

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Lesser Black-backed Gull

Number: 1 second-basic

Location: Horseshoe L., Larimer County, Colorado

Habitat: large lake

Date: 18 April 1999

Time: 8:12-8:30 a.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird(s): m.ob.

Rec 5/99 apl

ACCEPT 6-1

Description of bird(s): While leading a Fort Collins Audubon trip, I spotted a dark-mantled gull resting on the northwest shore of Horseshoe Lake. Initially, the bird was quite distant, but we were able to approach closer and later saw the bird in flight. I quickly recognized the bird as a Lesser Black-backed Gull and we studied the bird for about 20 minutes. The bird was smaller than a Herring Gull and noticeably larger than a Ring-billed Gull. The contrast between the white head and darker mantle and upperwings were striking at a distance. The bill was black and appeared to have a smaller pinkish area near the base of the lower mandible. Bill size and shape were similar to those of a herring Gull. The legs were flesh-colored. The head was white with some faint darker markings on the nape and around the eye. When perched, the mantle and upperwings appeared nearly solid dark gray, although the bird retained at least a few brown (second-basic) scapulars. In flight, the upperwings were dark gray with some black visible on the outer primaries. There was no white color on the upper surface of the primaries. The bird had a conspicuous white rump and broad, black terminal band. The bird was clearly a second year gull on the basis of the bill pattern, leg color, mantle, and tail pattern. I tentatively concluded the bird was in or very near second-alternate plumage on the basis of the extensive dark gray color on the mantle, the very white-headed appearance, and the appearance of some pink color at the base of the bill.

Similar species and how eliminated: The combination of size, mantle color, tail pattern, bill color, and leg color eliminated other gulls, especially second-basic Herring Gull. Comparisons were made to Herring Gulls of all ages at the time of the sighting.

Previous experience with species: I have seen >100 Lesser Black-backed Gulls (all ages) in North Carolina, plus 10-15 each in Iowa and Nebraska.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were good with clear skies and the sun behind us. Estimated viewing distance was 300-500m. I used a 20-60x spotting scope.

References consulted: none

How long before field notes written? none written

How long before this form completed? written 19 April 1999