

CFO-RC-FILE#: \_\_\_\_\_

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

Red 3/99 upl

Results: ACCEPT 7-0Species: Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

(Common Name)

(Scientific Name)

Date(s) of occurrence: December 12-13, 1998

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: Unknown

Plumage: Sub-adult (probably Basic II)

Exact location: Lake Loveland

Elevation: Approx. 4900 feet

County: Larimer

Nearest town: Loveland, CO

Length of Observation: 20 min.

Time(s) of Observation: 4:55 - 5:00 pm (Dec 12), 4:40-4:55 pm (Dec 13)

Other observers who saw the bird with you:

Paul Sweet (Dec 13)

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

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

Dec 12, poor light due to post-sunset, although clear sky; Dec 13, decent to poor light due to receding sunlight (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):

Dec 12, 200 m. Dec. 13, 200-300 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. Bird was observed resting on water and in flight.

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

Dec. 12, resting on water with other roosting gulls; Dec. 13, chasing a Ring-billed Gull with food in its beak, then resting on water with other roosting 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 ~~intermediate~~ larger in size than Ring-billed Gull and similar in size to California Gulls (CAGU) and smaller than Herring Gull (HERG), with which it was associating. Field marks noted were: mostly dark bill with basal quarter pale, head whitish with the area around the base of the bill the whitest. Dark markings around eye. In flight, rump and base of tail white. Upperparts (back and wings, and outer tail) otherwise mostly dark gray-brown, with darker primaries, and darkest outer primaries. Secondaries edged white giving a white trailing edge to the wing. Underparts mostly whitish, with some darker markings on the upper sides. A thin whitish terminal band in the tail was noted, and the thickness of the dark subterminal band was narrower in the central rectrices. In flight, the wings were long and narrow, relative to other gulls. At rest, upperparts appeared uniform in color, except for black primaries. Small white tertial and scapular crescents were noted.

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 never would appear as the combination of dark on the upperparts and of light on the head and underparts, as exhibited by this bird. Basic I HERG that are dark brown would be so on both upper- and under-parts, with the exception of a whitish head. Furthermore, Basic I HERG would



not show the contrast between white rump and dark tail. Basic II HERG would be much paler gray on the back.

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

Elimination of Great Black-backed Gull, *Larus marinus*: Size was too small for this species. Furthermore, all plumages except Basic I would show some black in the upperparts. Basic I plumage would show more mottling, an effect of broad white edges to back and wing feathers that was absent on this bird.

Elimination of Slaty-backed Gull, *Larus shistisagus*: Juvenile of this species ~~shares much in common with the observed bird, but~~ should have a dark rump, head and underparts, and should be 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*: Basic I CAGU would appear more uniformly brown above and below, and would be a lighter shade of brown. Basic II CAGU would show grey on back. Both Basic I and II would show much less black on bill.

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. I have never observed Basic I *L. fuscus*.

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

National Geographic field guide, Gulls, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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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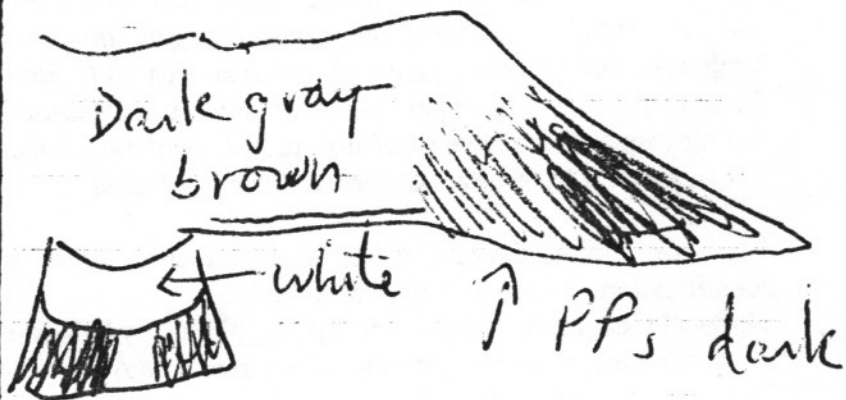
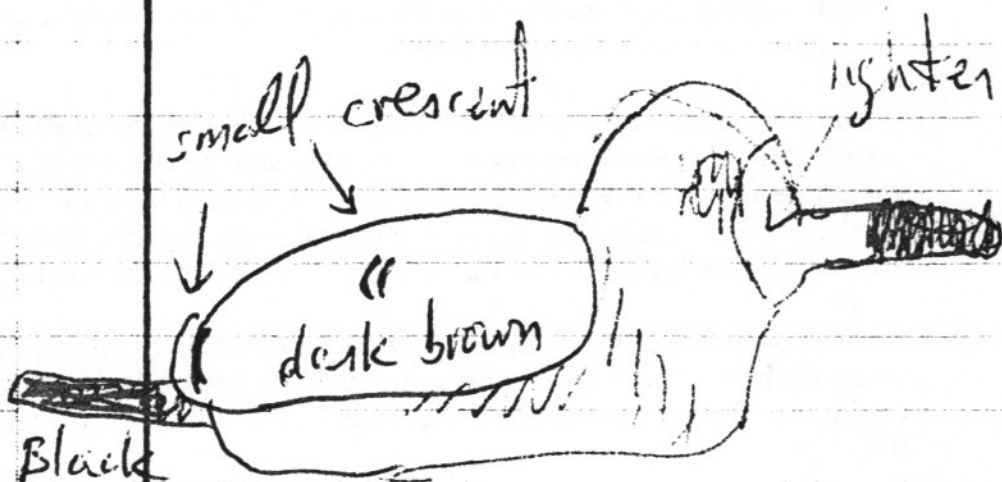
Lake Loveland

DATE

12/13/98

w/  
Paul Sweet

4:40 - 4:55 pm  
LBBG - Basic II



Pale edge to SS

Size > RB94  
= CAGU