

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

Species: Common Black-headed Gull ; Larus ~~philacte~~ ridibundus
(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): October 8th, 1988 Time Bird Seen: 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Locality : Cherry Creek State Recreation Area Aurora, Arapahoe County,
Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell 10 x 50, Discovery Spotting Scope

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Winter Adult

Light conditions: Mostly clear, sunny, afternoon.

Distance from bird, and how measured: 30 yards (Visual estimate)

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

The bird was primarily standing in one place the majority of the time. It started to get "restless", and flapped it's wings every so often. The bird finally flew off in the NE direction. That was the last I saw of it.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

The bird was on an open sand spit extending out into Cherry Creek Reservoir on the SE side.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Jack Reddall, Wade Leitner

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.

The Bird's size seemed to be just a little larger than the Franklin's Gulls standing around it. Not a readily noticeable difference at a casual glance. The bill was a definite red color. The eye was dark, and the legs were red. It had the dark spot located behind the eye, that was the only dark coloring on the head. It had the white edge on the front of the wing, and black tips when in flight. The bird also showed the dark spot on the underside of the primaries. The bill was larger than that typically found on a Bonapart's Gull.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

I heard, or could distinguish, no sounds from this specific bird.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

The only similar species in the area were some Franklin's Gulls. All these gulls had the black "cap" extending from directly behind the eye, and up and around the back of the head. They also had black bills.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

None.

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

Name (print) : Steven Stachowiak

Mailing address: 2263 S. Quentin Way F-201 Aurora, CO 80014

Signature: Steven Stachowiak

Return Form To:

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

23-88-33 5

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

Species Common Black-headed Gull; *Larus ridibundus*
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

Date: October 9, 1988 Time Bird Seen: 8:00 to 10:00 AM

Locality: Cherry Creek Reservoir, Denver Colorado.

Optical Equipment: Bushnell Spacemaster spotting scope 15 to 25 power zoom lens, Kona 2 Spotting scope 25 power lens, Questar telescope 60 power lens, Bushnell Audubon Binoculars 10 by 40.

I did not photograph this gull.

Number of birds seen: one Sex: ? Plumage: Adult, Winter

Light conditions: Overcast to bright sunlight.

Distance from bird, and how measured: 40 yards to 250 yards, estimated.

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Very actively feeding on lake's surface, interspersed with short flights.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: On the Surface of Cherry Creek Reservoir.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (please list name and address):

Wade Leitner, 10993 W. 38th Pl, Wheat Ridge 80033.....	423-8495
Randy Lentz, 456 Logan St. # 306, Denver 80203.....	777-7101
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Montgomery, 5031 S. Florence Dr., Englewood 80111.	771-4572
Dr. Thompson Marsh, 199 Ash Street, Denver 80220.....	377-5380
Duane Nelson, 31428 Burke Rd., Golden 80403.....	642-7109
Jack Reddall, 4450 S. Alton, Englewood 80111.....	771-5308
Steve Stachowiak, 2263 S. Quentin Wy. # F-201, Aurora 80014.....	750-3422

This gull was first found by Leitner, Reddall, and Stachowiak late on October 8, 1988, when they reported it to the Colorado bird community. When I observed this gull on October 9, it was first found and pointed out by Leitner and Reddall. Later I observed it much closer with Lentz, Nelson, and Marsh, and several other observers who I did not know.

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 of shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. Describe what you actually saw in the field.

This gull was in adult winter plumage and superficially resembled an adult winter Bonaparte's gull, because of its conspicuous ear spot. It was actively feeding with a flock of Franklin's gull, and was noticeably larger than the Franklin's. When feeding in the water it was very animated, at times twirling around like a feeding Wilson's Phalarope. This gull had a very pale mantle with a bright red bill and legs. When raising its wing it showed a dark patch underneath, covering perhaps 2/3 of the primaries, and located towards the trailing edge. From below, the first or perhaps the first and second primary did not show black and were white. The top of the wing was very pale, showing none of the black markings of the underwing.

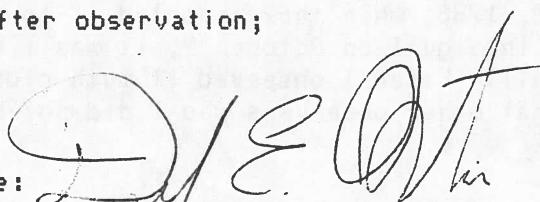
This Gull was silent while I observed it.

List similar species and how you eliminated them: Bonaparte's Gull is smaller than a Franklin's, and does not have a red bill or a black underwing smudge in the primaries. Laughing Gull has a red bill in breeding plumage, but not in winter, lacks the ear patch in winter plumage, and has a different underwing. Little gull is too small, and Red-legged Kittiwake does not have a bright red bill or the described underwing. All other North American gulls fall even further from the above pattern.

Prior experience with this and similar species: This is the first Common Black-headed Gull I have ever seen.

This Report was written from notes made after observation;

David E. Martin
9330 West 90th Drive
Westminster, CO 80020

Signature: 

Send Form to:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator--Zoological Collections
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City Park
Denver CO, 80205