

Laughing Gull

Larus atricilla

Holbrook Res., Otero County

May 10, 1975 4:30 to 4:45 PM

Van A. Truan

7x35 Bushnell Binoculars and 20-45x Bushnell Scope

Habitat: Prairie Lake

I observed three black headed gulls flying just over the lake at about 300yd. Two were typical Franklin's(summer adult plumaged) with a different winged one. The odd bird had a darker gray mantle and black primaries(outer) The tip of the wing had no signs of white, the Franklin's had white spots on the primaries. The birds then started flying higher to where I could see the under side too. The odd gull was darker on the wings and no white in the upper primaries, unlike the two other birds which had some white on the primaries on the underside. They then flew directly overhead at about 100ft. I could see the odd one was slightly larger than the other two. The bill looked a little heavier too. The color was the same and same with leg color. The Bird flew directly into the sun and I could not get any good light on them again.

Conclusions: I have no doubts that it was a Laughing gull because of the direct comparison with Franklin's. There wing color at the tips were conspicuously different. The gull had a darker mantle and black upper primaries. No sight of any white on the primaries.

I've seen this species in Florida and Kansas

Similar species: Franklin's gull- lighter mantle and white spots in the primaries. other black headed gulls-either have white in primaries or are smaller in size.

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Van A. Truan

833 Harmony Dr.
Pueblo West, Colorado 81007

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1, adult summer plumage

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