

SPECIES: GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL | LARUS MARINUS
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

DATE(S): MAY 10, 1993 TIME OF OBSERVATION: ~12:30 TO ~12:50 PM

EXACT LOCATION: CHATFIELD RESERVOIR

NEAREST TOWN: LAKWOOD COUNTY: JEFFERSON

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD:

JOEY KELLNER

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: BAUSCH & LOMB CRISTIAN 4000 40X SCOPE, ZEISS 10X40 BINOCULARS

WEATHER CONDITIONS: SUNNY, SLIGHT BREEZE

BIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: BEHIND ME AND TO THE RIGHT AS I LOOKED AT THE BIRD.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 40-50 YDS VISUAL ESTIMATE

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: ? PLUMAGE: ADULT

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: ^{AS I WAS} I FIRST OBSERVED THE BIRD AS IT WAS STANDING ON THE HERON OVERLOOK. THE BIRD WAS DIRECTLY WEST JUST OFF THE OPPOSITE SHORELINE. IT WAS IDENTIFIABLE AT THAT DISTANCE TO THE NAKED EYE. WE DROVE AROUND TO THAT SHORELINE AND BEGAN OBSERVING THE BIRD. IT JUST FLOATED AROUND UNTIL A BOAT SPOOKED IT. IT THEN FLEW A SHORT DISTANCE AND FLOATED AROUND FOR ANOTHER 10 MINUTES OR SO. IT FINALLY FLEW OFF FOLLOWING THE RESERVOIR'S OUTER SHORE AND AROUND TOWARD THE MARINA. THE BIRD SEEMED SLIGHTLY RESTLESS AS I OBSERVED IT. WHEN IT FLEW AWAY IT FLEW FROM MY RIGHT TO LEFT IN A STRAIGHT LINE GIVING ME AN EXCELLENT VIEW. IT WAS A HUGE GULL. WITH THE WHITE HEAD AND DARK BACK IT REMINDS ME OF A BIRD EAGLE HEAD & NECK (forehead, crown, auricular & malar regions, median line, etc.):

THE ENTIRE HEAD AND NECK WERE PURE WHITE.

EYES & LORES (supercilium, eye-ring, eye-stripe, color, etc.): THE AREA AROUND THE EYE WAS WHITE. THE EYE WAS LIGHTER AND SEEMED TO BE YELLOWISH.

LOWER & UPPER MANDIBLES (color & shape): A LARGE YELLOW BILL THAT WAS FAIRLY THICK AND WELL IN PROPORTION WITH THE HEAD SIZE. A LARGE ELONGATED RED GONYAL SPOT ON THE LOWER MANDIBLE.
LEGS & FEET: I ONLY OBSERVED THE FEET AS THE BIRD FLEW BY. THEY (LEGS & FEET) APPEARED TO BE A LIGHT FLESHY COLOR.

UPPERPARTS (nape, back, rump, uppertail coverts, etc.): THE NAPE AND VERY UPPER PART OF THE BACK WERE WHITE. THE BACK WAS A VERY DARK BLACK. THE BLACK APPEARED TO HAVE A SLIGHT BROWNISH HUE WHEN THE SUN SHONE OFF IT AT CERTAIN ANGLES. THERE WAS ONE WHITE SPOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BACK ABOUT 2/3 OF THE WAY DOWN. I DO NOT RECALL MAKING NOTE OF THE AREA WHERE THE BACK AND RUMP MET, BUT THE TAIL AND UPPERTAIL COVERTS WERE DEFINITELY ALL WHITE.

UNDERPARTS (chin, throat, belly, sides, flanks, crissum, etc.): THESE AREAS WERE ALL WHITE.

RETRICES (inner, middle & outer tail feathers; color, pattern, shape, etc.):
THIS AREA WAS ALSO ALL WHITE.

WINGS (color, length, shape, bars, coverts, etc.): WHEN SITTING THE PRIMARIES EXTENDED A
GOOD DISTANCE PAST THE TAIL AND I COULD SEE TWO WHITE SPOTS ON THE END PRIMARIES. IN FLIGHT THE UPPER WINGS WERE
ENTIRELY BLACK. A FAIRLY THICK WHITE TRAILING END TO THE WING. IN FLIGHT I SAW AT LEAST THE FIRST FOUR OUTER
PRIMARIES WITH WHITE TIPS. THE UNDERWING WAS GRAY WITH A BLACKISH PATCH AT THE END OF THE OUTER
PRIMARIES WITH WHITE SPOTS.

VOCALIZATION (call/song, method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight):
I DID NOT RECALL HEARING THE BIRD MAKE A SOUND.

HABITAT: RESERVOIR.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

THE ONLY POSSIBLE SIMILAR SPECIES WOULD BE A LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. THIS BIRD
DID NOT HAVE YELLOW LEGS, THE BACK SEEMED TOO DARK, AND IT WAS JUST TOO BIG. TO BE
FRANK, THIS WAS SUCH A HUGE MOTHER OF A GULL, AND SUCH A DARK BLACK BACK, THAT
IT LEAVES NO DOUBT AS TO ITS IDENTIFICATION. WHEN IT TOOK FLIGHT PEOPLE WALKING
THEIR SMALL DOGS RAN FOR COVER. (O.K. SO I MADE UP THAT LAST LINE TO SEE IF YOU
WERE AWAKE, BUT IT WAS BIG!)

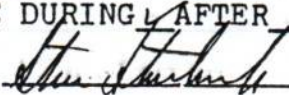
PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

THIS IS THE ONLY GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL I HAVE EVER SEEN. I HAVE SEEN TWO
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS. ONE FIRST WINTER AND ONE THAT WAS COMING OUT OF ITS
THIRD WINTER.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

THIS REPORT WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING ☒ AFTER OBSERVATION; ☐ FROM MEMORY

NAME: STEVE STACHANAK

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 7-20-93