

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Laughing Gull 2. Number: 1

3. Location Below Saylorville Dam, Polk Co. Ia

4. Date: 4/16/99 5. Time Bird seen: 3:30 to 3:40

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Black-headed gull w/ medium gray back + wings. Partial white eye-ring, Dark red bill, longer when compared directly with a nearby Franklin's. Primaries black, w/ no white in either the tips or between gray wing + black primaries. Full black hood indicating adult breeding plumage. Legs weren't seen. Slightly smaller than Ring-billed, slightly larger than Franklin's. Both species were in scope view with this bird, allowing direct size comparison. Bird closer in size to the Ring-billed than it was the Franklin's.

7. Description of voice, if heard:

8. Description of behavior: Resting on the water on one of the ponds below Saylorville dam.

9. Habitat - general: With flock of 20 Ring-billeds, 3 Franklin's, + 3 Bonaparte's  
specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

Franklin's + this bird were swimming side by side. Bill longer, bulkier. No white in the wing tips while resting. Stretched its wings once, with no white visible in the primaries, nor any white bar separating the gray wing from the black primaries. Whitespots + bar visible in nearby.

11. Distance (how measured)? 50 yd. Direct size comparison 12. Optical equipment: Franklin's, 20x Kowa scope.

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Light overcast. Excellent viewing conditions, plus observed at close range.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Limited in Iowa, extensive in Texas + Florida.

15. Other observers: None. Armstrong's unable to locate 3 hours later. I unsuccessfully searched on 17<sup>th</sup> + 18<sup>th</sup>.

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

NGS bird guide.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 2 days

Deann Thompson Address: 7503 Wildflower Ct  
Signature

Date: 4/19/99 City, State: Jackson Ia