

Laughing Gull

Record Number: 94-27

19 Oct 1994

Classification: A-D

Midwest Power Pond, Pottawattamie Co., IA

\*Ross Silcock, \*Lehman, \*Padelfords

IBL 65:15, 81

#### DOCUMENTATION

Ross Silcock (19 Oct), P.O. Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653 [2/23/95\*]

Paul [Lehman] (19 Oct), Box 379, Cape May, NJ 0821 [not reviewed]

Babs and Loren Padelford (24, 29 Oct)[not reviewed]

#### REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:15

Records Committee: IBL 65:81

#### VOTE: 7 A-D

A-D, All points fit with 1st winter Laughing Gull. Field marks not mentioned: head color, eye crescents, white trailing edge of wing.

Iowa Rare Bird Documentation

94-27

SPECIES: Laughing Gull (1, 1st winter)

OBSERVERS: Ross Silcock, Paul Lehman

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 19 October 1994

TIME OF OBSERVATION: 11.30 am, for about 10 minutes in all.

DATE OF REPORT: 19 October 1994

LOCATION: Midwest Power (South) Pond, Pottawattamie Co., IA

DISTANCE FROM BIRD: In flight as close as 30 yds; at rest 200 yards

LIGHT, etc: Clear day, about 65F, sun behind us. Perfect light conditions.

NARRATIVE: Paul Lehman and I arrived at the southeast corner of the south pond and noticed an immature gull flying around over the water. Paul quickly identified it as a first winter Laughing Gull. Later it was seen at rest with Ring-billed and Franklin's Gulls, the latter group including a few individuals of the same age as the Laughing Gull, allowing careful comparison. This is about the 11th record for Laughing Gull in Iowa, the first in 1989.

IDENTIFICATION: In flight, the black primaries contrasted strongly with the brownish coverts and the gray mantle. The wings were long and pointed, the overall jizz of the bird more attenuated than a Franklin's. The bill was relatively prominent and slightly drooped distally; it was black. There was a grayish-black wash over the crown and nape, slightly intensified in the upper nuchal area, and a paler grayish wash on the flanks in the area below the bend of the wing, imparting a "dirtier" look to the underparts than on same-age Franklin's Gulls (seen when at rest). At rest, the black primaries extended well past the tail, a feature compared easily with nearby Franklin's, and there were no small white crescents in the primaries of the Laughing Gull, a feature easily seen in same-age Franklin's nearby. The Laughing Gull was almost as big as the Ringbills near it, while it appeared significantly larger than the adjacent Franklin's. The tail was white, with a prominent black band distally, although the tail tip was narrowly white.

Ross Silcock  
PO Box 300  
Tabor, IA 51653

Ross: For your/Iowa Committee purposes.

- Paul

PO Box 379  
Cape May, NJ 0821

94-27

4 December 1994

Dear Ken,

Sorry for the delay with your IMU Point/Counterpoint. The other article I am running with it on much the same topic has required more back-and-forth with the author than expected. There's been a backlog of P/CP pieces to work through as well. They should go in the next issue I submit for the final publication process--probably will be submitted in early January (for April or June issue).

It was a good fall here in Cape May, with Wood Stork, B-t Gray, "Audubon's", Bell's Vireo, 3 Cave Swallows, W-w Dove, 2 White Pelicans, Painted Bunting, "Spotted" Rufous-sided Towhee, Le Conte's Sparrow, Rufous Hummingbird, and 5 Swainson's Hawks. Also good volume. Our yard list is already up to 204 and includes, the stork, Swainson's, Cave Swallows, Eur. Wigeon, Goshawk, Saw-whet, Golden Eagle, Parasitic Jaegers, King and Common eiders, Conn. Warbler, etc.

Back in mid-October I was in the sw Iowa/w. Missouri area for a few days (attending a Bausch&Lomb meeting in KC). Here are the highlights for your AFN uses, etc.

IOWA:

Sandhill Crane- 1 at Forney Lake, Fremont County, Oct. 19  
(stakeout present several days; locally rare)

Laughing Gull- 1 (1st-winter) at I.P.L. Ponds, Pottawattamie Co., Oct. 19

Details: We found this bird flying over the Iowa Power & Light settling ponds south of Council Bluffs and quickly ID'd it as a first-winter Laughing. It was, at times, very close to our car. Also seen by Ross Silcock, and, I think, by others on later dates. I gather this is about the 11th state record. Description from field notes taken that day: "Dusky dark-gray crescent around nape to auriculars, where crescent shaped, and suffusion of pale gray wash to entire nape and down neck and on sides of breast. Blackish bill clearly longer than Franklin's Gull's and with more obvious droop to tip. Also, overall size and wing length longer than Franklin's. In flight, upperwing coverts brownish, with blackish primaries and secondary bar, with thin white trailing edge to secondaries. Complete black tail band (no white outer tail feathers). At rest, approx. size of Ring-billed Gulls and larger than nearby Franklin's. Primaries at rest lacked whitish spots/edges shown by Franklin's. Legs blackish."

BOWA

94-27

Babs & Loren Padelford  
1405 Little John Rd.  
Bellevue, NE 68005

Documentation for Laughing Gull

Location: Midwest Power south pond, Pottawattamie County

Date: October 24 & 29, 1994

Time: approx. 3 - 3:15 p.m.

Light conditions: sun shining, good light

Description of bird: first winter bird. It had a whitish head with a gray bar extending behind the eye. The wings were long and slender and all black from the wrist to the wing tip on the dorsal side. The trailing edge of the secondaries was all black dorsally. The back was a medium dark gray, and darker than Ring-billed Gulls which were present for direct comparison. It was slightly smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls. The tail was white with a black terminal band. The bill was black and straight. The legs were dark.

Behavior: It was sitting on the shore with Ring-billed Gulls. It got up and flew around the south pond where we could see dorsal field marks and the shape clearly.

Optical equipment: Bushnell Spacemaster 25 x 60 spotting scope; Bausch & Lomb 10 x 42 Elite binoculars; Bushnell 7 x 35 Custom binoculars.

This documentation is being written on 12/12/94 from notes taken at time of the sighting.