

UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTING
at Lake Manawa, Iowa

Date: December 6, 1978
December 7, 1978

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. (both dates)

Weather: Very cold - 10 to 15 degrees F.
Lightly overcast

Equipment: Bausch & Lomb Discoverer Scope
(zoom - used at 20 to 40 power)

Observers: Jim & Sandy Kovanda (reporting)
Ruth Green - present December 6, 1978

While observing a reported immature glaucous gull, an unidentified gull was noticed in the same vicinity by Ruth Green. After having studied the glaucous gull, we attempted to identify the other bird. The two gulls were first sighted at rest on the ice. Later, they were flying and swimming with a small flock of common mergansers. The unidentified gull was approximately one and one half times the size of a merganser and of equal size to the glaucous gull. An outstanding feature of the bird was its white head, large black bill, and brown wings. Because of its large size and general appearance, we ruled out a herring gull. It was noted that the wings of the bird extended beyond its tail, unlike that of the glaucous gull. During flight, it showed a black band on a white tail. Also, the legs appeared light in color. From the observed field marks, we arrived at the conclusion that the bird fit the description of an immature great black-backed gull.

We returned the following day at approximately the same time. Both the glaucous gull and the gull in question were again studied under similar viewing conditions. All previous field marks mentioned were again noted.

Sandra S. Kovanda
SANDRA S. KOVANDA

James Kovanda, Jr.
JAMES KOVANDA, JR.