

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD *Recd 12/21/00 wpl***Species:** Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)**Date:** 8, 11, 18, 26 March and 3 April 2000 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** ? **Plumage:** Def. Basic**Locality:** Horseshoe Res., Lake Loveland, Ft. Collins landfill**Elevation:** about 5000'**Nearest town:** Loveland & Ft. Collins**County:** Larimer**Time observed:** various times on various dates**Duration of observation:** at least 1 hour, 45 minutes over the five days

Description: After being unable to chase this bird on the second day of its stay, Dan Svingen, Dan Casey, Carol Beardmore, and I got up to see it at Horseshoe Lake on the late afternoon of 8 March. We found it at the north end and watched it from the west side of the lake. I observed it a number of times after that date at Horseshoe Res., Loveland Lake, at the Larimer County landfill, and at a small pond just to the north of the landfill along Taft Hill Rd. On various dates, I saw it standing, swimming, and flying and saw all aspects of its plumage and structure.

The bird was a large, dark-mantled gull about the size of Herring Gull (HERG). The head was white with extensive brown streaking around and behind the eyes forming a dark patch around the yellow eyes and additional streaking on the back of the neck and with some on the crown. The bill was yellow and fairly parallel-sided, without much of a gonydeal angle and with an obvious red gonydeal spot. The mantle was very dark gray - in some lights, almost black - that contrasted somewhat with the black wingtips. The bird had wide, white scapular and tertial crescents and, in flight, it showed extensively-white secondaries. The white tips of the secondaries were so wide that most of the time, I could not detect the gray bases to those feathers. The inner primaries also had wide, white tips, but they were somewhat narrower than those on the secondaries.

When the bird was in flight, I could not determine the precise wingtip pattern, but a couple times while it was preening, I managed to do so. The outer half of the primaries had at least some black (edges on the outer webs and straps proximal to the white tips) with the tip of P10 being separated from the white mirror by only a very thin strap. P9 had a medium-sized white mirror and pp 7&8 had obvious white tongues. The pp 9-10 mirrors and the P7-8 tongues did not line up, such that the line formed by these white spots had a kink in it. The tail and underparts were white; the legs were pink.

Similar species eliminated: Though SBGU does not have much in the way of individual distinctive field marks that other dark-mantled gull species lack, in toto, the field marks presented by this bird confirmed it as a card-carrying adult SBGU. Great Black-backed Gull (GBBG) is easily eliminated by size, bill size and shape, eye size, head pattern, mantle color, leg color, secondary pattern, and precise wingtip pattern (though that of GBBG is quite similar, it differs mainly in degree of contrast, as the middle-primary tongues are much smaller and the outer-primary mirrors are much larger). Lesser Black-backed Gull is ruled out by size, wing pattern (wingtip, secondaries, tertials), leg color (usually), and bill structure. Dark forms of Herring Gull, particularly *vegae*, are difficult to rule out, but they are all still much paler-mantled than SBGU with a slightly

different wingtip pattern (the mirrors and tongues line up straight in Vega Gull) and with a much narrower white trailing edge. Kelp Gull is eliminated by mantle and leg colors and head pattern. The most similar species, Western Gull, is eliminated by head pattern (Western has a nearly-white head in Basic), wingtip pattern, and by bill structure. Yellow-footed Gull is eliminated by all of the features that rule out Western and by leg color.

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

Light conditions: various lighting conditions during the many times I studied the bird

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x and Zeiss 7x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach at about 30 meters, usually more distant

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Dan Svingen, Dan Casey, Carol Beardmore, Larry Semo, Doug Faulkner, Chris Wood, Dave Leatherman, Peter Gent, and a host of others

Other observers who saw the bird independently: >175 others

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:

b) after observation: various field guides which did not alter my identification of the bird

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 14 April and 3 & 20 December 2000 from field notes written on three occasions, varying from during observation to a few hours after observation

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form**2000 - 164**

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

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!*Red 3/22/00 uper**(video + photos)***CFO-RC FILE X:****RESULTS:**

Species:(Common Name)Slaty-backed Gull (Scientific Name)

Date(s) of occurrence: March 7 & March 10, 2000

Number of birds seen: one Sex: Plumage: adult

Exact location: Robert Benson Lake, Ft. Collins & Horseshoe Lake, Loveland

County: Larimer Nearest town: Elevation:

Length of observation: Time(s) of observation:

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: mob

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s):

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position):

Optical equipment used: Canon Vistura Digital Video Camcorder through a Swarovski scope with a 20-60X zoom

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted):

Was bird(s) photographed? Captured from digital video If so, have you submitted photos? Included

Who took the photographs?

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred:

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification):

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):

Please see #1 & #2 videos

Describe bird's call or song:

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

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

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation):

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

Date of written report: 3/16/00

Reporting observer: Rachel Kolokoff Signature:

Reporting Observer's Address: 1721 Cottonwood Pt. Dr.

City: Pt. Collins State: CO Zip: 80524

Send report to:

Colorado Birds Record Committee

c/o Bill Lisowsky

2919 Silverplume Dr.

Ft. Collins, Co. 80526



