

Herring Gull  
11 Nov 1989  
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA  
D. Rose (photo)  
IBL 61:86, P-0358

Record Number: 89-61  
Classification: A-P

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

Doug Rose, P-0358 [submitted as Lesser Black-backed Gull]

#### REFERENCES

Field Reports: none

Records Committee: IBL 61:86, 64:89

#### REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Tom Kent to Records Committee, 13 Sep 1993

VOTE: 2 A-D, 5 NA

A-P: While it is difficult for me to identify a bird from a photo, I believe that in Harrison's SEABIRDS Plate 59, 216D, I see the same bird as in the submitted photo. I accept this bird as a juvenile Lesser Black-backed Gull.

NA: Photo is very interesting due to prominent white rump and broad black terminal tail band. However, a closer examination of the prints circulated to the committee (but especially of the slides submitted by Rose) reveals some features that don't fit Lesser Black-backed Gull (LBBG). First, if this bird was a LBBG, the mostly clear yellowish bill and the definite gray in the mantle (center of upper back) would make it at least a 2nd summer bird (See Grant, GULLS, 1986). By date, it would be even more likely at 3rd winter. However, Grant says "In 2nd winter and second summer (LBBG) plumages, the adult upperparts coloration begins to show at least on the mantle and scapulars, so there is little risk of confusion with Herring Gull". But these photos clearly show a bird with a LIGHT GRAY mantle with brown mixed into the scapulars. The gray is nearly identical in shade to a Ring-billed Gull shown in the much the same light. A LBBG, if it is showing any adult gray in the mantle, must show a much darker shade.

In addition, this bird seems to have pink legs (as compared to the nearby Ring-bill with definite yellow-green legs in the same light). This doesn't fit for LBBG either.

A further point is that by the time a LBBG has the adult gray in the mantle and a mostly all light bill, the tail band is usually not very prominent.

More likely this bird is a Herring Gull. In fact, Grant gives a description of a 2nd winter Herring summarized as follows: mostly white head; with bill mostly yellow or yellowish-flesh; "mantle and scapulars sometimes similar to 1st winter, but usually with at least some clear gray"; grey window on darkish wings (note how well this fits photo); tail "extremely whitish at base, broad mainly solid blackish subterminal band of variable pattern"; and legs "dull flesh". This description fits the photos extremely well.

NA: I've concluded I'm not particularly adept at identifying birds from less than full frame photos, and these photos do nothing to increase my confidence. While they are excellent, considering the circumstances, it is difficult or impossible to see subtle plumage and soft part characteristics and, to a lesser extent, to make size comparisons with the Ring-bills. The effect of lighting is also an unknown. Analysis of the photos in Grant and the paintings in Harrison appeared to narrow the possibilities down to either Herring or Lesser Black-backed, but, at least for me, were not conclusive as to further separation based on Rose's photos.

NA: Photo is not a Lesser Black-backed Gull and doesn't support the documentation of Cummins and Fuller.

NA: This bird looks to be an individual going into or in 3rd winter plumage. The rump is quite white in the "flying" photo which might indicated Lesser Black-backed but the back area itself is not dark enough in either photo for *L. fuscus*. It looks more the color of *L. argentatus* (Herring). Leg color is definitely a fairly bright pinkish color. *L. fuscus* would be a dull flesh color, not this bright. The bill color and size could be either species. The subterminal band on the "flying" photo is inconclusive in itself as both species have a subterminal band of highly variable extend

and pattern (Grant, 1982). I would say this is more likely a Herring Gull, mostly on the color of the mantle and scapulars.

A-P: The photo of the gull in flight is diagnostic of a Lesser Black-backed Gull and is an excellent photo as well.

NA: Photo alone is not conclusive. However it is suggestive in contrasty appearance of dark & light areas of plumage. Main problem is difficulty of discerning pattern of wing feathering.

REVIEW OF PHOTOGRAPHS (at meeting of 11 Nov 1990): The committee felt the bird was most likely a Herring Gull.

REVOTE (1993): 7 A-P Herring Gull

89-61

13 September 1993

To: IOU Records Committee

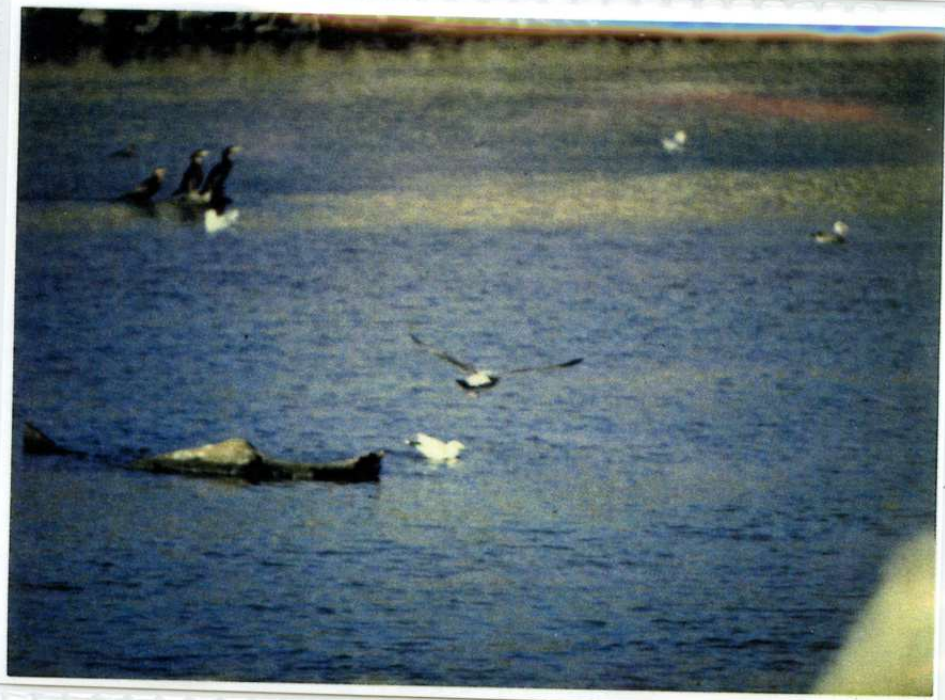
From: Tom Kent

Re: Request for reconsideration of record

**Record:** 89-61 Lesser Black-backed Gull

**Reason for request:** Suggest reclassification as Herring Gull A-P

**Comment:** I believe the photos show a second-winter Herring Gull.



Lesser Black-backed Gu P-0358  
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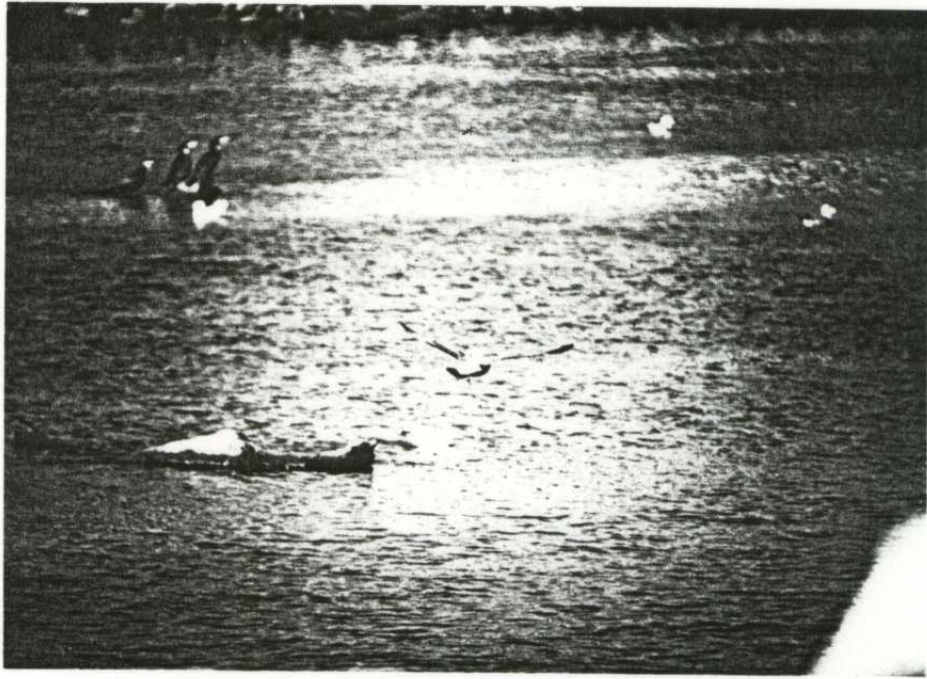
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