

1997-40
ACCEPTED 7-0

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus marinus

Location: Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo, Pueblo County, Colorado

Date: November 28, 1997 through the end of 1998

I observed this bird on several occasions into January 1998. I watched it standing on tires at the north marina on several occasions. It sometimes flew off the tires and out over the lake. It stood adjacent to Ring-billed and Herring Gulls for direct comparison:

This individual has returned for the sixth year.

Description:

It is an adult winter bird. It was very large -- a full head taller than Herring Gulls, and much bulkier. It was broader-shouldered, thicker-necked and bigger-headed. It had thicker and longer dull pink legs.

The bill was relatively short, but heavy, thick and powerful; deeper and heavier than the Herring Gull bill. The bill was yellow with a red and black spot near the gonys. The crown was long and broad, angled at the front and rear. The forehead was sloping, and met the bill at a low angle. The legs were dull pink. The eye color appeared brown, light yellowish-brown in some lights. The orbital ring was red. The head and body were white. There was fine streaking on the crown, nape and behind the eye. The mantle and wings were dark, slaty gray -- a shade lighter than black. The wing in flight showed a dark gray upper wing blending gradually into a black wing tip. There was little or no white in the wing tip -- just white tips to the primaries and a single white window on the outer primary. The underside of the flight feathers, especially the distal 2/3 of the wing, was dark. The rump and the tail were white.

Similar Species:

The large size, in direct comparison with Herring Gulls rules out most gulls. This bird was longer and taller and much, much darker than the Herring Gull. California Gull is light, much smaller, and has a two-toned bill. Glaucous and Thayer's gulls would be much lighter on the back. Lesser Black-backed and Western gulls are smaller than, or the same size as, a Herring Gull and not as dark gray above. Western Gull lacks streaking on the head and has a darker underwing. Slaty-backed Gull would be nearly this size, but lighter than this bird above, with a white border between the black wing tip and the gray distal wing, and with more smudging on the head and neck in winter plumage. The Yellow-footed Gull would have yellow legs.

Experience with Species:

I have seen many Great Black-backed, Western, Yellow-footed and Herring gulls. I have seen Great Black-backed Gulls several previous times in Colorado.

This report was prepared from memory.

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

Mark Janos

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

RESULTS: _____

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS AND ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY.

SPECIES: GREAT BLACK BECKED GULL LARUS MARINUS
(COMMON NAME) (SCIENTIFIC NAME)

DATE(S) OF OCCURRENCE: JAN - 1 - 1998NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: one SEX: _____ PLUMAGE: BASIC WINTEREXACT LOCATION: STANDING ON TIRE BARRIER ON NORTH SIDE OF NORTH MARINA AT PUEBLO RESCOUNTY: Pueblo NEAREST TOWN: Pueblo West ELEVATION: 5000'LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 15 min TIMES(S) OF OBSERVATION: 12:30 - 12:45

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY SAW THE BIRD(S):

DAVE QUENSENBERRY - 6254 S ELMIRA CIR ENGLEWOOD CO 801767603

George Ambrose - Lakewood CO

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

CLEAR, Temp: High 40° upper 50°, West wind 10 mph sun off observers @ shoulder

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: Zeiss 10x40

Kowa TSN-4 20-60x

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): 250 - 300 YDSWAS THE BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED: No IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOS? _____

WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? _____

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

Pueblo RES. (FRESH WATER LAKE)

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

The bird WAS SEEN RESTING ON TIRES ON NORTH SIDE OF NORTH MARINA. Among other gulls (R. Billed mainly). The bird eventually Took off, circled the bay NORTH of the MARINA A couple of TIMES AND flew off to the North.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD IN DETAIL. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS REPORT. INCLUDE 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):

LARGE gull - Almost 2x size of nearby R. Billed Gulls

Bill - LARGE YELLOW Bill with RED spot on ANTERIOR mandible

HEAD - white, DARK EYE - RELATIVELY FLAT CROWN EXTENDING onto Bill gradually -

NAPE - Dirty wash on white background

Body - mantle, wings - Black. Primary extension showed white wing - THROAT, BREAST, BELLY - white

Tail - white

Legs - Pink.

DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM:

Size, Black of mantle rule out most gulls. Possible exception would be SLATEY-BACKED L.B.B. gull ~~BE~~ YELLOW FOOTED or WESTERN gulls - which ARE ~~also~~ usually much paler in mantle color. Pink-legs rule out WESTERN, YELLOW FOOTED and L.B.B. gull.

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

minimal.

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

Birds of NA NAT. GEO

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING _____ OR AFTER _____ OBSERVATION, OR LATER FROM MEMORY X.

DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT: 3-11-98

REPORTING OBSERVER: Ric Olson

SIGNATURE: Rol

9450 N Heather Dr C. Rock CO 80004 3037907753

SEND REPORT TO: MARK JANOS, 10 SEDUM COURT, PUEBLO, CO 81001