

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CBRC FILE # 2001-153

ACCEPTED

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

rec'd 1/25/02

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

Date: 27 December 2001

Number seen: one

Sex: ?

Plumage: Def. Basic

Locality: Lake Hasty and John Martin Res.

Elevation: about 3800'

Nearest town: Hasty

County: Bent

Time observed: off and on, ~07:45-16:10

Duration of observation: about 10 minutes in that time

Description: While heading to the John Martin Dam to start counting waterbirds for the inaugural John Martin Reservoir CBC, Mark Janos and I stopped briefly at Lake Hasty, as I had seen a dark-mantled gull among the Ring-bills that were perched on the ice. I quickly determined that it was a Great Black-backed Gull in Definite Basic. Mark and I eventually saw it at least five times, both perched and in flight, on both the reservoir and on Lake Hasty.

The gull was much larger than the Ring-billed Gulls, and even the Herring Gulls, nearby. Its head was white with vague, thin, brown streaking that was visible only at fairly close range. The bill was large and yellow with a large, red gonydeal spot. The eyes were small (seemingly smaller than the eyes of a nearby Herring Gull) and were just pale yellow. The mantle and wings were dark, dark gray (almost black) and only contrasted a little with the black primary tips. The legs were dull grayish-pink. The P10 mirror extended all the way to the feather tip creating a very large white tip. The underparts were white, as was the tail. The bird had wide, white tertial crescents. The scapular crescents were thin.

Similar species eliminated: Lesser Black-backed is eliminated by head pattern and coloration, size, and bill size. Slaty-backed Gull is also eliminated by size and by leg color. Kelp Gull is ruled out on leg color and head pattern. Western Gull is eliminated by coloration. The pattern of p10 rules out virtually all other dark-mantled gulls.

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 >120 *graellsii* LBBGs, 10s of 1000s of GBBGs, and about 50 Slaty-backed. I have not seen Kelp Gull.

Light conditions: sun was variably behind me and to my right

Optical equipment used: Leica 20-60x and Swarovski 8.5x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach at about 100 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Mark Janos, Duane Nelson, Brandon Percival, Leon Bright, Mark Yaeger, Andrew Spencer, among others

Other observers who saw the bird independently: good question; this might be the bird that has been wandering around southeastern CO for a couple years; if so, it has been seen by quite a few other birders

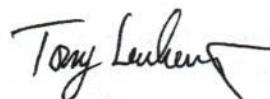
If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph the bird.

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: 25 January 2002 from notes written the morning after the observation