

## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

ACCEPT 7-0

**Species:** Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus graellsii*)**Date:** 18 Dec. 1999, 9 Jan. 2000**Number seen:** 1    **Sex:** ?    **Plumage:** nr. Def Basic**Locality:** South Marina, Pueblo Reservoir**Elevation:** about 5000'**Nearest town:** Pueblo West**County:** Pueblo**Time observed:** about 07:15 - 17:40 MST; about 09:30 MST (9th)**Duration of observation:** about 10 minutes, off and on (18th); about 3 minutes (9th)

**Description:** While participating on the Pueblo Reservoir CBC, I found a dark-mantled gull standing on the tires at the South Marina. It was immediately apparent that it was a Lesser Black-backed Gull (LBBG), so I called to the rest of my party. We watched it for a while, getting direct comparisons with Ring-billed (RBGU), California (CAGU), Herring (HERG), and Great Black-backed (GBBG) gulls. It was even in the same field of view with the adult GBBG for a short while. Unfortunately we never saw the bird's legs. I also saw this individual on 9 January 2000 and confirmed all characters noted on the CBC. Unfortunately, I still didn't see the bird's legs. Others who have seen the legs have said that they appeared grayish suggesting that the bird has not quite reached adult-hood.

The bird was obviously much larger than all RBGUs around it, was somewhat larger than nearby CAGUs, and slightly smaller than nearby HERGs. It was obviously smaller than the GBBG. The head was white with moderate dark streaking. The streaking was densest around the eyes, which were pale yellow forming vague eye patches. The mantle was considerably darker than that of the nearby RBGUs and HERGs, and also somewhat darker than subadult CAGUs. The bill was yellow with a large red gonydeal spot and no apparent dark markings. The basal 2/3 of the bill was a paler, sickly yellow; the outer 1/3 was yellower and contrasted somewhat with the basal 2/3. The bill was relatively short and thin, but with more of a gonydeal angle than that shown by the CAGUs nearby. There were obvious white, well-demarcated scapular and tertial crescents. The black primaries all had white tips. When the bird raised its wings, I could see that the secondaries appeared grayish underneath, contrasting with the white wing linings. There was a small, white mirror on P10; P9 did not have a mirror. The tail tip fell between the tips of P7 and P8, closer to P7.

**Similar species eliminated:** CAGU is eliminated by mantle and upperwing coloration, bill size and structure, and eye color; GBBG is ruled out by size, mantle and upperwing pattern and coloration, and by bill structure; HERG eliminated by mantle and upperwing coloration, wingtip pattern and formula, and by underwing pattern. Black-tailed Gull eliminated by size and tail pattern, among other things.

**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 >65 *graellsii* LBBGs on the Great Lakes, the East Coast, and Colorado, bazillions of HERGs, 10s of 1000s of GBBGs, and 1000s of CAGUs. I have not seen YLGU.

**Light conditions:** sun behind partly cloudy skies to my left

**Optical equipment used:** Leica 32x and Zeiss 7x42

**Distance, and how estimated:** estimated closest approach at about 60 meters

**Other observers who saw the bird with you:** Doug Faulkner, Bill Maynard, Peter Gaede (18th); Chris Wood, Mark Janos, Doug Faulkner, and Brandon Percival (9th)

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** Bob Dickson, Karleen Schofield, and many others

**If photographed, type of equipment and film:** I did not photograph

**List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:**

**a) at time of observation:** none      **b) after observation:**

**Reporting observer:** Tony Leukering

**Signature:**



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

**Date report was written:** 21 December 1999 (from notes written the evening of the 18th) and 12 January 2000 from memory