

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Lesser Black-backed Gull How many? 1

Location? Cedar River, on sandbar across from Cargill plant, Cedar Rapids, IA

Type of Habitat? ~~SA~~ Standing, walking around on sandbar

When? date(s): December 18, 1993 time: 2:15 to 2:25 PM

Who? your name and address: Pete Wickham, 2201 5th Ave. S.E., Cedar Rapids

Others with you: None

Others before or after you: None, as far as I know

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Head, neck, and underparts white; head and neck flecked with brownish streaking - which did not obscure the basic white color of these parts. Bill relatively large, with downward hook, yellow, with bright red spot on lower mandible. Legs yellowish. Mantle a dark charcoal gray. Wing primaries black with some white spots in them. Size - close to that of Herring Gulls on sandbar - significantly bigger than Ring-bills also on sandbar, and stood higher than them. The bird was standing on a sandbar with about 170 other gulls. It also walked around, and seemed pretty aggressive, at one point going after a fish another gull had, and (I think) taking it away.

Similar species; how eliminated:

The dark mantle, yet whitish head, neck, and underparts identified it as an adult gull, and immediately eliminated Herring, Ring-billed and other gray or whitish-backed gulls. It was too small for Great Black-backed Gull, which has flesh-colored legs anyway, or Slaty-backed Gull, which has pinkish legs. The mantle wasn't truly black, as a Great Black-backed's mantle would be.

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

If yes, explain: —

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

Heavy overcast, sun behind it, to SW. I was looking south. However, the lighting was OK. I could see the bird very clearly. Used 20-25X

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen several -- at least 3 adults that I can recall -- in the last 3 years. Zoom Scope, 8X36 binoculars

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Guide -

although I was pretty certain while viewing the bird that it was a lesser Black-back-
How long before field notes made? on the spot this form completed? Jan. 6

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).