

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Printed: 11/20/00

Laughing Gull

30 Sep 1995

Pleasant Valley, Scott Co., IA

*Peter C. Petersen

IBL 66:21, 96; Petersen 1996

Record Number: 95-48

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport 52803

[*3/24/96]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:21

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

Petersen, P. C. 1996. Laughing Gull in Scott County. IBL
66:140.

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Details substantiate well a first-winter Laughing Gull.

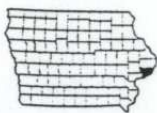
found the bird the next day. This is the fifth record of this European species for Iowa, with three fall records and two spring records.

407 Court, Ida Grove, IA 51445

LAUGHING GULL IN SCOTT COUNTY

PETER C. PETERSEN

On the afternoon of 30 September 1995, I received a call from Dan Dorrance that he had just seen a first winter plumage Laughing Gull at Hampton, Illinois, below Lock 14 on the Mississippi River. Just after 5:00 p.m., Mary Lou and I drove to Hampton but located nothing but Ring-billed Gulls. I scoped the Iowa shore and found a group of gulls on a rock and sand bar at the mouth of Spencer Creek at the east edge of Pleasant Valley, Iowa. One bird was smaller and had a dark grayish hind crown. We quickly crossed the interstate 80 bridge and drove to a lane next to the mouth of Spencer Creek. We walked to within about 75 m. of the birds and viewed them with a Kowa scope at about 30 power for about five minutes from 6:00 p.m. One gull was slightly smaller than nearby Ring-billed Gulls. It had a heavy pointed black bill and gray-brown smudge on the hind crown. In size it was just smaller than nearby Ring-billed Gulls. The mantle was gray and the primaries black with no white tips. The legs were black and the tail ended in a black band. The sky was overcast, and a strong rain cell was just west of us. The birds flew as the wind from the rain cell reached us and we noted black secondaries with a white rear edge and brownish coverts. The tail band was complete with no white edge. We used 10 x 40 and 7 x 35 binoculars to observe the birds in flight. They all flew west to the usual night roost between Bettendorf and Moline. On 2 October I had a chance to check the night roost early in the morning but found only Ring-billed and Franklin gulls present. This is the first report of a Laughing Gull in Scott County.



235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803

I.O.U. BUSINESS SPRING BUSINESS MEETING

Carol Thompson, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary
Burlington, 18 May 1996, 3:20-4:35 p.m.

On behalf of the I.O.U., Thompson thanked Chuck Fuller for his work on local arrangements for the meeting.

It was moved (Gode, seconded by Zaletel) that the minutes of the fall business meeting be approved. Motion carried.

The treasurer's report for 1995 was distributed. It showed an excess of support and revenues over expenses of \$3,745.88.

Committee Reports

Records: Tom Kent reported that a new official list of Iowa birds will be published this year. Jim Fuller is now a member of this committee through 2002.

Membership: Beth Brown reported that she is attempting to get the Iowa Birdline on public radio. There are two vacancies on this committee; the board will act on them after the business meeting. The I.O.U. display was shown. This committee is in charge of the display.

Publications: No report. There is one vacancy on this committee.

Library-Historical: An ad hoc committee is currently looking at the future of this committee. Interested people should contact Bud Gode. Hank Zaletel is currently archiving many I.O.U. materials at the Iowa State University Library.

Environmental: Jim Dinsmore shared a letter sent to the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Project as an example of what this committee might do.

Big Day: Members were asked for opinions concerning Big Day. It was suggested to either raise money for specific projects rather than for the endowment fund, or just have the competition and not have this as a money raising event. Suggestions will go back to the committee.

Spring Count: Pete Petersen reported that the count was held on 11 May 1996 and that reports should be sent to him.

Educational: Carol Thompson reported on a proposal for a REAP grant for the development of a middle school curriculum called, "Birds of Two Worlds." The I.O.U. has agreed to a \$2,000 cash match as part of the proposal. Hank Zaletel reported that revisions are being made to the original educational booklet written for elementary grades. Reprinting cost will be approximately \$3,000.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Carol Thompson reported that the atlas will be to press by fall. Cover artwork was shown.

Partners in Flight: Carol Thompson reported that the I.O.U. will have representatives at meetings when possible. The group is working on developing a plan of action.

Field Trips: Field trips are planned for 21 September to Sweet Marsh and 11 November to northeastern Iowa. Participation was low for the spring field trips. New committee members are needed.

Birdline: Jim Fuller reported that 9,130 calls were received in 1995. He encouraged members to report unusual birds and reminded callers to be aware that all calls are recorded.

I.O.U. Web Page: Ann Johnson would like to have material submitted to be included on the page.

Upcoming Meetings: The fall 1996 meeting will be 6-8 September at the Lime Creek Nature Center in Mason City. The tri-state spring meeting will be at Sioux City on 16-18 May 1997. Iowa City is the proposed location for the fall 1997 meeting. The 75th anniversary meeting is proposed for spring 1998 in Ames.

New Business

Election of Officers: The following were elected to office: Jim Scheib, treasurer; Mary Kuhlman, secretary; and Beth Brown and Dan Dorrance, Board of Directors.

Jim Dinsmore commended Pam Allen for her fine work as treasurer.

Pete Petersen was proposed for honorary membership in I.O.U. (Dinsmore, seconded by Porter). Motion carried.

Feeder Survey: Feeder survey data have not been processed for two years because of funding cuts at the DNR. In order to cover costs, DNR plans to charge \$1.00 to participate in the survey. It was moved (Zaletel, seconded by Porter) that I.O.U. pay for data entry for the last two years and for next year, and that no fee be charged for participation in the survey. Motion carried. Data entry will be done at Iowa State and costs \$500 per year. \$200 has been donated to I.O.U. for the project. Tom Kent suggested that better use be made of the data.

CB Channel: Little interest has been shown in establishing a CB channel for use during field trips. It was suggested that cellular phones be used instead.

Tick Survey: Beth Brown reported that ticks may be sent to Dr. Wayne Rowley, Department of Entomology, Iowa State University, Ames 50011 for a research project.

Announcements

Jim Dinsmore reported that the Watchable Wildlife Guide has been published. He also encouraged members to support wildlife art featuring nongame species like the work Larry Zach did for the cover of the Breeding Bird Atlas.

Dinsmore also announced that the Iowa Academy of Science awarded Myrle Burk Scholarships to David Horn, William Norris, and Wendy Reed, all Ph. D. students at Iowa State University and Brenda Peltz, a M.S. student at the University of Northern Iowa. Each student is also awarded membership in the I.O.U.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

95-48

What species? Laughing Gull - imm (1st yr.) How many? 1

Location? mouth of Spencer Creek, Pleasant Valley, Scott Co. Flying down

Type of Habitat? gravel bar at mouth of creek & over river Miss. R.

When? date(s): Sep. 30, 1995 time: 5:00 PM to 5:05 PM CST

Who? your name and address: Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd, Dav. IA-52803

Others with you: Mary Lou Petersen

Others before or after you: Dan Dorrance

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.

Imm. gull just smaller than Ring-bills sharing its gravel bar. When perched showed heavy, very pointed black bill, legs black. Forewing white, hindwing brownish grey over white. Primaries black, mantle greyish brown, tail white with broad black terminal band. Chest white with grey wash, belly white. In flight primaries almost entirely black, secondaries black with narrow white edge, coverts grey.

Similar species; how eliminated: Franklin's Gull - larger, much heavier bill, wider tail band, this bird with much more extensive area of black on primaries. Franklin's were in the area but not standing on same gravel bar.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. O.C. - sun source to right.
30-40x Kona scope - 70 m. (est.)

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen many times on East Coast, Gulf coast & previously in Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Geo. guide during obs.

How long before field notes made? during obs. this form completed? 1 hour

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

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