

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Glaucous Gull (Larus hyperboreus) How many? 1Location? Tailrace behind Mississippi River dam at Keokuk, IowaType of habitat? River RapidsWhen? date(s): Jan. 9, 1985 Also briefly end in bad light on 10th, time: 12:45 A.M. to 1:10 P.M.Who? your name and address: Robert I. Cecil 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632others with you: Noothers before or after you: No

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

About 12:45 P.M. I went out to look for Glaucous Gulls behind tailwaters of L&D (Lock and Dam) 19. Among approximately 1000 Herring Gulls, I noticed a single Glaucous Gull just behind a spillway chute.

Most conspicuous about the bird was the pure white wingtips, in strong contrast to those of the Herring's. The mantle was a very pale gray, also much paler than that of the Herring. The gray mantle of the wings became white along perhaps the last inch of the wing's trailing edge. The bill was conspicuously yellow. The legs were pinkish, or possibly orangish, or somewhere in between--it was hard to tell at the distance. The head was white. The tail was snow white. Generally and overall, the bird appeared very pale, almost white, especially in contrast to the Herring Gulls.

The size of the bird was quite similar to the accompanying Herring Gulls; -I did not notice any significant size difference.

Like ~~the~~ the other gulls in the area, the bird wheeled about over the spillway, evidently looking for fish. It spent much time gliding, occasionally dropping sharply to the surface after something.

Based upon the clearly defined gray mantle and yellow bill, I believed this bird to be an adult.

--Late Note: When viewing the G. Gulls on the 13th, I noticed the wing shape of the gulls and recalled that this bird had the same feature, but I had forgotten to include it in this documentation. Like the gulls on the 13th, this bird had wings which seemed relatively broader, shorter, and more triangular than those of other gulls in the area. In contrast, wings of Herring and Ring-billed seemed proportionately longer, more narrow.

Similar species and how eliminated: White wingtips ruled out Herring Gull.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? N.A.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Distance: Estimated 300 yards. Viewing Conditions: sky overcast
Optics: Nikon Spotter at 20x

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Life bird.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Field Guide used during identification only.

How long before field notes made? 10 minutes this form completed? 2 hrs.

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