

Mew Gull
20 Dec 1997
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
*S. Dinsmore, *M. Overton
IBL 68:53, 60, 86

Record Number: 97-54
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 612 1/2 West Magnolia St, Ft. Collins, CO
80521 [*6/9/98]

Michael D. Overton, 1316 S. Duff #93, Ames 50010 [6/9/98]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 68:53, 60

Records Committee: IBL 68:86

VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, Adult L. c. brachyrhynchus.

A-D, Mantle and bill descriptions are good.

A-D, All field marks of winter adult noted. I don't have enough experience to know how to definitive the subspecies identification is.

A-D, Although distance great, key features noted. An overlooked mark is the extensive white patch formed by folded tertials and inner secondaries. This is far larger than that of RB Gull & is visible at large distances. Darker mantle from RB Gull or Herring Gull makes this noticeable.

97-54

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Mew Gull

Number: 1 basic adult

Location: Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., IA

Habitat: large reservoir

Date: 20 December 1997

Time: 3:30-4:40 p.m.

Observer: Stephen J. Dinsmore 612 1/2 West Magnolia St. Fort Collins, CO 80521

Others who saw bird: Maridel Jackson, Ann Johnson, Aaron Brees, m.ob.

Description of bird(s): I was watching gulls gathering on the ice above the dam when I noticed a darker-mantled gull resting among the Ring-billed Gulls. The bird was only slightly smaller than a Ring-billed Gull and otherwise resembled one in shape, except that the head was more rounded and dove-like in appearance. The mantle was a shade darker gray than that of a Ring-billed Gull, closely matching the mantle color of a California Gull. The head was mostly white with some light gray/brown streaking on the nape. The eye was dark. The bill was very short, very thin, pointed at the tip, and mostly yellow-colored. However, I thought I could see a dark subterminal mark on the lower mandible, but the distance precluded a better view. The underparts and tail were white. I saw the bird in flight only briefly. I noted that there was a broad white trailing edge and, compared to a Ring-billed Gull, there was a larger, white subterminal mirror on the outermost primary. The wing pattern, bill color, and white tail identified the bird as an adult in basic (third-basic) plumage.

The plumage and color of the bare parts indicate the bird was an adult in basic (third-basic) plumage. The small size and lack of a subterminal ring on the bill indicate the bird was L. c. brachyrhynchus rather than L. c. canus.

Similar species and how eliminated: The wing pattern, size, and lack of black marks on the face eliminated any of the smaller gulls (i.e. Bonaparte's). The small size and smaller bill size eliminated California Gull. Ring-billed Gull was eliminated on the basis of the darker mantle and upperwings, large, dark eye, and bill color and shape.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were good with clear skies. Estimated viewing distance was 500m. I used a 20-60x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen several Mew Gulls in the Midwest (IA, NE), many in California, and two Mew "Common" Gulls along the East Coast (MA, NC).

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America
Grant Gulls: A guide to identification

How long before field notes made: written after observation

How long before this form completed: written 24 December 1997

IOWA BIRD SIGHTINGS DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Mew Gull (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*) **How many?** 1 basic adult
Location: Marion co., Red Rock Reservoir, South Overlook Recreation Area
Habitat: On ice above dam, large manmade lake in mixed hardwood forest, agricultural cropland.
Date: 20 December 1997 **Time:** 4:00pm to 4:15pm
Observer: Michael D. Overton, 1316 S Duff # 93, Ames, IA, 50010
Other Observers: Steve Dinsmore, Maridel Jackson, Gordon Brand, and two others I did not know.
Observers Before and After: Before: ?? After: Ann Johnson and others.
Description: Direct comparison with Ring-billed Gulls possible as the bird was with over 1500.
Size: Slightly smaller than Ring-billed Gull.
Shape: Similar to Ring-billed Gull, slightly lighter bodied.
Bill: Yellow, unmarked, shorter and thinner than Ring-billed Gull, almost straight with no pronounced gonydeal angle.
Eyes: Dark brownish black (not reliable at this distance).
Head: Crown noticeably rounded, white with diffuse brown streaking toward the back of the crown, behind the eye, and down the nape.
Throat: White, unmarked.
Back: Dark gray, noticeably darker than Ring-billed Gull.
Breast/Belly: White, unmarked.
Wings: Dark gray with a broad white trailing edge, primaries black with white spots, (Only the folded wing was observed).
Tail: White, unmarked.
Legs/Feet: Dull yellow.
Vocalizations: None.
Behavior: Standing on ice with a large group of Ring-billed Gulls.
Similar species and how eliminated: Ring-billed Gull: Size, Bill size, shape and pattern, Head shape, Mantle color. European Mew Gull: Bill pattern, Extent of brown streaking on head, Mantle color, Extant of white on dorsal wing.
Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification: No.
Viewing conditions: Sky not noted, light behind observers, approx. 450 yards (estimate), Leupold 12-40x60@ 40.
Previous experience with species and similar ones: Mew Gull: numerous sightings in WA, OR, CA, and 1 immature in IA. European Mew Gull: 2/97 PA. Ring-billed Gull: numerous sightings.
References and persons consulted before writing description: None.
How long before field notes made? 5 minutes this form completed? 2 weeks.