

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

ACCEPTED

rec'd 12/8/01

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD **Species:** Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus graellsii*)**Date:** 8 December 2001**Number seen:** one**Sex:** ?**Plumage:** Def. Basic**Locality:** Horseshoe Res.**Elevation:** about 5000'**Nearest town:** Loveland**County:** Larimer**Time observed:** about 13:45 - 13:48 MST**Duration of observation:** about 1 minute in this period

Description: While on my cell phone telling Rachel Hopper to get to Horseshoe Res because Larry, Mark, and I had a lot of good birds, Larry instructed me to look in his scope. I did and noted an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull (LBBG) in the field of view. I then told Rachel that we had yet another good bird. This bird slipped away from us, but I refound it once in a gull feeding frenzy.

The bird was a large, white-headed gull, larger than nearby California Gulls (CAGUs), much larger than nearby Ring-billed Gulls (RBGU), and a bit smaller than nearby Herring Gulls (HERGs). The bird's white head was extensively streaked with dark brown. The eyes were yellow, as was the bill, which had a large, red gonydeal spot. The bill also had a pronounced gonydeal angle, unlike the bills of the CAGUs. The mantle was a couple shades darker gray than that of the nearby CAGUs. There was a strong contrast from mantle color to wingtip color, unlike in Great Black-backed Gull (GBBG). The wings were long, extending well beyond the tail tip. Since I never saw it fly, I do not know to what extent, if any, the bird was still molting. However, I suspect that it was, as the wingtips did not extend beyond the tails as much as fully-molted LBBGs wings should be. The scapular and tertial crescents were well-defined, but fairly thin. The underparts were all white, other than some pale brown streaking on the neck. The legs were fairly bright yellow.

Similar species eliminated: California Gull (CAGU) eliminated by size, mantle color, and bill size and shape. Herring Gull (HERG) (*smithsonianus*) ruled out by mantle color and leg color. Other, darker forms of HERG ruled out by size (they should be larger) and bill pattern. Slaty-backed Gull (SBGU) eliminated by size, mantle color (the bird was not virtually black-backed), and leg color. Kelp Gull (KEGU) ruled out by bill (size and shape) and by mantle color. GBBG eliminated by size, leg color, and by upperparts color and pattern.

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 >90 *graellsii* LBBGs, bazillions of *smithsonianus* HERGs, >125 *vegae* HERGs, 10s of 1000s of GBBGs, 10s of 1000s of CAGUs, and >75 SBGUs. I have not seen any other of the darker, Asian HERGs, nor have I seen KEGU.

Light conditions: sun behind and to my left

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x and Leica 20-60x (at 20x)

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest distance at about 80 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Larry Semo, Mark Hopey

Other observers who saw the bird independently: Nick Komar, who had seen the bird earlier that day

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

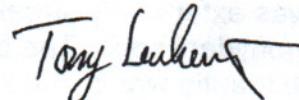
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: Written on 8 December 2001 (in early evening) from memory

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(This is a two-page report. Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Species:(Common Name): Lesser Black-backed Gull | | (Scientific Name) Larus fuscus graellsii |
| Date(s) of occurrence: 8 December, 2001 | | |
| Number of birds seen: One | Sex: Unknown | Plumage: Adult basic |
| Exact Location: Horseshoe Reservoir | | |
| County: Larimer | Nearest town: Loveland | Elevation: XX msl |
| Length of observation: Approximately three minutes | | Time(s) of observation: Afternoon |
| Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Tony Leukering, Mark Hopey | | |
| Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): | | |
| Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Good. Bird was to west/northwest of myself and the skies were partly cloudy | | |
| Optical equipment used: 7 x 42 Zeiss Bins, 20 x 60 Leica Televid Spotting Scope | | |
| Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): Roughly 200 feet | | |
| Was bird(s) photographed? Yes (Nikon Coolpix 995) | If so, have you submitted photos? Yes | |
| Who took the photographs? Myself | | |
| Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Open water reservoir that was partially frozen | | |
| Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): Bird was observed loafing on ice adjacent to open water for a couple of minutes. The bird then took off and was briefly observed in flight. | | |
| 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 important 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 field notes): | | |
| <p>Tony, Mark, and I arrived at the east edge of Horseshoe Reservoir and noted a large concentration of waterfowl and gulls on the eastern end of the lake. We immediately began scooping the group. I started scooping from the left and Tony started from the left. Very quickly I found a dark-mantled gull standing on the ice along the edge of the open water. The gull was seemingly slightly larger than California Gulls (which were nearby) and smaller than Herring Gulls. Overall shape was of a more attenuated gull due to extended primary projections. The bill was yellowish with a red spot on the gonys. The bill seemed to have a thicker gonydeal angle as well from that of California Gulls. The head was basally white, except for dark brown streaking present along the face, rear-head, nape, and side-neck. The streaking was accentuated around the eye, forming a black-eyed appearance. The eyes appeared light. The anterior portion of the face, throat, breast, flanks, belly, and vent were a clean white. The upperparts were a dark charcoal gray, noticeably darker than Herring Gulls and a few shades darker than California Gull. The tertials were tipped with white, forming a moderate crescent. There was also a small white scapular crescent as well. As indicated above, the primary tips were long and narrow, extending well beyond the white tail tip. The primaries appeared black with white tips; overall color of the primaries was contrastingly darker than the body upperparts. The legs were yellow.</p> | | |
|  | | |



Describe bird's call or song: **None heard**

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: **The yellow legs, dark mantle, size, and shape eliminated Herring Gull. The smaller size, streaked head, lighter mantle, and yellow legs eliminated Great Black-backed Gull. The darker mantle shade, bill shape, and light eye eliminated California Gull. All other dark-mantled gulls, except Yellow-footed Gull were easily eliminated by size, shape, plumage pattern, and leg coloration. Yellow-footed Gull, though not known to have appeared in Colorado, is a thicker, more robust-looking gull with thicker bill, wider tertial crescent, and lacks dark head streaking in all adult plumages.**

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **Extensive. Have observed approximately 10-15 other graellsii birds in Colorado plus additional U.S. birds in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the East Coast. Have also observed hundreds of other birds in Europe (all graellsii).**

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): **None**

This report is from notes made during or after **XX** observation or later from memory

Date of written report: **09/14/02**

Reporting observer: **Larry Semo**

Signature:

Reporting Observer's Address: **9054 Dover Street**

City: **Westminster**

State: **Colorado**

Zip: **80021**