

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X**Species:** Mew Gull (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*)**Date:** 2 November 2002 **Number seen:** one **Sex:** ? **Plumage:** Definitive Basic**Locality:** Seeley Lake**Elevation:** ~4700'**Nearest town:** Greeley**County:** Weld**Time observed:** mid-afternoon**Duration of observation:** ~10 minutes

Description: As Nancy Gobris had not seen Mew Gull in Colorado, we chased after the adult at Seeley Lake reported the day before by Nick Komar. After at least 30 minutes of searching, I finally found the bird in the southeast corner. It was fairly close and we were able to obtain excellent views. I also digiscoped the bird and came up with a very nice image or two, one of which is included here.

The bird was an obvious smaller, white-headed gull among Ring-billed Gulls which were slightly bigger than it. The white head was heavily mottled with brown, with a distinct concentration of brown mottling on the nape. The bill was shorter and thinner than those of the Ring-billed Gulls and, except for small dark smudge near the gonys, unmarked yellow. The eyes were dark. The mantle was a medium gray, a shade or two darker than those of the Ring-billed Gulls. The wings were long, with the wingtip extending well past the tail (the tail only reached the tip of P7). The underparts were white and the legs were a weird greeny-yellow. The outermost primary (P10) had a very large mirror and P9 had a smaller, but still substantial, mirror. Each of these mirrors was considerably larger than the respective mirrors on the Ring-billed Gulls. P8 had only a relatively small amount of black on P8.

Similar species eliminated: Ring-billed Gull can be easily ruled out by bill size and pattern, eye color, head pattern, mantle color, and wingtip pattern. Common Gull (*L.c. canus*) is more difficult to eliminate from consideration, but wingtip pattern does the trick, as does (probably) mantle coloration. California Gull is ruled out on size, bill pattern, and wingtip pattern.



Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 100s of Mew Gulls, untold bazillions of Ring-billed Gulls, and 1000s of California Gulls.

Light conditions: sun was to my left and a bit behind

Optical equipment used: Leica 32x

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest approach of ~20 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Nancy Gobris and Nathan Pieplow

Other observers who saw the bird independently: Nick Komar, at least

If photographed, type of equipment and film: Nikon Coolpix 995 through Leica 32x

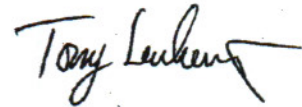
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: 17 January 2004 from notes written that evening and from review of my pictures