

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Laughing Gull 2. Number: 1

3. Location New Beach (sw of marina) Saylorville Lake Polk Co. Ia

4. Date: 6/29/87 5. Time Bird seen: 6:30 to 6:35

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Black-headed gull. A little smaller than a ring-bill (direct comparison). Posterior half of head was black, rest white. Mantle and wings dark gray; underparts throat + neck white. Bill long, droopy + dark red. Legs dark. Bird was standing with or flock of ring-bills when I first observed it. No white was noted in the wings at rest. Posture was very "upright". Neck + legs appeared long, giving it a pot-bellied appearance back →

7. Description of voice, if heard: -

8. Description of behavior: First observed standing with 12 ring-bills. Flushed, it landed by itself 20 yds away. Flushed again, it flew over a dune, out of sight.

9. Habitat - general:   
 specific: Sandy beach.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

Franklin's gull - bird had a completely different build. I had the advantage of a direct comparison with ring-billed. This bird was smaller, but still →

11. Distance (how measured)? 50 yds. (Guesstimate) 12. Optical equipment: 7X35

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): binocs

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Very familiar with Franklin's. Laughing observed in Texas this March; Florida 2 yrs. ago.

15. Other observers: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Did the others agree with your identification? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Consulted National Geographic + Harrison's "Seabirds" to determine age of bird. Recognized as laughing gull at first sight.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 24 hrs.

Dennis Thompson Address: 2014 44th

Signature Dennis Thompson Date: 6/30/87 City, State: Des Moines Iowa

6. (cont.) In flight, the tail was pure white. The wings were gray, with black tips. Definite white trailing edge. One small white spot on the secondaries just above the white trailing edge, almost creating a small bar. Underwing was light, with a darker tip.

10. (cont.) larger than a Franklin's. I would say it was half-way between a Ring-bill + Franklin's in size. White was almost non-existent in the wings, <sup>ps</sup> both at rest + in flight. The most obvious difference was the structure of the bird. As soon as I saw it, I knew it wasn't a Franklin's. The long neck, size, long legs, long bill, + "pot-bellied" look caught my eye immediately. I guess another way to describe it was upright-looking.