

1999 - 60

CFO-RC-FILE#: _____

Rcd 3/99 upl

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

Results: ACCEPT 6-1

Species: Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s) of occurrence: December 12, 1998

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: Unknown

Plumage: Basic IV or Definitive Basic

Exact location: Lake Loveland

Elevation: Approx. 4900 feet

County: Larimer

Nearest town: Loveland, CO

Length of Observation: 20 min.

Time(s) of Observation: 4:30 – 4:50 pm

Other observers who saw the bird with you: None

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): Unknown

Light conditions [quality; direction relative to bird(s) position]:

Poor light due to post-sunset, although clear sky. I was positioned between sunlight and bird.

Optical equipment used: Swift Panther telescope, 15-45x zoom. Observed mainly at 45x, and lower power to increase lighting.

Distance from bird (estimated unless otherwise noted): 500 m

Was the bird photographed? No.

If so, have you submitted photos?

Who took the photographs?

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred:
Lake/Reservoir.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying; feeding; habits; behaviors used in identifying the species or in supporting the identification):

Resting on water with other roosting gulls, mainly California Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls.

Describe the bird in detail: This is the most important part of this report. Include overall size and shape, and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings, and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the (bird(s)). Describe other details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, etc. that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted: you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches, or copy of field notes):

A gull larger in size than Ring-billed Gull and similar in size to California Gull (CAGU) and smaller than Herring Gull (HERG), with which it was associating (all three species). Field marks noted were: Pale bill with dark subterminal smudge on lower mandible; white head with dark streaking concentrated around eye, and less concentrated streaking on nape area; White underparts. Very dark gray back and wings, with black primaries. Strong white tertial crescent and scapular crescent.

Describe the bird's song and calls if heard: None

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

Elimination of HERG, *Larus argentatus*: The few HERG observed among the hundreds of roosting gulls were obviously larger than this bird. HERG is much lighter gray on the mantle, with the exception of the *heuglini* subspecies of Asia.

Elimination of HERG, *L. a. heuglini*: This dark subspecies averages larger than *L. a. smithsonianus*, the North American subspecies of HERG. This bird was approximately the size of CAGU.

Elimination of Great Black-backed Gull, *Larus marinus*: Size was too small for this species. Also the back color was not as dark black as would be *L. marinus*.

Elimination of Slaty-backed Gull, *Larus shistisagus*: Size of HERG.

Elimination of other "Black-backed" Gulls: This bird was too small for Western Gull (*L. occidentalis*) or Yellow-footed Gull (*L. livens*), both species that are not known to

wander far from their respective ranges on the west coast of North America. Kelp Gull, a South American species that has bred in coastal North America in the Gulf of Mexico, also has notably larger bill and would show more black on the mantle.

Elimination of California Gull, *Larus californicus*: Adult California Gull could appear to have a very dark gray mantle in very poor light. However, the observed bird was surrounded by many CAGU (probably 20 or 30 within the same scope-view, all of which appeared uniformly gray and much lighter than the observed bird.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I have birded actively in the United States from 1973-present, mainly in the East, and have had extensive experience with *L. argentatus smithsonianus* and *L. marinus*. Within the last 15 years, I have observed at least 10 *L. fuscus*, in plumages Basic II, and Basic Definitive. I have paid closer attention to gull identification within the last 2 years, during which time I have carefully studied several *L. fuscus* and many HERG and CAGU in Colorado. This individual was the first of this species that I had observed in Colorado and in recent years. However, I have since observed this species on 5 separate occasions (minimum of three individual birds) including another observation of a bird of this same plumage at Pueblo Reservoir in January 1999.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation):

National Geographic field guide, Gulls, 2nd Ed., by PJ Grant. Plumage characteristics of most similar species were reviewed in Grant's book.

This report was made from notes taken during observation.

Reporting observer: Nicholas Komar

Signature: Nicholas Komar 3/4/99

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BILL LISOWSKY
Records Committee Chair
2919 Silverplume Drive
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Lake Loveland

DATE

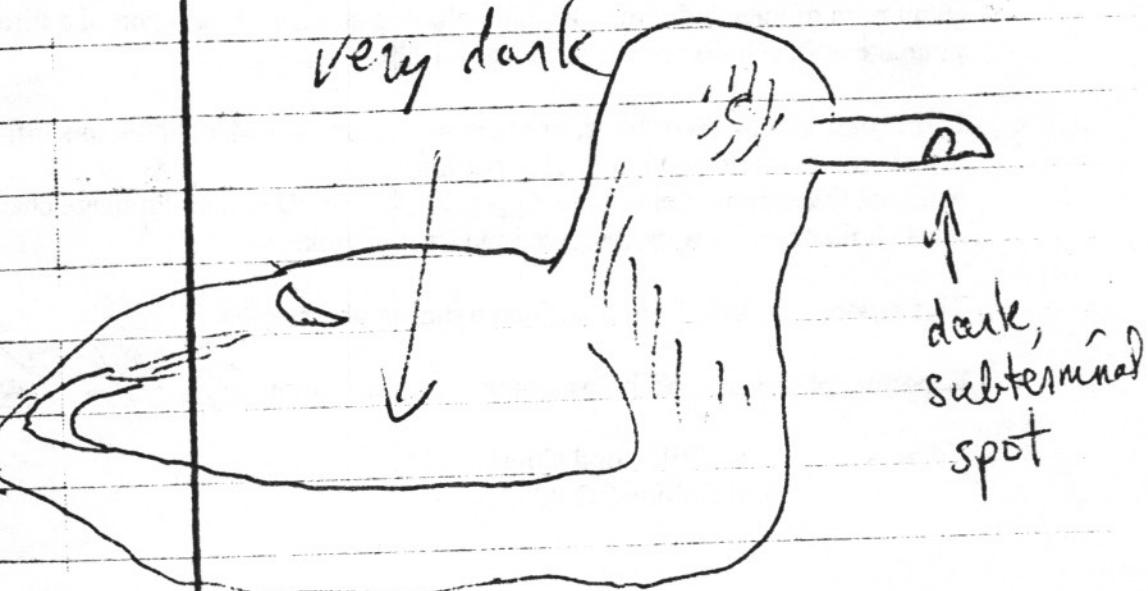
12/12/98

Observer: N. Komar

~4:30 pm

Adult (4th basic?) LBBG

very dark



↑
dark,
subterminal
spot

executiv