

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # \_\_\_\_\_

NEW STATE RECORD \_\_\_\_\_

UNUSUAL RECORD X

ACCEPT 7-0

Red 1/5/00 wpe

**Species:** Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)**Date:** 27 November 1999**Number seen:** one**Sex:** ?**Plumage:** Def. Basic**Locality:** South marina, Pueblo Reservoir**Elevation:** about 5000'**Nearest town:** Pueblo West**County:** Pueblo**Time observed:** about 14:15 - 15:00 MDT**Duration of observation:** off and on for about 25 minutes during this period

**Description:** While scoping through the gulls at the South Marina with Peter Gent and Mark Janos, I found a small gull bathing beyond the tires that had no black on the upper side of the primaries. I immediately called out "Little Gull" and the three of us proceeded to study it. After a time, Mark called Brandon Percival and informed him of the bird's presence. The bird left the marina and flew to the bay to the west where the three of us followed it and refound it flying around foraging, sometimes near a few Bonaparte's Gulls that were doing the same. Brandon showed up shortly thereafter and watched the bird for some time.

The bird was a small gull (whitish head and underparts, gray back and wings) that was obviously much smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls that were bathing nearby. It had a small, rounded head that was mostly white, but with a large dark gray/blackish smudge on the crown and a well-defined black post-ocular spot behind each eye; the spot was just a bit larger than the eye. The eyes were dark and the bill was very short, thin (with no pronounced gonydeal angle), and all black. The length of the bill was only slightly longer than the distance from the base of the bill to the back of the eye. The neck was pale - I do not recall whether white or pale gray. The mantle and upper sides of the wings were pale gray - slightly paler than those of the nearby Ring-bills. The upper side of the primaries were the same gray as the rest of the upper side of the wing, but had wide, white tips forming a very pale wingtip when the wing was folded. The rump and rounded tail were white. The underparts were also white, but with grayish smudging protruding from the upper-side down to the sides of the chest. I did not see the legs. When the bird was flying, the wings were broader and very much more rounded than those of the Bonaparte's Gulls with which it was flying at times. The underside of the wings was extensively blackish. Upon close study, the flight feathers were black with wide, white tips that formed a wide, white trailing edge. The wing linings ranged from gray to black, with the underside greater secondary coverts being quite dark gray. The color then paled both proximally and anteriorly so that the innermost lesser coverts were pale to medium gray.

Similar species eliminated: The blackish wing linings immediately eliminate the only regularly-occurring small gulls in CO, Bonaparte's and Franklin's. That and the lack of black in the wingtips also eliminate all other North American gull species other than Ross's. Ross's (ROGU) is ruled out by bill size (ROGU has an even smaller bill), head pattern (ROGU mostly lacks an obvious crown patch and has a smaller post-ocular spot), tail shape, and by wing lining color (most ROGU have paler wing linings).



**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 >30 Little Gulls, mostly at Niagara Falls, but also in MI, NY, NJ, and three previously in CO. I have seen >250,000 Bonaparte's Gulls (mostly on or near the Great Lakes), and about eight Black-headed Gulls. I have not seen Ross's Gull

**Light conditions:** sun bright and in various juxtapositions with bird

**Optical equipment used:** Leica 32x

**Distance, and how estimated:** estimated closest distance at 70 meters

**Other observers who saw the bird with you:** Peter Gent, Mark Janos, Brandon Percival

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** none


**If photographed, type of equipment and film:** not photographed due to the long range - but it would have been easy to video if anyone had had a video camera!

**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:** 1 December 1999 from notes written at the time of the sighting with the bird in view

Red 11/30/99 repl

CFO-RC FILE # 1999-55

RESULTS: ACCEPT 7-0

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS AND ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NECESSARY)

SPECIES: LITTLE GULL LARUS MINUTUS  
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION: 27 NOVEMBER 1999

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: UNKNOWN PLUMAGE: ADULT BASIC (WINTER)

EXACT LOCATION: SOUTH MARINA AT PUEBLO RESERVOIR

COUNTY: PUEBLO NEAREST TOWN: PUEBLO ELEVATION: 4400'

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 45 MINUTES TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION: 2:15 - 3pm

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO SAW THE BIRD(S) WITH YOU:

TONY LEUKERING, MARK JANOS, BRANDON PERCIVAL

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY SAW THE BIRD(S):

LIGHT CONDITIONS (QUALITY; DIRECTION RELATIVE TO BIRD(S); POSITION):

SUNNY, FIRST SEEN IN EXCELLENT LIGHT WITH SUN BEHIND OBSERVERS

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED:

20-60 X TELESCOPE

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): 200 m

WAS BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED?            IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOS?           

WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS?           

DESCRIBE THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD(S) OCCURRED:

SWIMMING AND FLYING OVER A LARGE RESERVOIR.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S BEHAVIOR (FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION):

SITTING ON WATER, THEN FLYING OVER WATER SEARCHING FOR FOOD,  
AND OCCASIONALLY DIVING INTO THE WATER.



DESCRIBE THE BIRD IN DETAIL. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS REPORT. INCLUDE THE OVERALL SIZE AND SHAPE AND HOW YOU PLACED THE BIRD IN THE GENERAL GROUP THAT YOU DID. GIVE COMPLETE DETAILS OF PLUMAGE, INCLUDING HEAD, THROAT, UNDERSIDES, NAPE, BACK, WINGS AND TAIL. GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO MARKS YOU USED TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD(S). DESCRIBE OTHER DETAILS, SUCH AS COLOR AND SHAPE OF BILL, LEGS, EYE, ETC. THAT WERE IMPORTANT IN MAKING THE IDENTIFICATION. (FILL OUT THIS PORTION EVEN IF PHOTOGRAPHS ARE SUBMITTED; YOU MAY ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS, DRAWINGS, FIELD SKETCHES OR COPY OF FIELD NOTES):

VERY SMALL GULL SEEN SITTING ON THE RESERVOIR, WITH A SMALL AURICULAR BLACK SPOT AND A QUITE LARGE BLACK SMUDGE ON THE TOP OF THE HEAD. THE BILL WAS BLACK AND VERY SMALL. WHEN IT SHUFFLED ITS WINGS, AND LATER WHEN IT FLEW, THE UNDERWINGS WERE MOSTLY QUITE BLACK. IN FLIGHT, IT WAS VERY EASY TO TELL FROM BONAPARTE'S GULLS BOTH BY THE BLACK UNDER THE WINGS, AND BY THE LACK OF A WHITE WEDGE AND BLACK AT THE TIPS OF THE PRIMARIES. THE TAIL WAS WHITE AND SQUARE, NOT WEDGE SHAPED.

THE MANTLE COLOR WAS SIMILAR TO BONAPARTE'S GULL, OF WHICH THERE WERE DESCRIBE BIRD'S CALL OR SONG:

ABOUT 100 ON THE RESERVOIR. THE EYE WAS BLACK,

BUT THE LEG COLOR WAS NOT NOTED. THE WINGS WERE

DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM: SHORT AND ROUNDED IN FLIGHT.

BONAPARTE'S GULL - SIZE, UPPER AND LOWER WING COLOR, WING SHAPE, BILL SIZE.

BLACK-HEADED GULL - SIZE, UPPER AND LOWER WING COLOR, WING SHAPE, BILL COLOR

ROSS' GULL - UNDER WING COLOR, TAIL SHAPE, HEAD MARKINGS.

IVORY GULL - WING MARKINGS AND COLOR, WING SHAPE, BILL COLOR.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES?

HAVE SEEN LITTLE GULL 5-6 TIMES, ROSS' GULL ONCE, IVORY GULL NEVER,

AM VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE OTHER SPECIES OF GULL.

LIST BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION):

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING \_\_\_\_ OR AFTER \_\_\_\_ OBSERVATION, OR LATER FROM MEMORY ☒.

DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT: 11/27/99

REPORTING OBSERVER: PETER R. GENT

SIGNATURE: Peter R. Gent.

OBSERVER ADDRESS: 55 S 35th St

BOULDER

CO 80303

**SEND REPORT TO:**

COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

c/o BILL LISOWSKY

2919 SILVERPLUME DR.

FT. COLLINS, CO 80526

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

ACCEPT 7-0NEW STATE RECORD \_\_\_\_\_ UNUSUAL RECORD XRecd 1/20/00 upl**Species:** Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)**Date:** Dec 18, 1999**Number seen:** one**Sex:** unknown**Plumage:** Basic (adult)**Locality:** Pueblo Reservoir**Elevation:** 5,000 ft**Nearest town:** Pueblo West**County:** Pueblo**Time observed:** seen twice at ~0900 hrs and again in the afternoon**Duration of observation:** Seen for 20 minutes, in flight (5 min) and sitting on water (15 min)**Description:**

During both observations it was seen associating with Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*). Small gull (smaller than Bonaparte's seen in direct comparison sitting on the water next to each other) with a darkish crown, small dark bill, and black ear-spot. The mantle and upperwings were light gray. The upperwing pattern showed a white trailing edge and no black coloration, while the underwings were entirely dark gray to blackish (not shadowed, seen as the bird banked with light shining on underwing) with a white trailing edge. The rest of the body was white providing a contrast to mantle and wings. Wings were extremely rounded in flight, not tapered as in other gull species. Tail squared off.

**Separation from similar species:**

No other gull species has an entirely dark gray (blackish) underwing. Size (smaller than Bonaparte's) also eliminates all other gull species.

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

None



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

I have seen only one other, a 2<sup>nd</sup> basic plumaged individual at Lower Latham in the fall of 1997.

**Light conditions:** Excellent. Sun high and behind (morning) or high and left (afternoon)

**Optical equipment used:** Zeiss 7x42, Kowa 20-60x

**Distance, and how estimated:** 400-1000 meters (flying near and far)

**Other observers who saw the bird with you:** Tony Leukering, Peter Gaede, Bill Maynard

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** This bird had been around for over a month and I'm sure that dozens others have seen it (reported regularly by Brandon Percival to Cobirds)

**If photographed, type of equipment and film:** None

**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:** Doug Faulkner

**Signature:** Douglas W Faulkner

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

**Date report was written:** This report was written on Jan 16, 2000 from memory