

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? A Black-backed Gull species How many? 1 adultLocation? Red Rock Reservoir - (Marion County)Type of habitat? whitebreast area east of the church - large open waterWhen? date(s): Dec. 25, 1998 app. time: 3:00 pm. ~~to~~ for 15-30 secondsWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: noneothers before or after you: none

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.

I was scanning thousands of birds on the water when I came across this gull on the water and thought, "wow! That's a Black-backed Gull!" I compared its mantle color with the light gray mantle of the gull near to it and about that time it took off flying, went behind a tree, and I never saw it again.

This gull had a dark yellow bill, an all-white tail, and a white head. Its mantle and upper wings in flight were blackish. Its underside of its wings were quite dark in flight also. I did not see its legs color. I certainly wished I could have watched it much more! I looked repeatedly for it but never found it. I could not tell what size it was as it was by itself more or less. I did not have time to notice if the white head had lots of streakings or not.

Similar species and how eliminated: This was probably a Lesser Black-backed Gull or a Great Black-backed Gull.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? _____

If yes, explain: _____

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

Partly sunny, good viewing - light to my side. 80 yards estimated.
22x Scope and 8x30 Binocs.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen two Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Red Rock and Greats in Maine.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic field guide
How long before field notes made? none made this form completed? Dec. 26, 1998