

1998-59

ACCEPTED (70)

Unusual Bird Report Form for Christmas Bird Counts

12/29/98 ✓

**CBC Name:** Pueblo Reservoir, Colorado.

**CBC Date:** December 21, 1996.

**Species:** Mew Gull, *Larus canus*. One winter plumaged adult. Sex unknown.

**Observer:** Brandon K. Percival, 835 Harmony Drive, Pueblo West, CO 81007-2632. (719)-547-3722.

**Other Observers:** none.

**Description:** The size of the bird was about one inch smaller than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls, about 16 inches. The color pattern is as follows: The bill was all yellow with no black or other colors. The head and neck were white with brown smudging. The eyes were dark not yellow. The feathers around the eyes had some brown. The mantle was gray a little darker than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls. The wings were also the same color as the mantle. The folded wings were black with four white spots at the tips of the wings. The white spots seemed a little bigger than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls. The tail was white. The chin and throat were white. The breast and belly were also white. The bird had some brown smudging on the sides. The under tail coverts were white. The bird had yellow legs and feet. The bird was gull shaped. The shape of the head seemed small and more rounded than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls. The bill shape was small and thin, much smaller and thinner than the Ring-billed Gulls. The legs were not as long as the Ring-billed Gulls legs. The bird was about an inch smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls next to this bird. The bird was on the south edge of the group of gulls making it one of the closer gulls. I could see all the field marks very clearly.

**Sounds made, if any:** none.

**Conditions of observation:** 7:10-7:20AM. 10 minutes of observation. About 50 yards away from bird. I used my Bausch & Lomb 15-60x spotting scope and my 10x40 Bausch & Lomb binoculars.

**Behavior and Habitat:** The bird was seen with about 150 Ring-billed Gulls and a couple of Herring Gulls, standing on the ice of Valco Ponds, along Highway 96 in Pueblo, Colorado.

**Similar Species:**

*Ring-billed Gull:* adults of this species directly compared with the Mew Gull: shows a black ring on the bill, they are a little larger, they have lighter gray mantles, and have yellow eyes.

*California Gull:* this species is quite a bit larger and will have a black and red spot on the bill.

*Herring Gull:* this species is much larger and has a lighter mantle.

The only gulls with all yellow bills are Kittiwakes which have red or black legs.

**Previous Experience:**

I have seen one adult in winter plumage Mew Gull before in Colorado in 1994. Also I have seen 3 immature Mew Gulls in Colorado since 1990. I have seen most of the gull species in North America, except Ivory, Ross's, Red-legged Kittiwake, Slaty-backed, and Iceland besides for the very rare gull species (such as Black-tailed and Yellow-legged, etc.). In Colorado I have seen 16 of the 18 species of gulls that have been in the state except for Ivory and Ross's. In California I have seen the other three gulls I have seen (Western, Yellow-footed, and Heermann's).

Brandon K. Percival