

Mew Gull

4 Nov 1995

Rathbun Res., Appanoose Co., IA

*Ray Cummins

IBL 66:21, 97

Record Number: 95-51

Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Ray Cummins, 609 S. Main St., Centerville 52544

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:21

Records Committee: IBL 66:97

VOTE: 3 A-D, 4 NA

NA, A real head scratcher. The description of size and bill shape indicate Mew Gull. Head shape is supportive but subjective. I wasn't sure what to make of the "6 to 8 brown spots at the base of the wing coverts," or "the lower flanks had brown stripes." Unfortunately, the color of the back was not noted. Could this bird have still been in juvenile plumage? I don't think was have enough to go on here.

NA, Possibly correct but not enough description to adequately evaluate.

NA, At this time of year, first-year Ring-billed Gulls are extremely variable in size, bill color, and appearance. I saw some still in juvenile plumage late in the fall. There is no description of the mantle, so I cannot tell whether this bird is in juvenile or first-winter plumage. I do not know what "brown spots at the base of the wing coverts" means. How could a black tail be compared with an adult Ring-bill, which has a white tail?

NA, Features described are either subjective or not diagnostic. While this may have been a Mew, I don't think this doc is convincing.

Rare Bird Documentation

95-51

Species: ~~Pacific Loon~~ ^{Mew Gull First-winter} (winter plumage)

Number: 1

Location: Lake Rathbun Appanoose Co.

Observer: Ray Cummins

Others before/with/after: None

Date: 11/04/95 Time bird seen: 7:45AM to 8:05AM

Habitant & Circumstances: Sandy beach with about 50 other gulls including Ring-billed, Franklin's, Bonaparte's and the 1st winter Mew Gull. After about 20 min the bird departed to the north with about a dozen other gulls. Did not see them take off.

Description: The Mew gull was picked out because of size and first winter plumage. The only other first winter gulls present were two Ring-billed gulls. The size was slightly but noticeably smaller than all the Ring-billeds present. The head was more rounded in appearance than the ring-billeds. The bill was smaller in portion than the Ring-billeds, both shorter and thinner. The bill appeared black, but closer inspection showed a lighter color at the basal 1/3. The wings had several (6 to 8) brown spots at the base of the wing coverts. The lower flanks had brown stripes. The tail was black, but not as black as side by side comparisons with the adult Ring-billeds.

Description of voice: NA

Similarly appearing species: See Ring-billed Gull comparicons above.

Distance: 100 to 125yds.

Optical equipment: Kowa 20x to 60x spotting scope.

Light: Excellent at my back.

Previous experience with species: Seen the first winter at Redrock several times. Have seen large numbers in California years ago.

Anyone have any reservations: No.

Books and references: National Geographic during sighting.

Time of field notes: during sighting. Final typing: 29 days

Signature: Ray Cummins Address: 609 S. Main St. Centerville, IA 52544

Date: 12/3/95