

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

ACCEPT 7-0

Rcd 1/5/00 wpl
(3 photos)**Species:** Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus graellsii*)**Date:** 12 December 1999**Number seen:** one**Sex:** ?**Plumage:** Basic III**Locality:** Loveland Reservoir**Elevation:** about 5000'**Nearest town:** Berthoud**County:** Larimer**Time observed:** between about 12:55 - 13:15 MST **Duration of observation:** about 20 minutes

Description: Because I saw some gulls standing on the ice of Loveland Reservoir as I drove by it, I stopped to check them out. About the tenth bird I saw was a dark-mantled gull, much larger than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls (RBGU). I recognized it as a Lesser Black-backed Gull (LBBG), studied it for a bit, and then grabbed my scope, camera, and bread and walked out closer to attempt to pull the thing closer with the bread. After a few RBGUs flew around with pieces of bread, the LBBG finally flew in reasonably close, thus providing my first photo op in the state for the species (finally!).

The bird was in Basic III plumage. It had a white head with extensive dark brown streaking, except on the forehead and chin. The heaviest streaking on the head was around the eyes, which were whitish-yellow. The bill was thicker than those of nearby California Gulls (CAGU) and had an obvious gonydeal angle. The unguis and the gonys were bright yellow and there was a bit of red at the gonydeal angle. Most of the rest of the maxilla was blackish, though there were some small pale areas mixed in with the blackish. The basal 3-4 mm of the maxilla was a pale straw color, as was the basal 1/4 of the mandible, with the middle of the mandible being blackish. The mantle and wings were a medium to dark gray, darker than that of the nearby CAGUs. The outer primaries were extensively black and the primary coverts were gray, extensively mottled with black. There was no white mirror on P10 and the outer primaries had only very rudimentary whitish tips. Primary molt was evidently complete and the tip of P7 fell just short of the tail tip and the tip of P8 extended well beyond the tail tip. The secondaries were gray with thin, white tips forming a white trailing edge. The undersides of the flight feathers were darker than the whitish wing linings. The tail and underparts were white. The legs were a sickly yellow color with a strong pink cast on the back of the legs; the webbings were pink.

Similar species eliminated: Herring Gull (HERG) ruled out by mantle and wing color and by bill color (bill should be mostly pale in Basic III). Other, darker forms of HERG ruled out by size (they should be larger), mantle color, and bill pattern. CAGU eliminated by size, mantle color, bill shape, and leg color. Slaty-backed Gull (SBGU) eliminated by wing pattern; bill size, shape, and color; leg color, and by size. Kelp Gull (KEGU) ruled out by bill (size, shape, and color) and by upperwing pattern. Great Black-backed Gull eliminated by size and by upperparts color and pattern.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >65 *gracillii* LBBGs on the Great Lakes and the East Coast and five previously in CO, bazillions of *smithsonianus* HERGs, >125 *vegae* HERGs, 10s of 1000s of GBBGs, 1000s of CAGUs, and >75 SBGUs. I have not seen any other of the darker, Asian HERGs, nor have I seen KEGU.

Light conditions: Bright with the sun to my left and slightly in front of me

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x and Zeiss 7x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach at about 12 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: none

Other observers who saw the bird independently: unknown

If photographed, type of equipment and film: Canon rig, 300mm lens w/1.4x converter; Fuji film

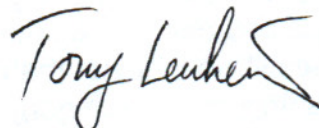
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 12-13 December 1999 from notes written during the sighting



1999-72

Basic III LBBG

Loveland Res. Larimer Co. CO

12 Dec 99

Tony Leukering

(additional photo on reverse)



1999-72