

23-92-110

A

Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus

One 1st. Winter Immature February 8, 1992 (12:30 to 1:20PM)

CF & I Lakes, 4 miles South of Pueblo, Pueblo Co., Colorado

Observed from 60 to 300 Yards with binoculars and Questar Scope.

Light: Bright, clear sky, bird directly in sun, sun at our backs.

Observers: Van Truan and Bob Dickson

Habitat: Man-made Lake, Reservoir type.

General description: During an field-trip to CF & I Lakes we observed a large dark backed gull flying along the south edge of the upper lake. The bird then flew and landed on the ice with ring-billed and herring gulls. This bird was distinctly larger than the ring-billed gulls but smaller than an immature Herring near it. We noted the very dark grayish-brown mantle and back, which appeared the browner than the primaries which extended beyond the tail. While observing this bird a second gull with a dark-gray back joined this bird, which was the same size. At this point Bob and I discussed the possibility of a second lesser black-backed. We observed the two birds while they fed of small catfish and shad.

Specific details: Size: About 20 inches compared to ring-billed

Shape: Typical gull shaped.

Head: White, with some brown streaking on the back.

Bill: Typical gull shaped, appeared thin and all black

Eye: Dark

Nape: White, with brown streakings to upper back

Back: Dark brownish-gray, same color as the folded wings, lighter than wing tips. In flight appeared to be same color as the wing coverts and slightly darker than secondaries.

Rump: white, plain. Upper Tail Covert: white, plain extending over central part of the tail

Throat, Breast, Belly, Flanks, and Under-tail coverts: white, some grayish shading

Wings: Closed: Mantle - dark brownish-gray.

Wing tips - Black, extended well beyond the tail

Wings: upper side in flight - mantle - dark brownish-gray, lighter than primary tips

Primaries - dark brown at secondaries to black at tips

Secondaries - dark brown, somewhat lighter at body

under side in flight - coverts - appeared to be dark-grayish brown

primaries - brown at secondaries to black at tips

Secondaries - brown

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Tail: upper side - white down 1 inch from base on the outer two tail feathers, inner feathers mottled at base down to black, forming a 1 inch wide black band, with a thin white edge at the tip of tail.

lower side - base, light gray with mottling to black tip

Legs: fleshy-gray colored legs. not pink!

Experience with this and similar species: I observer a lesser black-backed in Florida in 1977 and one at Pueblo Reservoir on January 11, 1992. This was my second Colorado record of this species.

Western Gull - seen numerous times in Cal. Ore. Wash. & B.C. both sub-species in all plumages.

Greater B.-b. - seen in N.J., N.Y., Mass. north to N. Brunswick in all plumages.

Herring & ring-billed - everywhere in all plumages.

Thayer's, California & Mew - seen in all plumages in Ore., Cal, & Wash.
Slaty-backed - no experience.

Elimination of similar species:

Western, Herring, Slaty-backed, & Gr. Black-backed - all three to large for this bird.

Ring-billed, Mew, & "black headed" - all to small to be this species

Thayer's - Back lighter grayish, tail all dark in this plumage, eye dark, pink legs.

California - Back medium-gray in this age class, all dark tail, upper mandible pink, with dark tip, legs greenish, head with grayish-brown down to the back. and dark eye.

Conclusions: I have no doubts that this bird was a 1st. winter lesser black-backed gull, with a second winter of the same species. These two birds were previously observer at Pueblo Reservoir, about 10 miles NW of this site. This report was from notes taken after observing the bird.

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