

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Glaucous Gull (Larus hyperboreus) How many? 2Location? Above Mississippi River Dam (#19) at Keokuk, Lee County, IowaType of habitat? Above open water near Powerhouse, or resting on ice.When? date(s): Jan. 13, 1985 time: 11:45 A.M. to 12:15 P.M.Who? your name and address: Robert I. Cecil 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632others with you: Francis L. Moore 336 Fairfield St. Waterloo, Iowa,others before or after you: Not to my knowledge

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.

In flight, the wing-tips were pure white, not a trace of any black, gray, or color. Underwings were white. Upper wing surface was a very light buffy white. Like the adult Glaucous I saw earlier, the overall general color of ~~this bird was white~~ these birds was white, but they did not have the well defined pale gray mantle of the adult. The tail, back, and head were a uniform, very light buffy white, like the upper wing surface.

The bill base was pale with an obvious black tip, just like an immature Herring. I forgot to note the color of the legs.

Regarding size--in flight, I could not detect a significant size difference between the Glaucous and accompanying Herrings. Francis said he did, but his eye is considerably more experienced than mine. The birds were noticeably larger than that of a Ring-billed with which one flew for awhile.

Regarding flying birds, the only other thing I noticed about the birds were that the wings seemed relatively broader, shorter, and more triangular than those of other gulls in the area. I also noticed this about the adult on the 9th, but forgot to mention it in the documentation.

Both gulls rested on the ice perhaps 400 yards out. In contrast to the Herring Gulls also present on the ice, the Glaucous gulls were obviously slightly larger. More conspicuously, they appeared a creamy buff against the whites and browns of the various Herring gulls. Francis noticed this, and it seems it might be helpful in picking out resting birds at long distances.

Similar species and how eliminated: White wing-tips ruled out Herring gull. Size larger than Herring gull eliminates Iceland.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
~~Very cloudy~~, conditions good. Distance, from 50 yds to 400 yds. (estimated)
 Optics: Nikon spotter at 20x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Only previous Glaucous was on Jan. 9, '85.
 Generally inexperienced with gulls.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Used field guides during identification only.

How long before field notes made? 8 hours this form completed? 1 day

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