

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD REPORT
☒ RARE OR UNUSUAL RECORD ☐ NEW STATE RECORD

CFO-ORC FILE NO. 23-76-112
☒ ACCEPTED ☐ REJECTED *8/14/5/76*

Species: LAUGHING GULL

Larus atricilla

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): October 23, 1976

Time Bird Seen: 2:05 P.M. to 2:10 P.M.-MDT

Locality: Union Reservoir

Nearest Town: Longmont

County: Weld

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

None

Optical Equipment: 10X50 Bushnell Binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used:

Light Conditions: High thin overcast, but still relatively bright. Good contrasts. Air still

Distance from bird (how measured): 75 feet to 300 feet+ (estimated).

Number of Birds Seen: One Sex: Unknown Plumage: Winter adult

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Bird was first observed resting on water with small flock of Franklin's Gulls and a large number of Ring-billed Gulls. Its larger size than nearby Franklin's Gulls caught my eye immediately. It stayed on the water for less than a minute. Then all the gulls in the area took off. The gull in question circled the area a couple of times, maybe about 100 feet or so away, then turned and headed north across the reservoir to the opposite shore and out of sight. I was able to follow the bird in flight for about a couple of minutes in the telescope. I drove over to the north side of the reservoir, but was unable to relocate it. Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

A rather small gull, but noticeably larger than nearby Franklin's Gulls. Bill, dark and larger than that of Franklin's Gull. Head, white with remnant of dark hood of breeding plumage (most of forehead white with dark beginning on top of crown above eye and over to back of head. All underparts clear white. Tail, slightly rounded and white (no hint of terminal band). Wings, long, pointed and dark gray with black primaries. White trailing edge to wings. No white in primaries. Mantle, dark gray. Underwings mostly white, but with dark primaries. Bird flew with noticeably longer wings than Franklin's Gull and with more deliberate and deeper strokes.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

The bird was silent so far as I could determine.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Large fresh water reservoir on plains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Franklin's Gull (winter adult): Very similar, but smaller. Shows white "windows" in primaries. More pronounced dark area in head. Wings more rounded and not as long as in Laughing Gull. Flies with more fluttering flight (not as deliberate) than Laughing Gull.

Sabine's Gull (winter plumage): Boldly marked black, gray and white upper wing pattern. Has slightly notched tail.

Bonaparte's Gull (winter plumage): Smaller. Has white head with black ear spot. Shows prominent silvery area in upper forewing in flight.

Little Gull (winter plumage): Very small. Short, rounded wings. Underwings black.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have seen all of the above mentioned gulls in non-breeding plumage. Many Laughing Gulls winter in the New York area in mild winters where I have seen them particularly along the north shore of Long Island. Have seen thousands of Laughing Gulls in winter plumage along the south Texas coast.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Standard Field Guides supported identification.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory

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