

Laughing Gull  
6 Aug 1994

Record Number: 94-38  
Classification: A-P

Rathbun Res., Appanoose Co., IA  
\*Tom Johnson, \*Jim Fuller  
P-0424, IBL 65:15, 81

DOCUMENTATIONS

Tom Johnson (6 Aug), RR 1, Mystic [6/26/95\*]  
Jim Fuller (8 Aug), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240 [6/26/95]

PHOTOGRAPH

Tom Johnson, 6 Aug, P-0424

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:15  
Records Committee: IBL 65:81

VOTE: 2 A-P, 3 A-D, 2 NA

A-D, Sorry, xerox copy of photograph looks like Sooty Tern!

A-D, A better copy of the photo might change this to A-P.

NA, I don't think a young juvenile Franklin's gull is eliminated. Neither documentor mentioned drooping bill a major characteristic of Laughing gull. The bill is described by one documentor as being thinner than a Ring-billed gull, I think this is more supportive of Franklin's than Laughing. I also don't think that a Franklin's would necessarily show a partial hood on the early date of this sighting.

A-P, While the photo is from a distance, it shows the key features between the Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls.

A-P, Juvenile.

A-D, Copy of photo does not show any detail to show this was a Laughing Gull.

NA, Photo is not adequate to allow identification, even though relative size is suggestive; I can't even be sure what the larger gulls are. Perhaps the original photo would be better. Descriptions do not mention characteristic Laughing Gull bill shape, length of primaries versus tail at rest, nor head/breast/flank coloration.

REVOTE (at spring 1995 IOU meeting with photo): 4 A-P, including previous NA voter

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1994

## DOCUMENTATION FORM FOR EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTINGS IN IOWA

What species? Laughing gull How many? 1Location? Lake RathbunType of habitat? sand barWhen? date(s): Aug. 6 time: 1:30 to 2:00Who? your name and address: Tom Johnson, RT I, Mystic, IA.others with you: Dot Corbett, Mary Montgomeryothers before or after you: Chuck Fuller found ~~Aug. 1~~

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.

Slim brown gull, all black bill, dark legs, brown more uniform than immature ring bill gulls for coloration. Took pictures at 100' with 200mm telephoto.

Bill was slimmer than ring bill gull.

I did not see gull fly as we approached closely.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

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

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Kery TSN 2, BAL 7x36 binocs, Minolta 200mm  
5-e laughing gull on East Coast of Florida John - camera S.D.R.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? same day, 1/2 later. this form completed? 3 months

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City, IA 52240



94-38

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

SPECIES: Laughing Gull (Juvenile)

LOCATION: Lake Rathbun (Appanoose County)

DATE & TIME: 8 August, 1994 (4:20-4:50 PM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHERS: Originally reported by Chuck Fuller. Also seen by Tom Johnson and Mary Montgomery.

BACKGROUND: Chuck Fuller reported to me that he had found a juvenile Laughing Gull at this location on 31 July, and Tom Johnson relocated the bird at the same gravel spit near the north end of the dam on 7 August. I had made two previous unsuccessful trips, and on this date it was not on the gravel spit. However, I could see a group of gulls along the north side of the lake about 2 miles distant. I drove around to the Buck Creek boat ramp and then walked the shore until there was an inlet and the birds were sitting on a point across the inlet 200-250 yards away. The Laughing Gull was with the group.

DESCRIPTION: The bird was with about two dozen Ring-billed Gulls, and was smaller and much darker, in general. All of the upperparts were a brownish-gray. The belly and throat were light. The bill was dark, and seemed slimmer than that of the Ring-billeds. The legs were also dark. The eye was dark, and appeared to have an eye ring. The tail was black. I waited for the bird to fly, which it finally did after a fishing boat came by. It flew briefly out over the lake and landed again. In flight, the wing appeared gray with a black tip. The tail had a well outlined black tail band, and the rump was white.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This bird was smaller than Ring-billed, and no plumage of that species is as dark overall. The juvenile Franklin's Gull is smaller, grayish rather than brownish-gray, and has at least a partial hood.

OPTICS & VIEWING CONDITIONS: The late afternoon was partly cloudy, and I was looking to the north-northwest using a KOWA-TSN4 telescope (20-60X) at a distance of 200-250 yards.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen three previous juvenile birds of this species in Iowa.

FIELD NOTES & REFERENCES: I looked at the National Geographic guide before the trip. This information is from four months memory, and the form was typed 11 December.