

DOCUMENTATION FORM FOR UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS

I.O.R.C. RECORD NUMBER

This form submitted as supporting documentation of (check all that apply):

- Unusual species; Unusual date; Unusual number;
 Unusual plumage; Unusual breeding record; Christmas Count record; Spring Count record;
 Breeding Census record; Other: _____

1. Species: Great Black-Backed Gull
 2. Number of birds: 1 Age/sex/plumage: Adult
 3. Date(s): Dec 27, 1998
 4. Location (incl. County): Below Lock & Dam #16 in Muscatine County, Muscatine, Iowa.
 5. Observers:
 Your name: Brian Lewis Blevins Phone: (319) 324-7326
 Mailing address: 2003 East 12th Street Davenport, IA. 52803
 Others agreeing with identification: Corey T. Blevins

Observers NOT agreeing with identification:

6. Physical description (size, shape, proportions; details of both color and pattern on the head, back, breast, undertail, wings, and tail; coloration of bill, eye, legs and feet) of details actually seen in the field:

This was an extremely large gull; equal to bigger than the Herrings it was flying with, yet giant to the Ring-Billed gulls it was flying with.

The most noticeable feature was the pure black mantle. All Greater B. Backed, Lesser B. Backed, Slaty Back, and Western. But, the mantle on this bird was a dense saturated black only in comparison with Yellow-footed & some Westerns to my experience. The feet were a dull pink unlike those show in field Guides, none the less pink. No speckling was seen on the head or neck, the white was clean.

★ This is most likely the bird that was at Lock & Dams #14 and #15 a week earlier. With the river freezing upriver, the bird along with the other gulls were moving to open water, downriver.

Species: Great Black-backed Gull Date seen: 12-27-98 Observer: Brian Blevins

7. Description of behavior: A large harrassing bird with ponderous wingbeats, however, even it got out of the way when an eagle took a dive through the group.

8. Description of vocalizations: NONE Heard

9. Description of immediate and surrounding habitat(s): Below Lock + Dam #16 on the shoreline of Muscatine, Iowa, Mississippi River plus Boat harbor that is iced over where the gulls like to roost.

10. Viewing conditions: Partly cloudy but good viewing distance.

Optical equipment (type, power): 10x40 Binocs 15-45X Scope

Distance / how measured? First seen 300 meters Closest 25 meters

Time(s) of observation: 8:52AM - 9:02AM Total time of observation: 10 min.

Weather / sky conditions / relative position of sun: Partly Cloudy

11. Previous experience with this and similar species: WE get 5- to 10 of these a year here in Eastern Iowa on the Mississippi River. We've also seen quite a few of these on the Carolina coastline on Hatteras.

★ Looked at one a week earlier at Lock + Dam #15 and Lindsay park Boatclub.

12. Reasons for eliminating other similar species and/or hybrids:

Pink feet eliminates - Yellow footed
Lesser Black-Backed

Size + Jet Black mantle eliminates - Western
Slaty-Backed

13. Were photos obtained? NO By whom? _____ Attached? _____

14. Books & illustrations consulted, and advice received. How did these influence this description?

Geo. Guide to compare Western's size.

15. How long after observation were field notes recorded? time was taken during obs.

16. How long after observation was this form completed? one week

17. Additional remarks:

Signed

Brian D. Blevins

Date Jan. 2, 1999