

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD ☒UNUSUAL RECORD ☐

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

Species: Great-Black-backed Gull
(Vernacular Name)Larus marinus
(Scientific Name)Date(s): 3 January 1980Number of birds seen: one Sex: unk (♀?) Plumage: First WinterLocality: Centennial Park nr. jct of Federal Blvd & Union Ave. Elevation: ≈ 5280 ft.Nearest town: Englewood County: ArapahoeTime(s) observed: ~ 2 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) approx 30 minutes

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

Jeanne A Conry - #3 Chautauqua, Boulder CO 80302 444-0606

Mark Holmgren - 1914 1/2 Goss, Boulder, CO 449-6560

Barry Knapp 4695 Osage Dr. Boulder, CO 80303-494-8390

Charlie Chase - 1380 Brown Circle, Boulder CO 444-5651

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

J. Reddall

J.V. Rensen

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
overcastOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 8.5 X 44 Swift Audubon MKII BinocularsDistance, and how measured: estimated 150-200 ftIf photographed, type of equipment and film: 600 mm. Telephoto w/2x extender (=1200mm) 400 ASA Hi-Speed B&W filmWho else photographed the bird? Barry Knapp (et al)

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

swimming, perching on ice and flying behavior were all noted.

one flight shot shows the spread tail pattern which is diagnostic for 1st winter

GBBG.

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 observed in the field:

This gull was slightly larger than nearby Herring Gulls in wing length and as noted from the enclosed photo print, it was also slightly longer and stouter legged. The bill was black overall and deeper throughout its length than Herring gulls. Its overall body bulk was not as massive as I was anticipating (but perhaps this was because it was a female which is smaller than the male of the species.)

Head and Fore parts - whitish with dusky streaking strongest on back of neck and sides of body. There was a dark area behind the eye. Head not noticeably angular.

Back and wing coverts - a dark brown with very pale broad edging giving the appearance of white scallops.

Legs and bill - Legs - thick and grayish pink. Bill - all dark and quite massive viz other large gulls.

(OVER)

Description, (continued)

tail - background whitish with blackish barring and spotting becoming heaviest toward middle tail feather barring strongest subterminally
Rump - basically a dirty white in contrast to the brownish back.

wings - primaries relatively unworn - dark to tip extending $\sim 1\frac{1}{2}$ " beyond tip of tail. secondaries broadly tipped with whitish



Tail pattern from Kodachrome transparency. (Forgive the feather outline)

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

I did not hear it call.

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

adjacent to a sanitary landfill. The gull was on the ice covered Centennial Park lake.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

A - Western Gull

B - Slaty-backed Gull

C - Herring Gull

} all these are large gulls which are basically brown in immature plumage. However none have white background to the tail with the extensive mottling and spots as the bird in question
according to Dwight all these have gray or brown background on the tail.

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

None with Great Black-backed Gull or Slaty backed Gull. Extensive experience with Western and Herring.

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

a) at time of observation: J. Dwight. The Gulls of the World... ^(Laridae) Bulletin Am. Mus. Nat Hist.

b) after observation: Same. plus Robbins et al.

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

Date and time report was written: 6 February 1980

Reporting observer: Bruce Webb

Signature: Bruce Webb

Address: Dept. E.P.O. Biology Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309

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CITY PARK
DENVER, COLORADO 80205

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

(

Larus marinus

(Scientific Name)

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: —

Plumage: 1st winter

Elevation:

County:

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) 5-10 minutes

Annette Adams

Mildred Snyder

3095 E. Aurora Ave.
Boulder, CO 80303

(don't know address or phone #)

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
don't know all of them — incl. Bruce Webb, Jeanne Conry, Mark Holmgren, etc.

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
good — light^(sun) to side, clear skys.

Optical equipment use (e.g. power, types): spotting scope (borrowed Bruce Webb's!) 7x35 binoculars

Distance, and how measured: 20-30 yds. — est.

If photographed, type of equipment and film:

Who else photographed the bird?

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

spotted ~~sitting~~^{standing} first, on ice, by M.S. — it was then seen, tugging at a bone, walking around, then seen flying away.

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 observed in the field:

A large Gull, slightly larger than nearby Herring Gulls, standing ~1" taller and appearing to be 2-3" longer. HEAD: large, even for size, bill thick and chunky, but not strongly angled at the gonys; looked like a huge version of a Skua's bill. Bill all dark, ~ as long, perhaps slightly longer than, bills of nearby Herring Gulls, but much thicker. Head whitish, fine brownish streaks most prominent around eye and on nape. EYE: dark. Underparts: whitish, light brown mottling on sides and flanks (undertail coverts not noted). BACK and UPPERWING COVERTS: contrasty brown mottling on whitish tan background. FLIGHT FEATHERS: dark brownish.

RUMP: whitish, (streaked?). TAIL: white basally, ~~blackish~~ blackish at tip (a distinct dark band): this dark band edged + flecked with white, giving a "checkerboard" effect. LEGS: pinkish.

Description, (continued)

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

none noted

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:
standing on ice at edge of open water, flying.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

the bird was too large to be anything else, though it appeared ~~smaller~~ smaller than expected at the time of the sighting. It was larger than all other gulls, including Herring Gulls, present, though it bore a superficial ~~resemblance~~ resemblance to some 2nd winter Herring Gulls at the site. I felt at the time that the Slaty-backed Gull needed eliminating (Western + Lesser Black-backed were easily eliminated by plumage and size) as a possibility — however, my subsequent check of literature describing L. shistisagus leads me to conclude that a first year bird of that species would be darker, more mottled, on the head, underparts and tail than the bird seen.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?
none with it — much with Western Gull (L. occidentalis) + Herring Gull (L. argentatus) — none with other dark-backed gull species.

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

a) at time of observation: others in party (A.A. + M.S.) agreed it looked smaller than expected, but bigger than nearby Herring Gulls, + both felt the plumage was near-perfect for 1st winter G-B-b. Gull.

b) after observation: plumage appeared to be perfect, size only slightly bothersome; Pough's d. West. Guide shows 1st winter Slaty-backed Gull (L. shistisagus), only possibility I felt needed careful consideration, as being much darker on head + underparts. Bill Erwin, who has seen many G-B-b. Gulls on east coast, felt that the bird, as described, was not too small to be L. shistisagus.
This report was written from notes made during ✓ observation; from memory ✓. manolis

Date and time report was written: January 25, 1980

Reporting observer: Tim Manolis

Signature: Tim Manolis

Address: 3095 E. Aurora Ave.

Boulder CO 80303

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