

Iceland Gull  
16 Jan 1993

Record Number: 93-02  
Classification: A-P

Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA  
\*J. Fuller, \*Kent, \*Pinkston  
to 30 Jan; P-0355, IBL 63:49, 64:68

#### DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240 [11/27/93]  
Randall Pinkston,  
Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

#### PHOTOGRAPH

T. H. Kent, P-0355

#### REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 63:49  
Records Committee: IBL 64:68

VOTE: 6 A-P, 1 A-D

A-P, Is the photo mis-marked? If the photo I have is this bird, I will change to A-P. Descriptions of structure, size as compared to Herring Gull, bill size and coloration, and body/wing/tail feathering and color seem good for Iceland Gull. Pinkston mentions gray on the outer webs of the outer 2-3 primaries which I believe is to be expected in kumlieni. He also mentions a white rump and plain unmarked gray on the upper back which is suggestive of a second-winter bird. According to Zimmer (Birding, October '91), second-winter birds have lost most of the barring on the rump and base of tail. The other documentations have nothing to contradict that observation, so I am inclined to accept as a second-winter Iceland Gull.

A-P, The photo shows the small size, small head, and small bill compared to a Herring Gull. The white upper surface of the primaries is also shown.

REVOTE: 7 A-P



Iceland Gull P-0355  
Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA  
16 Jan 1993 T. H. Kent

93-02

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## DOCUMENTATION FOR UNUSUAL BIRD

SPECIES: Iceland Gull (First winter).

LOCATION: Iowa River near Hancher Auditorium, Iowa City (Johnson County).

DATE and TIME: January 16, 1993 (9:35-9:45 AM & 12:25-30 PM)  
January 19, 1993 (11:45-50 AM).

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

OTHER OBSERVERS: Jane Fuller, Tom Kent, Carl Bendorf, Randy Pinkston.

BACKGROUND: As I drove over the Park Avenue bridge in Iowa City, I observed quite a large gathering of gulls in the water just south of the bridge. I picked up Jane Fuller, and we returned to find the birds still there. We looked at the flock from the Phi Delta Theta fraternity parking lot on the east side of the river. I returned after noon, and viewed the birds from near Hancher Auditorium on the west side of the river. Three days later, I saw a large flock of gulls circling in the air near Hancher Auditorium, and I watched them for about five minutes.

DESCRIPTION: The general size of this gull was noticeably smaller than any of the Herring Gulls, either standing or flying. The head and bill were also more dainty, and usually the head appeared rounder and less angular than that of the Herring Gulls. The bird was generally one color, an off-white, because of faint brownish-gray flecking. Compared to the Herrings, it appeared quite light and whitish. The bill was dark, except for some lightness at the base of the lower mandible. The eye was dark, and the legs were a grayish-pink color. In flight, the underwing flight feathers were a translucent, almost silver color, as seen from below. There was also a very faint subterminal tail band of the same subtle gray-brown color.

SIMILAR SPECIES: First year Thayer's Gull is overall darker, with darker primaries and a well defined dark tail band. Glaucous Gull is larger, and the first year bird has a two-toned bill.

VIEWING CONDITIONS and OPTICS: The day was sunny, and the bird were viewed in the morning looking west and southwest, and at noon looking northeast. Distance was 50-75 yards. Both Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars and KOWA TSN-4 telescope with 20-60X zoom lens (used at 20X) were employed.



PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Two first-year birds of this species seen at Davenport, winter of 1992, and a single first year bird at Red Rock Reservoir in March, 1991.

REFERENCES and FIELD NOTES: Field notes were made when I returned home about 12:30 PM the first day. This report was typed on January 27th. No field guides were consulted before notes were made. Later, National Geographic was seen.

## DOCUMENTATION OF RARE SPECIES

Iceland Gull, Larus glaucooides

Date: Saturday, 16 January 1993; same bird observed on 17 and 20 January also

Location: Iowa River, south of Park Rd. bridge (across from Hancher Auditorium), Iowa City, Johnson County, Iowa

Other Observers: Same bird found earlier on the 16th by Jim Fuller and observed by many others

Description (see also drawings made on 17 and 20 January on back side this sheet): Approximately Herring Gull-size in flight, certainly no larger. Distinctly smaller on water than many nearby Herrings'.

Basically an off-white, but near all-white, gull with very pale grayish-brown mottling on mantle and on nape, and on belly (see flight drawings other side). Head and chest and rump essentially pure white. Tail mottled very pale grayish-brown, forming a very pale but broad tail band. Primaries translucent and white except for slight grayish hue on outer webs of outer 2-3 primaries, together primaries forming a pale contrast with the remainder of the mottled mantle (again, see flight drawings other side). Again, primaries translucent white from below with remainder of underwing pale grayish-brown. Bill noticeably shorter and narrower than Herring Gulls'; dirty pale at base gradually blending with black distal  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; mandible more extensively black than maxilla (see drawing other side). Feet pink. Eye not studied well.

Wings appeared long and narrow in flight and primary tips projected beyond tail tip on sitting bird.

While studying the bird through a Kowa scope on 20 January, I noted plain unmarked gray on the upper back raising the possibility that this bird was a second-winter individual.

Conditions: Mostly overcast, occasionally windy, cold. Observed from as close as 30 or 40 meters with Zeiss 10x40 binocular and Kowa telescope.

Similar Species: Glaucous Gull much larger, larger than Herring Gull, with massive bill. Same-aged Glaucous should show sharp demarcation between pink basal  $\frac{2}{3}$  of bill and black tip. First- or second-winter Thayer's Gulls typically darker than this bird with primaries concolor or a shade darker than remainder of mantle, also Thayer's shows a solid darker tail band.

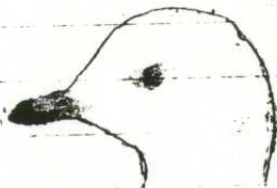
Previous Experience: Only one previous study of Iceland Gull, also a first-winter bird in February 1992 at Moline, Illinois. Thayer's experience limited to one first-winter individual twelve years ago near Flagstaff, Arizona. Approximately twelve years' experience with Glaucous Gulls in first-winter and adult plumages.

20: Iowa R. by Hancher -

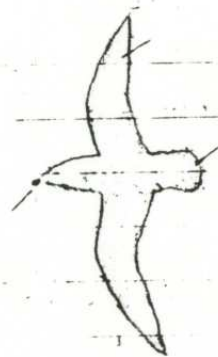
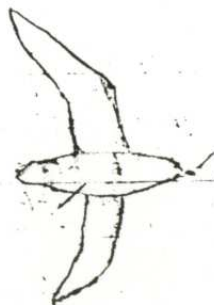
Iceland Gull 1, same bird

~ 9:30 - 9:45 a.m.; heavy overcast,

through Kowa scope. Noted  
previous features plus plain  
gray on upper back and detail  
of bill as illustrated:



Again noted was dusky gray on  
upper surface (outer webs) of outer  
2-3 primaries



Iceland Gull, Iowa City  
16-17 January 1943



## DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

**Species:** Iceland Gull; **Number:** 1 first-winter

**Location:** Iowa City

**Date:** 16 January 1993; **Time:** 10:20 to 10:35 a.m.; 12:25 to 12:30 p.m.

**Name and address:** Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

**Others before/with/after:** Found early in morning by Jim Fuller

**Habitat and circumstances:** river with open water.

**Description of bird:** I picked the bird out of 125 Herring Gull that were resting on the river below the Park Road bridge. It was distinctly smaller than any Herring Gull and the primaries were the same color as the rest of the wing. The head was smaller (about 15%) compared to Herring Gulls and the delicate rounded shape was easy to appreciate. The bill was shorter and more uniform in caliber than the Herring Gulls. The bill was black at the tip and I think it was slightly lighter at the base (I did not use a telescope). The eye was dark. The head and neck were off-white and lighter than the wings. The wings had fine vermiculated light brown markings. I did not see the leg color. In flight, the bird was smaller in wing span the Herring Gulls (about 10%). There was a pale brown, poorly demarcated tail band on the upper surface. The wings were uniform to the tip with the flight feathers showing translucent white and the coverts a more opaque light brown.

**Voice:** Not heard.

**Similar species:** The size and lack of sharp demarcation to the tip of the bill exclude Glaucous Gull. The paleness of the primaries on the sitting bird, all light wing in flight, and relatively pale tail band separate this bird from Thayer's Gull.

**Any one have reservations?:** No.

**Light:** Overcast; **Distance:** 50 to 75 yards (est); **Optics:** 10x binocular.

**Previous experience:** This is my sixth Iceland Gull for Iowa.

**References before/after viewing:** None.

**Time of notes:** 20 min. **Final typing:** 3 hours.