

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

ACCEPTED

(This is a two-page report. Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name): Laughing Gull		(Scientific Name) Larus atricilla
Date(s) of occurrence: 22 July, 2001		
Number of birds seen: One	Sex: Unknown	Plumage: Adult alternate
Exact Location: Upper end of Neesopah Reservoir		
County: Kiowa	Nearest town:	Elevation: XX msl
Length of observation: Approximately 3 minutes		Time(s) of observation: Roughly 1 PM MDST
Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Tony Leukering		
Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): Nick Komar, I believe		
Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Good. Sun was pretty much overhead and bird was to east of ourselves.		
Optical equipment used: 7x42 Zeiss Bins, 20x60 Leica Televid Spotting Scope		
Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): Approximately 90 yards		
Was bird(s) photographed? No	If so, have you submitted photos?	
Who took the photographs?		
Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: Muddy strip between two reservoirs		
Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification): Bird was first observed loafing on muddy strip between two reservoirs. The bird took off and was observed in flight and subsequently landed in the water on XX Reservoir.		
Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes):		
<p>While on a search for the wayward Black Skimmer, Tony Leukering and I began checking other waterbodies near Jett Reservoir in case the bird was present at another local lake. While at the north end of Neesopah Reservoir, I noticed a dark-hooded gull on the very north edge of Neesopah Reservoir. With the knowledge that a Laughing Gull had been reported at Jett Reservoir and nearby lakes during the same time frame that the skimmer was present, we studied the bird for a bit. Though numerous Franklin's Gulls were also present on nearby lakes, this lone bird seemed a little different to me in being quite long, flat-headed, and with a long bill. Due to the immediate distance involved (approximately 200 yards), heat waves, and partial occlusion by vegetation, we elected to get a closer view.</p> <p>This closer view (roughly 90 yards) quickly revealed that the bird was indeed a full alternate-plumage Laughing Gull. This moderately-sized gull was long and slender with long primary extensions, flattish crown, and relatively long, thin, drooped bill. The head was black and this dark hood extended to a point between the upper hindneck and the lower throat. The bill was seemingly long with a noticeable drooped tip. Because of lighting and distance, I could not discern the color of the bill though I suspected it to be dark red. Slight whitish eye crescents were noted but did not appear to be as wide or spatially separated as that of a Franklin's Gull. The somewhat flattened crown is indicative of Laughing Gull compared to the very rounded crown of Franklin's. The mantle was a dark gray and seemingly a shade darker than that of a Franklin's Gull. The neck, breast, belly and undertail coverts were white. I did not notice any large tertial crescents as would be portrayed by a Franklin's Gull. The wingtips were black and contrasted with the dark gray mantle and upper wings. No white mirrors were noticed on the primary tips when standing and none were observed during flight. The primaries extended well past the tail tip which accentuated the long, stretched out shape of the subject bird. The legs appeared overall darkish.</p>		
Describe bird's call or song: None heard		

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

Alternate-plumaged Franklin's Gulls are a shorter, squattier gull with wide white eye crescents, a well-rounded head, a shorter, more straight bill, and contain large white mirrors to the primary tips.

Bonapartes's Gulls are small gulls that have very thin, short, generally straight bills, lack white eye crescents, and possess a lighter shaded mantle.

Black-headed Gulls in alternate plumage have relatively short, drooped bills and a dark hood that extends rearward only to the rear crown. The mantle shade of a Black-headed Gull is lighter in contrast and the legs are typically reddish (though the distance involved did not afford great looks at the subject birds leg color).

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? **Extensive. I have observed roughly tens of thousands of other Laughing Gulls on the East Coast, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Mexico. In addition, I have observed vagrant birds in Wisconsin and California as well as a couple others in Colorado.**

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): **None**

This report is from notes made during or after **XX** observation or later from memory

Date of written report: **12/11/02**

Reporting observer: **Larry Semo**

Signature:



Reporting Observer's Address: **9054 Dover Street**

City: **Westminster**

State: **Colorado**

Zip: **80021**

Send report to:
Colorado Birds Record Committee
c/o Tony Leukering
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory