were nearby.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Great Black-backed Gull - too large

Western Gull - pink legs, wing is more grayer than black

Slaty-backed Gull - legs reddish. (However, I do not know this bird.)

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Seen daily for over six weeks; Casablanca, Tangiers, and Straits of Gibraltar.

Great Black-backed Gull - seen every winter for many years along Niagara River, Lake Erie, and Erie, Penna.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

A Field Guide To The Birds of Britain and Europe - Peterson, Mountfort and Hollom

This report was written from notes made during after observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: Winston Wm. Brockner SIGNATURE: J. W. Brockner DATE: 27 Feb. 77

Street Address: 5965 S. Herzman Dr. Town and State: Evergreen, CO ZIP: 80433

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus fuscus

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): December 14, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 11:30 A.M.

to 12:30 P.M. -MST

Locality: Lake Sangraco (60th Avenue at Lowell Blvd)

Nearest Town: Westminster

County: Adams

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

First found by Bruce Webb of Boulder. Subsequently seen by many Denver area observers.

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars; 15X-60X Zoom Telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Excellent. Sunlight directly upon bird at all times.

Distance from bird (how measured): From 250 feet to 400 feet (estimated).

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Probably winter adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

The bird was first seen as it wheeled in over the lake with several Ring-billed Gulls. It dropped directly into the water between me and a small island where it commenced to bathe in typical gull fashion (ducking head under water and throwing water out over its back, spreading its wings now and then). The bird continued bathing for about twenty minutes. When finished it swam around in the area preening itself, occasionally raising itself up out of the water and flapping its wings vigorously. Finally it flew over to the ice, sat down and continued to preen for another thirty minutes.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

A fairly large gull, roughly the size of a California Gull. After bathing, it swam around for a while in the company of several Ring-billed Gulls and two Herring Gulls. This allowed for a direct comparison of size. The Lesser Black-backed Gull was noticeably larger and heavier than the Ring-billed Gulls and just a shade smaller than the two nearby Herring Gulls. The head was whitish and was marked with brownish streaks which extended down the back of the neck and barely into the upper breast. The eye was yellow (I could not make out the red eyelids). The bill was yellow and clearly marked with a prominent red spot near the end of the lower mandible. The bill was clearly more massive than that of the Ring-billed Gulls and the upper mandible had a slight hook to it at the end. The remainder of the under body parts were white (breast, sides, flanks, belly and under tail coverts). The back and upper wings were slaty-black (more blackish than slaty), but not nearly as black as the Great Black-backed Gull. The primary flight feathers as well as the secondaries were tipped with white. I could not safely say that I clearly saw the white spot at the end of the first primary but I am not certain that this is a meaningful field mark any way. The tail was white and was square or just slightly rounded. The feet were the most perplexing field mark. Supposedly they are yellow in adult birds. However, this particular bird had grayish-brown legs and feet. Some reference books state that adult birds in winter plumage do not have the yellowish legs. Other references state that the yellow legs don't appear until the fourth year. Still others make no mention of winter plumaged birds merely stating that the yellow legs and feet appear by the end of the second year. Possibly this characteristic ought to be more fully explored. Whatever the case may be, this particular bird definitely didn't have yellow legs and feet.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

No sound heard.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large fresh water lake in suburban area (possibly an old abandoned gravel pit)

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: Considerably larger, much blacker on back and wings; a much longer-winged bird.

WESTERN GULL: Conceivably this could have been the species, as there is rather large overlap in size in gulls. However, Western Gulls tend to average larger than Herring Gulls and have flesh-colored to pinkish legs. The several subspecies of the Western Gull also lend to the confusion.

SLATY-BACKED GULL: Size between that of Western Gull and Great Black-backed Gull and can probably be eliminated on this point alone.

CALIFORNIA GULL: Some observers claim to have seen "very dark-backed" California Gulls. However, I personally have never seen one that approached the blackness of the bird in question.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have never seen a Lesser Black-backed Gull although I have searched for it over the years on Long Island, New York where it occurs every winter in small numbers (has been recorded in every month of the year in the greater New York City area). Am very familiar with Great Black-backed Gulls mostly from Long Island, New York where incidentally I had just spent four days birding prior to observing the Lesser Black-backed Gull and where I had the opportunity to view many Great Black-backed Gulls. Have seen Western Gulls over the past ten years from coastal California (mainly the Monterey Peninsula).

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

BIRDS OF THE SOVIET UNION (Vol. III) by Dement'ev, Gladkov, Spangenberg.

COLLINS POCKET GUIDE TO BRITISH BIRDS by Fitter and Richardson.

BIRDS OF EUROPE by Brunn, Singer, Campbell. STANDARD FIELD GUIDES.

BIRDS OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN by Stokes. A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE.

This report was written from notes made during X after X observation; from memory

PRINT NAME: JACK REDDALL

SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall DATE: 12/25/1976

Street Address: 4450 South Alton Street

Town and State: Englewood, Colorado ZIP: 80110

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110