

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAIR BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

23-89-18

Species: Little Gull
(Vernacular name)

Larus minutus
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): July 23; July 30, 1989 Time Bird Seen: 3:30pm - to 4 PM July 23

Locality: Cheraw - Otero County Colorado - Latilong #20 (Las Animas)
Little Gull is not listed in this Latilong in Colo. Bird Distribution.
Nearest town, county and state: Latilong Study

Optical equipment: 15-60X Swift Zoom Spotting Scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: First year bird

Light conditions: Excellent

Distance from bird, and how measured: Closest distance - 25 yards estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior: This bird was first seen sitting on a sandy beach with Franklin's Gulls. It then flew past us and landed in water of Lake Cheraw about 50 yards from us. It then swam within 25 yards of us in excellent light conditions. Its flight was erratic; Tern like with rapid wing beats.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Prairie lake with many sandy shore lines due to low water. There are few trees near lakeshore but many trees (deciduous) in town of Cheraw near the lake.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Bob Dickson 55 Villa Drive Pueblo, Colorado 81001
Mark Janos 1 Cactus Drive La Junta, Colorado 81050
Dave Johnson 1920 Greenwood Pueblo, Colorado 81003

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Very small gull about $\frac{2}{3}$ size of nearby Franklin's Gull with which it sat. Head: White Forehead, throat, and nape region. Crown grayish black which extended into nape. Large black dot behind each solid black eye. Beak was short, thin, & solid black. In flight the following was observed: Wings: Primaries were dark smoky grayish black becoming whitish in secondaries. Inner wing was whitish but bisected by heavy black bar extending from body to carpal region. Tail was basically square shape but slightly wider at terminal edge. Tail was white except for narrow black terminal band which was slightly thicker in middle.

We did not see leg color or underside of wings well enough to record any positive field marks.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

No sound made.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Bonaparte's Gull is larger with lighter primaries. Black confined to wing borders, & primaries show more white than Little Gull. Bonaparte's Gulls (immatures) lack the extensive dark crown; nape of Little Gull. This bird was an immature due to dark terminal band & black wing bar.

Sabine's Gull has solid contrasting wedges or triangles in wing. Immatures lack dark wing bar of Little Gull. The wedges of Sabine's Gull are much more contrasting than the nuanced smoky dark primaries of Little Gull which gradually shade into its lighter secondaries.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have seen many Bonaparte's & Sabine's Gulls. In several different inland & coastal states. This observation of a Little Gull is my second one.

This report was written from notes made during ☒ before ☒ after ☒ observation; from memory ☐.

NAME (print): David Silverman

Mailing address: P.O. Box 362 Rye, Co. 81069

Signature: David Silverman

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

XC to Hugh Kingery

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAZE BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

23-89-18

Species: Little Gull
(Vernacular name)

Larus minutus
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound: future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Also seen on various dates, at least until Aug 31, 1989

Date (s): July 24, 1989 described

Time Bird Seen: 6:45 a.m. to 7:45

Locality: Cheraw Res.

Cheraw, Colo.

Otero, County

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binocs ; Kowa TSN-4 20-60X Scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: — Plumage: 1st Summer (but w/o black hood)

Light conditions: Excellent; high thin haze, at all angles.

Distance from bird, and how measured: 50-250 yds (Estimated).

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Active, fluttering tern-like flight with quick wingbeats. Flight has constant wingbeats with no soaring, occasional arching up, then down to surface where the bird fed by picking from water's surface, especially at edges. Also fed by snatching insects from air. Sometimes floated ~~perched~~ sitting on water alone or perched on beach with larger Franklin's Gull.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Plains reservoir.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

David Blue, Bob Dickson, David Silverman.

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

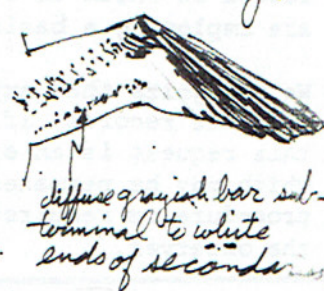
Very small gull, about 12" long & 22" wing-span. About the size of Black Terns, smaller than Franklin's Gull, larger than Common Nighthawk (which was nearby). About one half the bulk of Franklin's Gull. Small-headed gull. Black eye. Bill very small, slender, short, pointed & black. Tail short, square, or barely notched; white with black terminal band; wider black at center than at sides. Wings short, blunt ended. Strong, dark, "W" pattern on spread wing: ^{nearly black} primaries

Head white with distinctive blackish, dime-sized spot behind eye. Rear of crown & nape sooty colored.

Dark smudgy area around eye. Fore-crown white. Underwings grayish with darker secondaries (as seen from below).

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.



List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Small size and "W"-pattern on wings rules out most gulls.

Black-legged Kittiwake: larger, has black nape mark, 2-toned bill.

Bonaparte's Gull most similar, has more white in primaries, black terminal bar on 2's; rounder tail; pointier wings, no black nape.

Sabine's Gull: has solid "W", especially on fore-wing; is larger.

Com. Black-headed Gull larger, 2-toned bill; dark 2's.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I saw a similar plumaged Little Gull 16 July 1986 at Manitowish Wisconsin. I've never seen Com Black-headed Gull, but have seen others.

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

NAME (print): MARK JANOS

Mailing address: 902 Colorado Ave. La Junta, CO 81050

Signature: Mark Janos

Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

23-89-18

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Documentation of Unusual Bird Sighting

Little Gull, first-winter plumage
31 July 1989, 9:10 to 9:45 and 10:25 to 10:45 a.m.
Lake Cheraw, Otero County, Colorado
Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City, IA 52246

I heard about the Little Gull from the Colorado Birdline. I birded Lake Cheraw extensively from 3:00 to 6:30 p.m. on July 30 but did not see the bird. I did see a small white gull or tern, but it flushed before I could get a good look. After I saw the Sabine's Gull, I continued to look for the Little Gull and finally I saw a small, white, fast-flying bird at the east end of the lake. I made the following notes and sketch while viewing the bird.

9:10 to 9:45. Spotted small gull at east end of lake. Much smaller than Franklin's Gull. I noted thin black tail band. Wings appeared light above and below, body white, and fast tern-like flight. Bird flew for 5 minutes or more while I watched it in scope. Able to see dark carpal bar and probable dark outer primaries. There was no flash of white in the primaries and no dark on the trailing edge. The bird lit on a sand bar at about 200 yards and I watched it preen for a long time. It was about 2/3 as high and about 2/3 as long as Franklin's Gull in the same field of view. The posterior crown was dark (black). This extended to the upper nape. When the bird preened its breast, the top of the head appeared all black. There was also a black dot behind the eye. The mantle was light (gray). There was a dark mark on the wing beginning at the shoulder and going posteriorly. The wing was lighter below this. The primaries were dark. The bill appeared dark. I did not see the legs. The bird flew off when I wasn't looking."

"10:25-10:45. Just watched the bird flying for 20 minutes. Wing beats about twice as fast as Franklin's Gull and faster than Black Tern. Bird flying low--rarely more than 6 feet off the water. Difficult to see rounded wing tip--but less pointed than Black Tern. Mid-wing bar seen when bird turning, but dark primary hard to see in fast moving bird in bright light."

Conditions: overcast at first viewing, sunny at second with cross light. Used 20x scope. Bird always at 200 yards or more.

Used National Geographic field guide while viewing the bird. Notes made at end of observation periods. Typed 6 hours later at Denver Airport. Life bird (#683 for North America).

