

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species ? Laughing Gull 2. Number 1
3. Location Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Johnson Co, IA
4. Date: 26 June 1987 5. Time Bird Seen: ~ 10 AM to 10:05

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):

Legs + Bill - dark but probably not black

Mantle - darkish grey

Wing tips - good sized black dark patch rather sooty than black

I saw no white at very tip. And no white between dark and mantle

Top of head covered with a mottled hood, with a good bit of white around + in front of eye.

Tail - white

(OVER)

7. Description of voice, if heard: -
8. Description of behavior:
9. Habitat - general: marshy backwaters of reservoir
specific:
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
11. Distance (how measured)? 20-50'
12. Optical equipment: 7X35 binocs.
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
bright sun behind me
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
I have seen numerous gulls - both Franklins + Laughing but most of my experience has been with adults + or in breeding or winter plumage.
15. Other observers:
T. Kent saw a gull matching that was likely the same bird about 6 hrs after I. He was unable to get close enough to make an identification
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:
I consulted all std guides as my ~~interpretation~~ identification changed.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 48 hrs from field notes, made on the spot.
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Date: 6/26/87 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240

This bird flew past me + landed 50' away. I glanced at it. Made the description + moved on, figuring it was a Franklin's. Then I got to thinking: what if it was something else, as Franklin's are rare at that date. I looked at my field guides + realized that I was not sure if I could distinguish ~~from~~ Franklin's from Laughing Gulls in their last ^{summer} plummage before becoming adults.

I am not sure of the identification. At present I lean toward Laughing due to

1. lack of obvious white on wings
2. Size of dark patches @ wing tips
3. Dark color of mantle
4. The white tail rules out all the younger birds.