

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPE BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

2387-29
A

Species: Laughing Gull
(Vernacular name)

Larus atricilla
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 6 Sept 1987 Time Bird Seen: p.m. to for about 1 min

Locality: Lake Meredith
Ordway Crowley, County COLO.
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: _____ Plumage: 2nd winter

Light conditions: bright sun through thin high clouds; good light

Distance from bird, and how measured: 75-125 yds; estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

The bird circled and wheeled over the open lake at a narrow inlet by the boat dock. I didn't see the bird perched as it then flew away across the lake.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Open water. Lake with narrow sandy edge and marshy borders.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

None

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the trichia marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Was with (or in general area as) Ring-billed and California Gulls. It was closest in size to Ring-billed but was smaller; more slender and clearly shorter-winged. Body white or whitish with dusky wash on head. Dark gray mantle and upper wings - darker than Ring-billed Gull. Primaries and coverts blackish distally, blending abruptly into dark gray upper-wing. No white in primaries, i.e. "no mirrors". Tail white with distinct subterminal ^{black} tail band, divided by white in the center.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Too small and wing & tail pattern wrong for Herring or Calif. Gull.
- Franklin's Gull more delicate, smaller, more "hooded" appearance, black in wings less extensive, lacks broken black tail band.
- Ring-billed Gull is larger, lighter-mantled, has more abruptly black wing-tips, usually shows limited mirrors in wing-tips.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I've had much experience with Laughing Gull in U.S. Shortly after this sighting (mid-Sept.) I saw several birds in 2nd winter plumage in Montauk, N.Y., also in close comparison with Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. I saw several birds I felt perfectly matched this one.

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

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Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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