

Species: LITTLE GULL

Larus minutus

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 8, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 7:10 A.M. to 7:35 A.M.-MPT

Locality: Jumbo Reservoir

Nearest Town: Crook

County: Logan

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

None

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

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: Bright, Clear; Air still. Sunlight directly on bird.

Distance from bird (how measured): Various; 200 feet to 500 feet (estimated).

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Breeding adult.

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

First observed in flight over surface of reservoir. A small gull with rapid (almost tern like) wing beats. It circled and wheeled over the water during the entire viewing period, working back and forth from near the dam for several hundred yards. It never came to rest. The black under wings caught my eye immediately.

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 very small gull, smaller than the half dozen or so Bonaparte's Gulls with which it was associating. Head, black (more extensive than Bonaparte's Gull). Entire underparts white. Tail white, short and rounded. Wings, short, rounded, light gray above with white trailing edge. No other marks on upper wings. Under wings, black with white trailing edge which contrasted markedly with the rest of the bird when flashed in flight. Back (mantle), light gray.



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

No call heard.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large fresh water reservoir.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Bonaparte's Gull: This species is larger and lacks the black under wings. Also this species displays white or silvery primaries on upper surface of the wing and has black-tipped primaries.

Black-headed Gull: Larger still. This species also has black under wings. However, the pattern of the upper surface of the wings is identical to that of Bonaparte's Gull.

Sabine's Gull: Slightly forked tail. Bold upper wing pattern (black primaries, white secondaries, gray shoulders).

Franklin's Gull: Black-tipped primaries with white "windows". Rest of wing gray. White wing linings, dark primaries underneath.

Laughing Gull: Much larger. White wing linings, dark primaries underneath.

Terns: Do not have black heads (black crowns only). Have long pointed wings.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen all dark-headed gulls in North America. Extensive experience with Franklin's Gull and Bonaparte's Gull in Colorado (the latter in New York and California also). Have seen Little Gull twice before, both times in winter plumage - Atlantic Ocean off Moriches Inlet, Suffolk County, New York (February 1974) and Union Reservoir, Weld County, Colorado (November 1974). Have seen Black-headed Gull on one occasion - Jones Beach Inlet, Long Island, New York (March 1975), one bird in winter plumage. Familiar with Laughing Gull from Long Island, New York, North and South Carolina, Florida and Texas coast. Have seen Sabine's Gull on four or five occasions during fall migration in Colorado.

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

Standard Field Guides supported observation.

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

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