

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For extraordinary bird sightings in X_IA, __NE or __SD

Species: Glaucous Gull

Number seen: 1 first winter

Location: Blackhawk Lake, Sac County, IA

Habitat: lake ice/open water

Date: 11/18/95

Time: 0900-0915

Bill Huser 401 E. 14th St. S. Sioux City, NE 68776

Others with me: Jerry Probst, Bob Livermore and Loess Hills Audubon members

Others before/after me: Pete Ernzen (before)

Description: a large, pale colored gull in the company of many Ring-billed and two Herring Gulls. The bird was seen at close range perched on the ice and in flight. The gull was much larger than the RBG, and similar size to the Herring gulls. The bill was as large as a Herring Gull's and flesh-colored with a black tip. The bird was plumaged in off-white with pale beige barring over mantle, upper tail coverts and wing coverts. The primaries and secondaries were pale, both dorsally and ventrally, and whiter than the rest of the bird.

Similar species & differentiation: Relatively few gulls have pale coloration in their immature plumages. Also, few have pale colored primaries. Those fitting this description: Iceland Gull- smaller than a Herring Gull, with a disproportionally smaller bill. 1st winter with an all dark bill. Thayer's Gull- usually darker colored over-all, with an smaller, all dark bill in immatures and usually some darker colored primaries. Glaucous-winged Gull- though having a large bill, it is all dark in 1st and 2nd winter plumages

Disagreeing identifications: none

Conditions - light, distance & optics: excellent, direct side lighting; 50 yards; Minolta 10X50 binocs, Celestron 32X60 scope.

Previous experience with species: seen nearly annually in early winter at Gavin's Point Dam on the NE-SD border.

References: Nat'l Geo. Field Guide, Harrison's Seabirds - An Identification Guide

Notes taken, with bird in view: later: immediately after

Documented: 1/15/96