

SIGHT RECORD FORM

2004-68

Species: *Little Gull*

rec'd 11/19/04

Date: Nov. 15-16, 2004

Time seen: 11:00-11:15 a.m. both days

Locality: The Pinery, near Parker, Douglas County

Latilong: 39104

Optical equipment: Binocs, scope (20-60)

Other observers: Glenn Walbek found bird. He and Tony Leukering took pictures. Others no doubt saw it as well.

Number of birds seen: one Sex: unk Plumage: Winter adult

Light conditions: Sunny; bird active so that light hit it at all angles, from side to back to sun in the eyes

Distance from bird: 50-300 + feet

Weather at time of observation: Clear, sunny, no wind; temperature 50-60 degrees.

Prior weather & number of days since change: Clear, temperatures from 25-60 deg; trace of snow night of Nov. 13, and a bit more snow on Nov. 10.

Describe habitat: Small reservoir surrounded by housing development

Describe behavior: Gull flew actively over reservoir; it frequently (every 1-2 minutes) plunged into the water from 10-20 feet presumably catching food. On Nov. 15 it also rested on the water, several hundred feet away, to provide views through scope. Also on lake several Bonaparte's Gulls flew around for comparison and lit on the water to rest.

Field marks observed: size, color, pattern, shape, bill, etc.:

Size: small gull, a little bit smaller than the Bonaparte's on the reservoir.In flight: underside of wings: dark grayish-black with white trailing edge. White or light gray mantle without dark wing tips. Tail white.Wing shape: Little Gull's wings slightly blunter than Bonaparte's. Flight a bit faster with many turns and dives.At rest: head notable. Little Gull had a steeper forehead than resting Bonaparte's.Bill: small, blackish, a little shorter than Bonaparte's.Face: It had a grayish smudge behind the eye and a grayish strip over its crown almost to the nape. At rest it lacked black wing tips. (Sketch made in the field reproduced here.)

Bird's call or song: No sounds heard

Field marks not seen: Leg color.

Similar species and how eliminated: Bonaparte's: Compared on the spot. Little Gull lacked the triangles in the wing, and had that dark underwing. Bonaparte's slightly larger.

Wing pattern eliminates larger gulls such as Black-headed, Franklin's, and Laughing that, in winter plumage, have somewhat similar head patterns. Other gulls, all bigger, have black wing tips except for really big white ones such as Glaucous.

Prior experience with this species: One or two observations. Bonaparte's and Franklin's annually. Laughing on the east coast but only once or twice in Colorado.

Description from: Notes taken in field

Nov. 16, 2004

Hugh E. Kingery *Urling C. Kingery*
 Hugh E. Kingery Urling C. Kingery
 PO Box 584, Franktown CO 80116

2004-68

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

rec'd 11/18/04

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CBRC FILE #:

RESULTS:

Species: (Common Name) Little Gull

(Scientific Name) Larus minutus

Date(s) of occurrence: November 15, 2004

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: unable to determine

Plumage: Adult Basic

Exact location: Bingham Lake in the Pinery

County: Douglas

Nearest town: Parker

Elevation: Approximately 6000ft

Length of observation: 1.5 hours

Time(s) of observation: 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Hugh Kingrey came and observed the bird within 10 minutes of my departure

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): none at the time of this report

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s) and observers position:

mostly sunny, I viewed the bird from the SE corner and NW corner as well as the W side.

Optical equipment used: Nikon Superior E 8 x 32 and Swarovski ATS 65 Scope

Distance to bird(s) (estimated, unless otherwise noted): 100 yards to as close as 30 feet

Was (Were) bird(s) photographed? Yes

If so, are you submitting photos? Yes

Who took the photograph(s)? Me

Describe the general and specific habitats in which the bird(s) occurred: A small lake in a suburban area of Ponderosa Pines and Gamble Oaks

Describe the bird's (birds') behaviors, particularly behaviors that were used in supporting the identification, e.g., flying, feeding, habits:

The bird flew often with quick, shallow wing beats (compared to BOGU present). He would frequently and instantly change direction and dive to the surface of the water, catching and eating food. I was not able to identify what he was eating but did see him eat. After several minutes of this behavior, he would land and stay on the lake, floating and preening, only to start feeding again.

DESCRIPTION -- This is the most important part of this report. Include in these details the overall size and shape of the bird and give as many plumage details as possible, even including those that you feel might not have relevance to the specific identification. Please fill out this portion even if photos are accompanying your report.

The bird was obviously a small gull appearing Bonaparte Gull sized until he flew with that species on several occasions. He then appeared smaller than the BOGU. Noticeable was the shape of the wing, which looked shorter and rounder than the longer pointier wings of the several BOGUs that were present. The mantle and wings were light grey above and the wings were smudged charcoal below, noticeably darker than the mantle and top of wing. His primary tips were white along with the tips of all his flight feathers. This gave the appearance of a white margin from the tertials all the way around the trailing edge of the wing to the tips of the primaries; much different the black tipped primary feathers (appearing as a black edged) of the BOGUs. The head was reminiscent of adult, basic plumaged, 'small hooded' gulls, with a dark spot behind the eye that seemed to bend up toward the cap, which was dark (charcoal colored). The forehead was white. The bill was small and dark, and the feet and legs were deep red or reddish. The underside was white, with some of the grey mantle color dipping down from the 'shoulder' area to the sides of the breast. The tail was white with no markings and appeared short.

Describe the bird's (birds') call(s) and/or song(s), if noted:

The bird would occasionally make a one note call when entering the water. I am not familiar with the call of this species and can not use what I heard in this bird to support my ID.

SIMILAR SPECIES -- This is another critical part of your report. Please discuss how you eliminated similar species from consideration:

Certainly the presence of 5 BOGU on the lake, acting the same made me take careful notice of the differences. Most notable was the smaller size, shorter rounder appearing wings, the dark charcoal colored under wing and and completely white-tipped flight feathers that helped me distinguish this from the Bonaparte's Gulls present. More subtle was the LIGU had more dark in the face and head than did the BOGUs. Also, the leg color was deep red, sometimes appearing black, compared to the lighter pink of fleshy colored legs of the BOGUs. The squared-off tail, shorter, rounder wings, darker mantle and under wing, and dark crown helped me eliminate (unfortunately) Ross's Gull.

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

I have seen this species approximately 6 times, in various CO locations and Italy.

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

I consulted Sibley's Guide to Birds, following my sighting.

This report was made from (check one) ☒ notes made during observation ☐ notes made after observation ☐ later from memory.

Date and time of written report: November 15, 2004

Reporting observer: Glenn Walbek

Signature:



Reporting observer's address: 2908 Cliff View Court

City: Castle Rock

State: CO

Zip: 80108

Send report to:
Colorado Bird Records Committee
Tony Leukering
PO Box 660
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