

Lesser Black-backed Gull
4 Dec 1988
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA
*S. Dinsmore
see 88-29; IBL 59:52, 77

Record Number: 88-41
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Steve Dinsmore

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 59:52
Records Committee: IBL 59:77

VOTE: 6 A-D, 1 abstain

A-D. Back color eliminates the closest possibility California Gull.

A-D. Would consider same as Nov. bird.

A-D. Good documentation, all field marks needed to adequately describe this species are present.

A-D. Plausible. I am a little concerned about elimination of California Gull, but observer is experience with gulls (although perhaps not California). Mantle color should be sufficiently different to separate in most cases. Lesser BB prob. more likely than California in central/eastern IA.

SENT TO: Steve Dinsmore.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species? Lesser Black-backed Gull

How Many? 1 winter adult

Location? Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.--near Jester Park

Habitat? resting on mud bar with thousands of other gulls

Date? 4 Dec 1988

Time? 2:50-3:15 p.m.

Observers Name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

Others who saw bird: none

Description of bird: I was looking over several thousand gulls on a large mud bar north of Jester Park when I noticed a dark-mantled gull sitting with some Ring-billed Gulls. The bird was noticeably larger than the Ring-billed Gulls it was with. However, the bird was smaller and slimmer than nearby Herring Gulls. The mantle was slate gray, noticeably darker than the mantle of nearby Ring-billed and Herring gulls. The wingtips were black and darker than the mantle. The underparts, head, and tail were white, except for some dark brown streaking on the crown and nape. The bill was yellow and was longer and thicker than the bill of a Ring-billed Gull. The legs were bright yellow, similar to the leg color of the Ring-billed Gulls. From these field marks, I identified the bird as a winter adult Lesser Black-backed Gull, possibly the same bird that was here in November.

Similar species and how eliminated: The size (larger than Ring-billed Gull, smaller than Herring Gull) eliminates all Gulls except Herring, California, and Lesser Black-backed gulls. Dark mantle color eliminates Herring Gull. The dark gray mantle was too dark for a California Gull, and the legs were a brighter yellow than the dull yellow leg color of a California.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with the sky mostly cloudy. Estimated viewing distance was 300 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen three other Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Iowa, plus several in Massachusetts.

References consulted: NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made? during sighting

How long before this form was completed? 5 hours