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Unusual Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Laughing Gull (2)

Location: Saylorville; parking lot at Sandpaper

Habitat:

Date: Time: Length of observation: 5/22/99 08:05 - 08:35

Name and Address: Benny Engebretson

12825 NW 127th

Other Observers: Urbandale, IA 50323

None known

Description of bird: 2 Adults, in company of 2 Franklins, six Ring-bills, Cassin's & Fosters
Full black hood, dark bill, slight red tinge, gray mantle, white underparts, No white on wing tips, legs dark, partial eye ring.

Similar species and how eliminated: *

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NA

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions (light, distance, optics): 20-30 yds, early morning sun behind me
30x scope

Previous experience with this species and similar ones: 10 years in S. Florida

References and persons consulted before writing description: Nat Geog.; Kaufman

How long before field notes made? on spot

This form completed? Same site

* I could see both Laughing & Franklin's standing side by side. Laughing were clearly 20-25% larger, as was bill. A more prominent 'goose' made the bill appear somewhat more hooked. In flight, the wing tips were black & more extensive than Franklins, both above & below. I looked carefully for any trace of white between tip & rest of wing, as well as for any white on the head, and there was none. The eye ring was broken on the front, less so in the back. The Franklins had a rounder appearance to the head than did the Laughing. In flight, the Laughing's tail was pure white.