

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☐UNUSUAL RECORD ☒Accepted 7-0

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

Species: LITTLE GULL Larus minutus  
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): October 6, 1988Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: Unknown Plumage: Adult, winterLocality: Union Reservoir east of Longmont, CO (Weld County) Elevation: 4500' (?)Nearest town: Longmont County: WeldTime(s) observed: 4:45-5:15 PMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): total of 5 minutes

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

None

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

Joe Mammoser (Fort Collins)

Bill Prather (Longmont); Kevin Cook &amp; Mike Schomaker (Fort Collins); others?

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Light was fairly low, from the west. Most of views I had were from the northwest one view from the north, another from the east as the bird flew west into the sun

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 7x50 Nikon binocularsDistance, and how measured: Closest I got was what I would estimate at 50-60 yards. This is just my best guess. I did not pace it off or have any means of precise check.

If photographed, type of equipment and film:

Not photographed.

Who else photographed the bird? Nobody (yet?)

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Bird was initially found sitting on the mud of drawn-down reservoir several feet from water's edge with Franklin's and Ring-billed Gulls. Flew off when I was 50-60 yards away. It and other gulls appeared fairly skittish. Later tried approaching again and bird flew off at a distance of about 75-80 yards, this time without much stirring by the other gulls. It flew straight out over the reservoir, and then dipped violently to catch something on water surface.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

Bird was considerably smaller than nearby Franklin's gulls. I would say 1/3 smaller. Had the general configuration of a Bonaparte's gull: slender, small white head with a darkish spot behind the eye. Bill was thin, fairly long & dark. Legs dark, short. Body, back and wings were pale (i.e. no black). When bird flew, mantle was light gray (lighter than ring-billed gull adult), wings pale gray all the way to the tip (no black). Trailing edge of wing with wide, conspicuous white trim. Rump and tail white. Did not notice top of head but general impression was that head appeared whitish overall. Tail was short, wide



Description (continued):

and squared. When the bird wheeled to land on the shore 50-75 yards from where it initially took flight, the underwings showed a conspicuous, fairly uniform medium to dark-medium gray. I would compare this shade of gray to that of an adult Franklin's or Laughing Gull mantle. The second time I observed the bird flying was into the sun, and I was struck with the "stubby" appearance of the bird's wings, it's rapid wingbeat, and then it's erratic flight in the presence of surface food (either fish or insects near the water). After a few dives the bird then generally fluttered over the water in a petrel-like fashion or flew in rapid, broad circles 10-20 feet over the water surface. It did not particularly interact with other gulls (other than when it sat with them) or other waterfowl present.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

I did not hear the bird makes any sounds.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Typical Front Range, large reservoir in fall. Considerable amount of exposed shoreline.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

The combination of small size, pale mantle and wings and pale upper wing tips, pale white rear wing lining, white head with "ear" spot and uniformly dark underwings eliminate all other small gulls. Bonaparte's and Sabine's gulls have black somewhere on the upper aspect in all plumages, either on the wings, or back. Same applies to Black-headed, Black-legged Kittiwake and Red-legged Kittiwake. None of these also show contrast described between upper and lower wing.

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

I have no experience with Little Gull. I have seen Bonaparte's (several), Sabine's (1 immature the day before at this same location) and Black-legged Kittiwake (1 imm in CO, few on the West Coast).

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

a) at time of observation:

National Geographic Field Guide

b) after observation:

Audubon Water Bird Guide by Pough (Adult winter Little Gull at top of Plate 26)

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation X from memory X  
Date and time report was written: October 6, 1988 10:30 PM

Reporting observer: Dave Leatherman Signature: Dave Leatherman

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All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS  
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