

APPENDIX II

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

A 1

Species: Mew Gull ; Larus canus
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): 7 March 1980 Time Bird Seen: 1315 to 1600Locality: Sloan's Lake, Denver, Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 8.5 x 40 Swift binoculars; 20 x wide angle lens on a Bushnell Spacemaster II Spotting Scope
If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: see Bob RozinskiNumber of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Mixed: Aspects of juv and 1st winterLight conditions: poor (overcast) to fair (partially clearing)Distance from bird, and how measured: 20 meters (guesstimated)

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Loafing on sw edge of lake with 40 Ring-billed Gulls. Bird was fairly aggressive in accosting other birds with food. Sensitiveto human approach (i.e. it would fly away and circle oftenending up in another apart of the lake. Solitary at time
Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Open urban lake; edges bordered in places by sedges. Islands served as refuges for gulls and ducks.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):
Robert Andrews, 1390 Ivy Way, Denver, Colorado 80224Charles Chase, 1380 Brown Circle, Boulder, Colo. 80303

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Size: 10-15% smaller than most Ring-billed Gulls present; head smaller, bill 10% shorter and much shallower. Comparisons of leg, tail, wing lengths not made by this observer.

Shape: bill quite straight, pointed; lower mandible showed no contours. Entire length of bill was shallow. Head from distance appeared rounded, but closer examination showed very slightly flattened crown; forehead slope (and poor light) made it difficult to distinguish where bill began and feathers ended. Neck more slender in proportion to size differences between R-b and this gull. (Detailed description cont. p. 3)

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: No vocalizations heard

List similar species and how you eliminated them: From Ring-billed Gull

Bill: shorter, much shallower, no swelling nr. tip of lower mandible

Size: smaller, more petite Head markings: more extensive, darker than on comparably plumaged Ring-bills Rump and Tail band: much more heavily speckled brown with much broader (extending $\frac{1}{2}$ way up tail) band.

Posture in water: smaller, proportionately more of posterior $\frac{1}{2}$ of bird raised out of water. Paddled and turned at a much more rapid rate.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Lots of Ring-billed Gulls observed in Colorado and California where both Mew Gulls and R-b's simultaneously observed in February 1980. Notes on observed differences taken at this time in California.

This report was written from notes made during mostly after observation; from memory X a few.

Name (print) : Mark Holmgren (most notes made in conjunction with Robert Andrews)

Mailing address: 1915 1/2 Goss Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302

Signature: Mark Holmgren 3/9/80

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS

Description of Bird (continued)

Head:

Forecrown unstreaked just above base of bill. Brownish-gray soft, blurry streaking extending from (rear) crown to upper nape. Lower nape plain brown, marbled, not streaked. Blackish vertical line behind eye posterior to which was a paler area. The net effect of this was an indistinct shadow of a hood anterior to this line. Throat white. Breast essentially white with some blurring and clouding toward sides. Belly showed brownish gray (more brown) dunlin-like patch. Undertail coverts rather strongly barred brown. Back: unmarked gray. Wings: when folded showed uniform light tan-brown, primaries darker. When extended they were more uniform; less contrast between primaries and scapulars. In flight they showed a pale silvery flash in the inner 2-3 primaries. Underwings were uniform dark silver. Rump: heavily speckled with brown (chevrons?) which continued to base of tail. Tail: thin buffy tips to each tail feather. Broad sub-terminal band extending more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the distance to the base of the tail. Eye and area around it were dark. Legs gray above tibio-tarsel joint; paler below joint (perhaps pinkish-gray). Bill: bicolored; proximal $\frac{1}{3}$ grayish, distal $\frac{2}{3}$ blackish. The distinction between these two areas very poorly defined. Secondaries showed a blackish-brown terminal bar. Carpal bar not observed, although it may have been present.

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD

A

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

Species: MEW GULL | Larus canus brachyrhynchus
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): 7 March 1980Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: 1st-winterLocality: Sloan's Lake Elevation: 5200'Nearest town: Denver County: DenverTime(s) observed: ~ 1400Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.) About 1 hour

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

Charles Chase
Mark Holmgren

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

Many observers

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

sometimes with sun shining on bird from behind observers; generally overcastOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 15-60X telescope; 10X 50 binocularsDistance, and how measured: minimum estimated 50'

If photographed, type of equipment and film: _____

Who else photographed the bird? Bob Rozinski

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

Observed in a flock of about 60 Ring-billed Gulls. Seen feeding, standing or walking on grass lawn at edge of lake or along shore of the lake. Occasionally in flight over the lake, or sitting on lake. Occasionally aggressive toward individual Ring-billed Gulls; seemed wavier than the Ring-billed Gulls

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:

Head: crown and nape brownish-gray with soft blurry streaking on the crown and extending to the upper nape. Forecrown whitish, with streaking continuing almost to the base of the bill, but unstreaked immediately above it. Indistinct vertical streak from just above and behind eye to side of crown (across crown undetermined). Lower nape plain brown, unstreaked but softly marbled.Throat: white, unmarkedBreast: white, with grayish blurring and clouding toward the sidesBelly: large brown-gray patch (Punlin-like), with whitish flanksUndertail coverts: brownish, strongly marbled and barredBack: gray, unmarkedFolded wings: uniform light tan or buffy-brown (pale ground color with uniform pattern of slightly darker marks). Primaries appeared to be darker brown (partly due to folding of wings)Uppertail coverts and rump: whitish base color, very heavily barred or marked with dark brown
Tail: almost entirely dark brown, unmarked; some paler area (heavily marked) at base of tail (similar to and continuous with rump); each rectrix tipped with buffy, producing a very narrow buffy terminal band.

(OVER)

Description, (continued)

Upperwings in flight: uniform buffy-brown, with primaries somewhat darker (but no strong contrast); brownish subterminal bar on secondaries; pale silvery patch on inner primaries

Underwings in flight: uniform deep gray-silver

Eye: dark

Legs: Color difficult to discern due to overcast sky, appeared to be gray above tibio-tarsal joint and somewhat paler (perhaps pinkish) below it.

Bill Color: distal $\frac{2}{3}$ black, proximal $\frac{1}{3}$ pale gray; contrast not sharp or conspicuous

Bill shape: somewhat longish, but exact length difficult to determine because pale base and whitish feathers at base made it hard to tell where bill started; depth of bill quite shallow (perhaps only $\frac{1}{2}$ of most L. delawarensis); no discernible gonys

Head shape: small, rounded with crown very slightly flattened and a bit more slope to forecrown than on L. delawarensis.

Posture, overall appearance: clearly smaller and daintier than all L. delawarensis (ad. & imm.) with which it was compared. In flight, distinctly smaller with more rapid flight. Tarsi possibly less thick.

Wing, tail, length and shape not compared. Generally more reminiscent of Bonaparte's than Ring-billed Gull.

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

None

(even pigeon or dove-like), especially with regard to head and bill. On water, body rode higher in water (esp. the posterior) than did L. delawarensis.

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

Urban lake in park

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

See attachment

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

Extensive experience with Ring-billed Gull
Many Mew Gulls seen in California 1973, 1978

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

a) at time of observation: standard field guides

b) after observation: The Gulls of the World (Dwight, 1925: Bull. AMNH 52: 63-401); Lauro and Spencer, 1980; A method for separating juvenal and first-winter Ring-billed Gulls (Larus delawarensis) and Common Gulls (Larus canus). Amer. Birds 34: 111-117.

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

Date and time report was written: 25 October 1980

Reporting observer: Robert Andrews Signature: Robert Andrews

Address: 3260 W. 14th Ave., #144, Denver, Colorado 80204

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below.

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,
CITY PARK
DENVER, COLORADO 80205

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Mailing address: 1915 $\frac{1}{2}$ Goss Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302

Signature: Mark Holmgren 3/9/80

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205

23-80-17

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Mew Gull

7 March 1980 - Robert Andrews

Elimination of similar species:

Small size and numerous plumage differences easily separate Mew Gull from all gulls except Ring-billed Gull. The following discussion separates the observed bird ^{from} Ring-billed, and also identifies it as L. c. brachyrhynchus rather than L. c. canus.

1. The bird was clearly separable from a Ring-billed Gull, even a small Ring-billed, on the basis of these marks:

primaries not as dark as in delawarensis

lack of the tail band of delawarensis (rather, much of the tail was dark).

heavily mottled tail coverts, which are merely spotted in delawarensis.

underparts mostly brown (white in delawarensis)

underwings silvery-gray, not white as in delawarensis

less white in upperwings than in delawarensis (indeed, no white but uniformly pale brown)

generally uniform overall color (brown), rather than whiter, more contrasty appearances of delawarensis

darker, more streaked head (largely white, much less marked in delawarensis)
smaller size (not diagnostic, but generally useful)

These differences were observed in the field with direct comparison with numerous similarly plumaged Ring-billed Gulls, and supported by

2. details in Lauro and Spencer (1980; AB 34: 111-117).

2. The bird was clearly L. c. brachyrhynchus brachyrhynchus (U.S. west coast) rather than L. c. canus Europe based on these characteristics (from Lauro and Spencer 1980):

L. c. canus has a clear cut tail band with little or no marking on the white base of the tail and coverts, white (and largely unmarked) head and underparts. Indeed, L. c. canus more closely resembles L. delawarensis than it does L. c. brachyrhynchus.

Note: The description of the bird and its separation was made from my written field notes, without close examination of the photos taken by B. Rozinski.

A

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD

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

Species: Mew Gull (Vernacular Name) Larus canus brachyrhynchus (Scientific Name)Date(s): 7 March 1980Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: un Plumage: 1st winterLocality: Sloan's Lake, SW side Elevation: 5200Nearest town: Denver County: DenverTime(s) observed: 2:30 approx. 1/2 hourDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 1/2 hourOther observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
Robert Andrews and Mark HolmgrenOther observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
ManyLight conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
overcast to bright indirect sunOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 15-60 B&L scope and 7x35 Binoc.Distance, and how measured: Minimum 15 meters measured by camera lense scaleIf photographed, type of equipment and film: 500 mm Minolta Mirror lenseWho else photographed the bird? Robert Rozinski

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

The bird was mixed with ring-billed gulls towards which it acted aggressive. The bird was quite wary compared to some of the Ring-billed's. It was observed feeding, walking, snoozing and standing on the grass as well as flying in circles of the general area. the bird along with the R.B.s did not want to leave the area until aprox. 3 P.M. when all left the area and fly out over the lake. In flight bird was more rapid and lighter in bouyancy when in water. Very dainty bird.

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 observe in the field:

Overall size 10 % smaller than most Ring-bill's with smaller, rounder head. Bill show little or no gondeal angle and was relatively short and bi-colored (light basally) Head was pale whitish gray with light brown streaks on crown and nape of neck. Streaking on the rest of the head was lighter with the center of throat and breast white. Sides of breast more darkly streaked and lg blackish-gray patch on belly. Dark around eye and dark eye. Back gray, Rump heavily barred brown Tail distally dark for greater than half it's length, overall tail lightly tipped with buff (new feathers) Undertail coverts heavily barred much like rump though somewhat darker. Upper wing coverts mottled pale brown over light back ground. All flight feathers dark almost black though the inner

Description (continued):

primaries were pale silver. Subterminal bar on secondaries conspicuous in flight and on the ground.

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

None heard

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:
open water and grass on edge of reservoir.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Ring-billed is the only similar gull. Separated from that by: Bill small and much thinner, little gonys angle. Darker more streaked head and nape. overall darker bird with dark belly, rump, much more extensive black on tail. No white in upperwing coverts and flight feathers. Primaries more brownish than black. Rump heavily mottled not spotted as the R.B. and finally though not diagnostic as above characters the bird appeared smaller than the associated R.B.'s

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

extensive experience with Mew in California and Ring-billed throughout the U.S.

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

a) at time of observation:

field guides

b) after observation: Dwight- Gulls of the World and Lauro and Spencer 1980. A method for separating juvenal and first-winter Ring-billed and Common Gulls. Amer. Birds 34:111-117

This report was written from reports made during xxx, after observation _____ from memory _____
Date and time report was written: 1 October 1980

Reporting observer: Charles Chase III Signature: _____

Address: Denver Museum of Natural History

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205