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ACCEPT 7-0

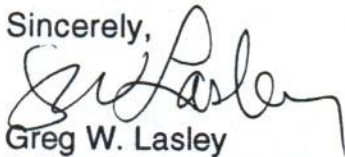
November 23, 1999

Bill Lisowsky
CFOORC Chair
2919 Silverplume Dr.
Ft. Collins, CO 80526-2422

Dear Bill,

Early this month I attended the ABA Board Meeting in Colorado Springs. After the meeting we had one day to do some birding. We ended up at Pueblo Reservoir and saw the Great Black-backed Gull that has been present forever during the winter. I took a number of photos of the bird for whatever they may be worth. I'm enclosing a set of written details and some slides for the record. Let me know if I might provide any more information.

Sincerely,



Greg W. Lasley
Editor, Texas Region, *North American Birds*
Secretary, Texas Bird Records Committee

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

8 November 1999

Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo Co., CO

Greg W. Lasley

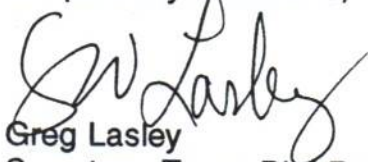
Details: I attended the ABA Board of Directors meeting in Colorado Springs, CO, from 3-7 November 1999. On 8 November we had set aside a day to do some birding before we all returned home. The party, in addition to myself, included the following ABA Board and Staff members: Jon Dunn, Paul Baicich, Blake Maybank, Gerald Ziarno, Margaret Bain, Bettie Harriman, Ann Stone, Lena DeGregorio and her husband, Virginia Maynard, Terry O'Nele, and Nanci Hawley. There were a couple of others, but I forget who. We birded a small park in Pueblo in the early morning, then went out to Pueblo Reservoir. Jon told me that there had been a Great Black-backed Gull at the reservoir for five or six winters, and that it was supposed to have arrived already this winter. We checked the lake from a marina on one side but only saw Ring-billed Gulls with one or two young Herring Gulls. We then drove to the other side of the lake and checked another marina and spotted a large adult black-backed gull sitting on some floating markers with several Ring-billed and California Gulls as well as two first-winter Herring Gulls. We were 200 yards away from the bird, so we walked out onto the marina and asked permission to go beyond some locked gates to get closer to the bird. They allowed us to do so. We got to within perhaps 100 - 150 feet of the gull. I took a number of photos (slides) with a Canon EOS 1N and 300 mm lens with a 1.4X extender (=420 mm).

Description: A very large black-backed gull. It was the size and shape of a Great Black-backed Gull, being quite large compared to the numerous Ring-billed Gulls. The bird was noticeably larger than adjacent Herring Gulls. It was a full adult bird with a pure white tail, all dark mantle, white head (with some very fine, indistinct streaks on the forehead area, and 3 or 4 white primary tips visible on the folded wing. The outer wing appeared the same black color as the inner wing; I could not notice any contrast the way I can on the wing of a Lesser Black-backed Gull. This bird has a little unusual black markings on the bill, the black markings being inside the red spot on the bill. The bill was yellow with a red spot on the lower mandible as described above. The bill was quite massive, and fairly thick looking. The eyes were dull yellow/brown, but not the usual bright whitish/yellow often shown by this species. It looked as if the bird was still molting wing feathers, as I did not see the usually obvious large white mirrors in P-10 and P-9 of this species. Still, overall it looked like a GBBG. Pale pink legs. I did not make any written notes at the time since this was known to be a returning bird that had been well documented in previous years. The above written from memory on November 23, 1999 after looking at my slides.

Discussion: I have looked at the numerous photos I took of this bird and will enclose several with this report to the Colorado BRC. The photos show the

blackish mark on the bill as well as the perhaps unusual primary tip pattern...as I said above, I think the bird was still in molt. I cannot make this bird into anything other than a GBBG, but I do find it interesting that several features about it seem a little unusual. The eye seems darker than typical for a GBBG, the black on the bill seems unusual for a bird in advanced adult plumage, and the wing tip markings, from what I could see in the field and what I can see in the photos, seems unusual for this time of year. One of my slides of the bird in flight shows the underwing tip of the right wing, and does show a huge white mirror on P-10 or P-9...something I did not note clearly in the field.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Lasley", written in a cursive style.

Greg Lasley
Secretary, Texas Bird Records Committee
Editor, Texas Region, *North American Birds*



GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

PUEBLO, CO

8 NOV 1999

GREG LASLEY

1999-77

(over)



1999-77

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 1999-77

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Rcd 1/18/00 upl

Date: 18 Dec. 1999, 8 Jan. 2000

Number seen: 1

Sex: ?

Plumage: Def. Basic

Locality: Pueblo Reservoir

Elevation: about 5000'

Nearest town: Pueblo West

County: Pueblo

Time observed: 07:20-07:40 MST (18th); 11:45-11:55 MST (8th)

Duration of observation: off and on for a total of about 5-10 minutes each day

Description: I found the returning Pueblo Reservoir Great Black-backed Gull (GBBG) flying into the South Marina on the Pueblo Reservoir CBC. On 8 January, I saw it at the North Marina. It has been at this site each winter since at least the winter of 1993-1994 (one year earlier?). The bird was a very large gull, dwarfing the nearby Ring-billed Gulls (RBGU) and much larger than all other gulls present (California (CAGU), Lesser Black-backed (LBBG), and Herring (HERG)). The head was white, with faint, dark streaks. The eyes were very small making it impossible at that distance to discern the eye color. The bill was yellow, very large (with a strong gonydeal angle), and had a red gonydeal spot. The mantle and upperwing were nearly black - the black wingtips only contrasted with the upperwing color slightly. The primaries were all tipped with white. The tenth primary had the distal 1/6 of the feather entirely white and there was a large, white mirror on P9. Primaries 5-7 had very small, whitish tongues separating the black subterminal straps from the very dark gray of the proximal portions of those feathers. The rump, tail, and underparts were all white. The legs were pale pink. Only two primary tips extended beyond the tail tip.

Similar species eliminated: The only truly similar species have never been recorded in Colorado and both are very rare in the U.S. Slaty-backed Gull (SBGU) is smaller, has distinct head streaking, larger eyes, brighter pink legs, a different pattern on P10, and a smaller bill. Kelp Gull (KEGU) has yellow legs and a different wingtip pattern. LBBG is much smaller, has yellow legs, a different wingtip pattern, and the *graellsii* subspecies (the only form ever documented in CO) is much paler.

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 1000s of GBBGs, >50 SBGU, and no KEGUs. I have also seen >65 Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Light conditions: sun behind me and somewhat to my right (18th); sun to my right (8th)

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x and Zeiss 7x42

77-9991

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest distance at 60 meters (18th); 35 meters (8th)

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Doug Faulkner, Bill Maynard, and Peter Gaede (18th); 20+ participants in the gull-identification workshop I was teaching on the 8th (including Mark Janos, Brandon Percival, and Doug Faulkner)

Other observers who saw the bird independently: many, many others

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

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: 21 December 1999 and 12 January 2000