

Ross's Gull Record Number: 93-26
31 Oct 1993 Classification: A-P
Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., IA
*J. Fuller, *****
P-0407, P-0413, IBL 64:13, 68, Fuller 94

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City 52240 (2/23/94)
Ann Johnson, 532 129th Ave., Norwalk, 50211
Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246
Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, 50148
Randy Pinkston, 526 Reno St., Iowa City, 52245
Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport 52803
Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines 50265
[Ray Cummins]

PHOTOGRAPHS

T. H. Kent, P-0407
P. C. Petersen, P-0408
Reid Allen, P-0413

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 64:13
Records Committee: IBL 64:68
Photographs: AB 48:116 (P-0407)
Fuller, J. 1994. Ross's Gull found at Red Rock Reservoir. Iowa Bird Life 64:113.

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, Nice to have photos showing all diagnostic characteristics.

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1 at Lime Creek Nature Center in Mason City on 2 Jun (RGo) was the only report.

Field Sparrow: Fewer were found on two BBS routes in E Iowa than in recent years (PCP).

Vesper Sparrow: Fewer were found on two BBS routes in E Iowa than in recent years (PCP).

Lark Sparrow: 1-3 were found in Allamakee, Fremont, Johnson, Lee, Linn, Louisa, Madison, Muscatine, Polk, and Winneshiek counties.

Henslow's Sparrow: This was a banner year for this rare nester; 16+ (including adults carrying food to young) were noted at L. Sugema W.A. in Van Buren Co. on 8 Jul (SJD). In addition, 2 more were found near that area and 10 more were found in SE Van Buren Co., all on 8 Jul (SJD). One more was found near Donnellson in Lee Co. on 9 Jul (SJD), and 12 were found in Davis Co. (John Fleckenstein fide JJD).

Swamp Sparrow: 4 males at Cardinal M. (DeC) were somewhat east of this species' usual range.

Lapland Longspur: A male in breeding plumage was seen in Chickasaw County on 19, 20 May (Heidi Stallman fide JJD, details)(record latest).

Bobolink: 40 at Cardinal M. on 29 Jul (DeC) were migrants.

Great-tailed Grackle: 8 males and 3 females were at Goose L. in Greene Co. on 1, 15 Jun (SJD, JJD); the females were carrying food to young. Nesting was also noted at Teig's M. in Story Co. (first for the county, SJD). Other reports are 1 at Dunbar Sl. on 4 Jun (PHA, RIA), 4 at Blue L. on 22 Jun (EuA, EIA), 1 at Brown's L. in Woodbury Co. on 16 Jul (BFH), and 10 including 3 young at Long Pond in Dallas Co. on 30 Jul (EuA, EIA). We received a late report of 2 males near Rush L. in Palo Alto Co. on 15 May (G. Brown fide SJD), the first report for that county.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Cowbirds were noted parasitizing Horned Lark, Northern Cardinal, Chipping Sparrow, and Northern Oriole nests (JSi).

Orchard Oriole: 1-3 were found in Cerro Gordo, Fremont, Lee, Linn, and Webster counties.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Singles were seen n of Burlington on 30 Jun (THK) and 9 Jul (SJD).

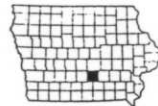
CONTRIBUTORS

Pam H. Allen (PHA), West Des Moines; Reid I. Allen (RIA), West Des Moines; Eugene Armstrong (EuA), Booneville; Eloise Armstrong (EIA), Booneville; Neil Bernstein (NBe), Cedar Rapids; Gordon J. Brand (GJB), Newton; Dennis Carter (DeC), Decorah; David L. Dankert (DLD), Cedar Rapids; Jeff Dankert (JD), LaCrosse, WI; Rich DeCoster (RDe), Evanston, IL; James J. Dinsmore (JJD), Ames; Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Ames; Dan C. Dorrance (DCD), Davenport; David A. Easterla, Maryville, MO; Chris Edwards (CE), North Liberty; Bruce Ehresman (BEh), Ames; Bery Engebretsen (BEh), Des Moines; Peter Erzen (PE), Ida Grove; Carolyn J. Fischer (CJF), Mason City; James L. Fuller (JLF), Iowa City; Rita Goranson (RGo), Mason City; Susan B. Grove, Raleigh, NC; Dennis Henrikson (DH), Estherville; Bill F. Huser (BFH), Sioux City; Ann M. Johnson (AMJ), Norwalk; Matthew C. Kenne (MCK), Algona; Thomas H. Kent (THK), Iowa City; Judy Knight (JK), Spencer; Fred Leshner (FL), LaCrosse, WI; William Norris (WN), Story City; Babs K. Padelford (BKP), Bellevue, NE; Loren J. Padelford (LJP), Bellevue, NE; Marietta A. Peterson (MAP), Walnut; Peter C. Petersen (PCP), Davenport; Randy Pinkston (DRP); Diane C. Porter (DCP), Fairfield; Beth Proescholdt (BPr), Liscomb; Mark Proescholdt (MP), Liscomb; Richard C. Rosche, Chadron, NE; Chris Rogers (CR), Iowa City; Lee A. Schoenewe (LAS), Spencer; Jim Sinclair (JSi), Indianola; Marie Tiemann (MT), Shenandoah; Hank Zaletel (HZ), Nevada.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50014

ROSS'S GULL FOUND AT RED ROCK RESERVOIR

JIM FULLER



Halloween morning 1993 was to provide a treat, not a trick for Pete Wickham and myself. We were taking advantage of the additional hour of morning sun the first day after daylight savings time to bird Red Rock Reservoir, and had arrived at the South Tailwaters Area at 8:15 a.m. to find several hundred gulls, some foraging below the dam, and others loafing on a small rocky island downstream. A bright sun precluded good viewing of the birds on the island, so we backtracked to the Howell Station campground where the gulls were but 40 yards away and the sun was behind us.

From this vantage, almost the first gull that I viewed through my scope was unmistakably different, and I yelled "Ross's Gull". We spent the next five minutes studying the field marks of this beautiful bird, before notifying other birders. Then, for nearly three hours, we observed the bird standing on the rocky bar and flying in the tailwaters area.

The features noted at first glance were a pink blush on the white underparts and a faint crown and nape stripe. But these features were only two of the many that made this gull stand out. The general size was about two-thirds that of the Ring-billed Gulls, with which it was standing. It was not the shape of the ring-billed either; rather it had a more sleek body, smaller head, shorter bill, shorter legs, and relatively longer wings. The upperparts were generally light gray in color, not different from the adult Ring-billed Gulls, but the white of the underparts was washed with pink.

The head was very small and rounded, more like that of a pigeon. The bill was black and so small that it looked out of place on a gull, but rather belonged to a passerine. The side of the head also had a pink wash. The eye was dark, and there was a dark smudge just in front of it. There was a faint crown and nape stripe, which was darker directly behind the eye. This feature would suggest an adult bird molting into basic plumage, as this stripe is quite pronounced in alternate plumage.

The legs were very short and a bright orange-red color. The primaries extended about 1.5 inches beyond the tail. In flight, the white tail was long and wedge-shaped. The wings were quite long. The upperwing was a uniform light gray, save for a narrow white trailing edge, and the underwing appeared to be light colored. Several times the bird flew to the tailwaters area, and even at a distance of 250 yards, the pink on the underparts could be seen well with binoculars. While on the island, the bird was continually moving. It waddled like a pigeon or dove, and picked at the rocks.

After an hour and a half, Eugene and Eloise Armstrong and Ann Johnson arrived, and during the day many others made the trek to Red Rock. Those who came early Monday morning, 1 November, also were treated to good views of the bird, but about 9:30 a.m., it flew up and over the facing of the dam, not to be seen again.

Primarily an Old World bird, Ross's Gull is tied to the ice of the Arctic. In the New World, it breeds in northern Canada and Greenland. It does wander south, on occasion, and has been recorded in all the states surrounding Iowa, most recently in Nebraska during the winter of 1993. On New Year's Day 1992, one was seen by a number of Iowa birders near St. Louis, Missouri. In most previous appearances in the lower 48 states, it has accompanied ice during the winter months. So, an October date makes this first Iowa record even more unusual.

6 Longview Knoll, RR 6, Iowa City, IA 52240

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93-26



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93-2c

Hoss's Gull
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
P-0407
31 Oct 1993 T. H. Kent

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93-2c

Hoss's Gull
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
P-0407
31 Oct 1993 T. H. Kent

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Hoss's Gull
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P-0407
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93-2c

Hoss's Gull
Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA
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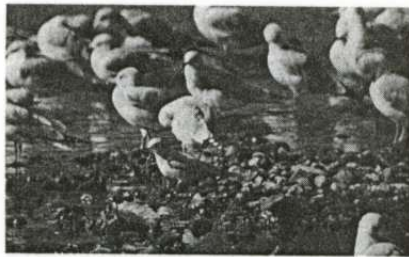


Ross's Gull P-0413
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Adult Ross' Gull (front, with Ring-billed Gulls) at Red Rock Reservoir, Iowa, on October 31, 1993. A first for the state, it added to the handful of mid-continent records for this elegant northerner. Photograph/T. H. Kent.

The single Red Phalarope seen outside Ohio was at Carlyle L., IL Oct. 22 (†JVu).

JAEGERS TO TERNS

An impressive 37 jaegers were reported during the fall flight; all but one appeared on the Great Lakes. The exception was a flyby at the Oak Openings, OH hawk watch Sept. 5 (†MA). Among the acceptably identified birds were six Pomarine and four Parasitic Jaegers on L. Erie and one Pomarine and three Parasitics on L. Michigan.

A juv. Laughing Gull wandered W to Saylorville Res., IA; it was discovered there Sept. 18 (†AJ ph.). Franklin's Gulls were scarce e. of the Mississippi R, where the peak count was only four. Nine Little Gulls were reported from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The primary Bonaparte's Gull flight passed through L. Erie; Nov. 7, 23,000 were at Eastlake and 20,000–30,000 were in Cleveland (LR, *et al.*). Adult California Gulls appeared at Michigan City harbor, IN Nov. 20 (KB, †Haw m.ob.) and at Carter L., IA Nov. 21 & 23 (TBr, †WRS, †B & LP). Most noteworthy of the Region's 19 Thayer's Gulls was a first-winter bird at Red Rock Res., IA Nov. 13 (†RPi, †RCE, †THK). The season's only Iceland Gull was an ad. "Kumliens" at L. Cal., Nov. 27 (WM, RHu, DM). Good numbers of both Lesser Black-backed and Glaucous gulls occurred on the Great Lakes. This autumn's total of six Black-legged Kittiwakes was near normal for the Region. Unquestionably the season's best gull, Iowa's first Ross' Gull, was discovered at Red Rock Res. on Oct. 31 (†JF, PWi, †m.ob., ph. THK, RA). This pinkish-breasted individual, an adult molting into basic plumage, associated with a mixed flock of Ring-billed and Bonaparte's gulls below the dam; it departed Nov. 1. A marvelous Sabine's Gull flight of 12 birds graced the Region; oddly the vast majority appeared away from the Great Lakes. Reports included five in Illinois, three in Indiana, three in Ohio, and one in Iowa. The latter was at Red Rock Res., Oct. 21–23 (†MP *et al.*).

Caspian Tern numbers were deemed low on L. Erie (LR), but were near normal elsewhere. Common Terns remained scarce with only paltry totals from each state; however, the count of 291 at Lorain, OH Oct. 25 (TL), was high for such a late date. No Forster's Tern concentrations were reported and the only Least Tern was seen Aug. 19 at Marshall-

town, IA (†MSt). A refreshing change from the routinely dismal Black Tern reports was a count of 640+ in Jackson, IL Sept. 25 (KMc).

DOVES TO HUMMINGBIRDS

S.A.

Observers are beginning to reap the benefits of taking a second look at hummingbirds that visit feeders in October. Among this season's rewards were two Anna's, two Rufous, and seven unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbirds. Foremost among these was the Region's first Anna's Hummingbird at T. Barksdale's feeder in Columbia, MO Oct. 29. The bird, an ad. male, was banded Nov. 11 and remained until Nov. 15 (†TBk, PMc, m.ob.). Remarkably, a 2nd ad. ♂ Anna's appeared at the J. & H. Palmer residence in Platte City, MO Nov. 16. On Nov. 18; this individual was also banded (†LMo, †JG). Illinois first confirmed Rufous Hummingbird arrived at the Olympia Fields feeder of E. & S. Strauss Oct. 14; it remained through Nov. 18 when it apparently died. Measurements taken at the Chicago Field Museum confirmed that the bird was indeed an imm. ♂ Rufous (†m.ob. * C.F.M.). The most interesting of five *Selasphorus* hummingbirds detected in Missouri was a banded bird that appeared at the home of H. & S. Vandever in Springfield Oct. 26. Authorities netted the bird and learned that it had been banded as an after-hatching-year ♀ Rufous Hummingbird by R. Sargent Dec. 19, 1989 in Pensacola, FL. This well traveled lady was subsequently recaptured on one previous occasion at Bay Minette, AL Feb. 2, 1992. Clearly, any hummingbird present in October warrants careful scrutiny.

Missouri's 5th Com. Ground-Dove was recorded Oct. 9 at Horseshoe L. (†LL). Extralimital Barn Owls appeared at 2 Indiana locations: in the Migrant Trap Oct. 10 (†LMk) and at Chain-o-Lakes S.P., Nov. 14 (JWi *et al.*). Barn Owls had not been confirmed in either of these areas for more than 20 years. A good Snowy Owl flight penetrated the n. states in November. Records included eight in Iowa, seven in Illinois, five in Indiana, and four in Ohio. Long-eared Owls were much as expected with ten reported across the Region, however, the seven Short-eareds reported was far below normal. The season's five N. Saw-whet Owls were distributed among 3 states. The Region's most impressive Com. Nighthawk flight was recorded at Columbia, MO Sept. 20, when 1650+ were counted (S H). A Whip-poor-will lingered on the Chicago lakefront until the unusually late date of Nov. 17 (KH).

FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

Olive-sided Flycatchers were scarce with reports only from Illinois and Iowa. Late Acadian Flycatchers were identified by voice Sept. 25 at both Magee M., OH (RHu) and Sanganois W.M.A., IL (KR). A calling Alder Flycatcher at Sanganois W.M.A., IL Sept. 24

(KR) was also extremely late. An ad. ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher delighted birders at Ivanhoe, IL Oct. 11–18 (BS, ph. †m.ob.). A very late Great Crested Flycatcher, at Effigy Mounds, IA Nov. 8 (†DC), provided that state's latest fall record. The swallow migration was poor. The only sizable concentrations consisted of 3000+ Purple Martins on the Chicago lakefront Aug. 14–15 (KH) and 2500 Tree Swallows at Muscatatuck N.W.R., Oct. 9 (PW).

Red-breasted Nuthatches invaded in numbers not seen in many years. Early August brought the first birds to the n. states and the surge penetrated the entire Region; Red-breasteds were deemed widespread in Kentucky and the heaviest since 1972 in Missouri. The highest counts consisted of 60+ harassing a N. Saw-whet Owl at Kingsbury W.M.A., IN Nov. 7 (LHi, LC) and 51 counted if 4 hours in s.w. Missouri Nov. 15 (PMA). A Bewick's Wren seen Sept. 30 at Matanzas Prairie, IL constituted the season's only record. Sedge Wrens were more common than normal with reports from every state except Kentucky; the peak count was 11 in Greene, IL Aug. 21 (HW). A good Golden-crowned Kinglet flight was highlighted by 100+ at Urbana, IL Oct. 30 (RCh). A single Bohemian Waxwing appeared in Jackson Park, Chicago Nov. 1–3 (†PC, JLa). Northern Shrikes were not widely distributed with only six in Iowa and two in Illinois. A Bell's Vireo lingered at West Frankfort, IL until Sept. 30 (LSt). Migrant vireo numbers were generally about typical for the fall flight.

The warbler flight was unusually strong in many areas with excellent diversity and encouraging numbers in Ohio, e. Missouri, and n. Indiana. Unfortunately, warblers remained unimpressive at some locations. It was a fine season for Golden-winged Warblers with unusually good numbers across the Region; the peak count was eight at Spfld., Sept. 1 (DBo). Tennessee Warblers arrived early, Aug. 3 at Fox I. Park, IN (Haw), and staged an excellent flight with daily counts exceeding 40 individuals reported from 4 states. Cape May Warblers were also more common than normal. The generally hard-to-find Black-throated Blue Warbler appeared in good numbers in Iowa and record numbers in Indiana, where 10 were counted Sept. 21 at Fox Island P., IN (Haw), constituting the highest daily count ever for that state. One Black-throated Blue lingered at the N. & M. Hoprich feeder in Garfield Heights through Dec. 4, providing the latest Ohio record (LR). A Prairie Warbler at the Skokie Lagoons, IL Sept. 30 (†EW), and a Louisiana Waterthrush on the Chicago lakefront Sept. 10 (KR, LA), were unexpected. Fall Hooded Warblers are quite rare in Iowa, consequently, the singing male at Hickory Hill P., Sept. 5–6 (CE), was noteworthy.

TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A ♂ Summer Tanager at Indiana Dunes S.P., Oct. 8 (JLo), established a first October record for n. Indiana. Late N. Cardinal nest-

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: Ross' Gull (Adult)

LOCATION: Below the Red Rock Reservoir Dam (Marion County).

DATE: 31 October, 1993 (8:35-11:30 AM)

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

OTHER OBSERVERS: With: Pete Wickham. After: Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, Ann Johnson. Later: MOB.

BACKGROUND: Pete Wickham and I arrived at the South Tailwaters Area below the Red Rock Dam about 8:15 AM. There were several hundred gulls feeding in the tailwaters area and sitting on a small rock island several hundred yards below the dam. The sun precluded a good view of the birds on the island, so we drove around to the Howell Station Campground where the island was only 40 yards away and with the sun more at our back. Almost the first gull I looked at in my scope was unmistakably different, a Ross' Gull.

DESCRIPTION: The bird's size was about two-thirds that of the Ring-billed Gulls. It had a more sleek body than the Ring-billeds, and the standing bird had a much smaller head and bill, much shorter legs, and relatively longer wings. The underparts were white with a pink wash. The back and folded wing were a light gray, which appeared to be about the same shade as that of the Ring-billed Gulls. The head was very small and rounded, more like that of a pigeon, and the bill was extremely short and black, again more like that of a passerine. The upper mandible was curved downward to meet the straight lower mandible. The side of the head also had a pink wash. The eye was dark, and there was a dark smudge in front of it. There was also a faint gray crown which could only be seen in the right light. There was a nape and crown stripe, which was faint, but darker directly behind the eye. The stripe's extent marked what would be the most distal extent on a hood on some of the breeding plumaged small gulls, such as Bonaparte's, Franklin's, Common Black-headed. The legs were very short and a bright orange-red color. The primary extension was an estimated inch and a half beyond the tail.

In flight, the white tail was long and wedge-shaped. The upperwing was a uniform light gray, and the underwing appeared light.

BEHAVIOR: The bird was continually moving while on the island. Most of the time it waddled around like a pigeon or dove picking at the rocks. On occasion, it flew up to the

tailwaters area and flew around with the Ring-billeds and Bonaparte's Gulls directly below the dam. Even at that distance (250 yards) the bird's pink could be seen with binoculars. No vocalization was heard.

SIMILAR SPECIES: No other small gull has the combination of a pink wash on underparts and head, orange-red legs, very small black bill, nape line, and wedge-shaped tail.

VIEWING CONDITIONS & OPTICS: The bird was viewed for almost three hours looking toward the southwest, early to late morning. It was sunny with the sun low in the east early and to the south late morning. Most of the time the bird was on the island which was about 40 yards away. It was viewed flying at distances ranging from 20-250 yards. Optics used were Swift Audubon binoculars (8.5 X 44) and KOWA TSN4 telescope (20-60X) set on 20X most of time.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: Field notes were made as the bird was being viewed. Field notes by Pete Wickham and myself were made independently. National Geographic Field Guide was referred to during viewing. This document was typed on 12 November, 1993.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Unusual Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Ross' Gull -adult

Location: Red Rock Dam, Pella, Marion County, Iowa

Habitat: Gravel bar in river below dam

Date: 31 October 1993

Time: 11:00 to 15:30

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other Observers: Found by Jim Fuller and Pete Wickham; many other observers

Description of bird: This was a tiny gull moving about on the gravel bar with a number of Ring-billed Gulls. Its size and shape made it appear about half the size of the Ring-billeds and the short legs made it appear even smaller than a Bonaparte's when the two were standing side by side. The bird had a round head and long wings and it strolled around the gravel bar, apparently finding food in the rocks. Its structure and movement made it look very much like a Mourning Dove. The bird had a gray mantle, similar in color to the other gulls present. The head and underparts were white with a strong pink blush extending clear through the undertail coverts. The black bill was very tiny and shaped more like a large passerine's than a gull's. The eye was black and the legs were red. A black, narrow collar line was in evidence but was somewhat broken. It was thicker and more apparent at a position behind the eye but was pretty visible elsewhere. The area between the back of the eye and the top of the head was more broken and faded. The top of the head appeared to have a light gray wash. The long wings looked totally gray with no markings. The bird would periodically fly a short distance to other areas of the gravel bar and the tail was seen. It was all white and distinctly wedge-shaped.

Similar species and how eliminated: The size of this gull eliminates most others of its genus. With the collar line and pink blush still apparent, combined with the red legs and wedge-shaped tail, identification is straightforward and confusion with any other species is unlikely if not impossible.

Viewing conditions (light, distance, optics): Optics consisted of 7X26 binoculars and spotting scope with 15X60 zoom eyepiece. Sky was sunny to partly cloudy. The bird was observed at 50 to 100 yards.

Previous experience: I observed three Ross' Gulls this past summer in Churchill, MN.

References consulted during observation: NGS Guide, Grant's Gulls

References consulted before completing documentation: NGS Guide, Grant's Gulls

Field notes made: Dictated during observation

Documentation completed: Two days later

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Ross's Gull; Number: 1 ad.

Location: Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., IA

Date: 31 October 1993; Time: 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

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

Others before/with/after: Jim Fuller, Pete Wickham, Eugene and Eloise Armstrong before; Dick Tetrault, Ann Johnson, Beth Brown with.

Habitat and circumstances: Gravel bar below dam.

Description of bird: This tiny gull was easily picked out on the gravel bar that was covered with Ring-billed Gulls. There were also a few Bonaparte's and Herring gulls, American White Pelicans, Dunlin, and one Lesser Golden-Plover present. The bird was smaller than Bonaparte's Gulls. It looked to be about the size of a Morning Dove; it had a small head and bill and elongated body and tail like a Morning Dove; and it acted very much like a Morning Dove because it continually walked like a dove and picked at the gravel bar. It was by far the most active bird. It occasionally flew a short distance, sometimes when chased off by a Ring-billed Gull. The bird was overall light colored with mantle grayer than that of Ring-billed Gulls and underparts from breast to undertail lightly tinged with pink when seen in the right light. The legs and feet were bright red (perhaps slightly pinkish). The bill was short, thin, and black. The eye was dark and there may have been some black in the eye ring. Ann Johnson thought the top of the head was slightly gray, and I thought I could see this occasionally. There was a vertical mark behind the head that became thinner as it extended toward the top of the head. The extension of this ring was missing anteriorly and over the top of the head, but when seen at the right angle, gave the appearance of an incomplete ring. The wings were long, extending and crossing behind the tail. In flight the long, very wedged tail was easily seen. The upper wing in flight was all light gray. I did not get a direct look at the underwing; it must have been white or it would have attracted my attention.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar species: This is a very distinctive species because of its size, wedged tail, pink underparts, tiny black bill, and neck ring.

Any one have reservations?: No.

Light: Mostly sunny with sun at 90 degrees; Distance: about 30 yards; Optics: 10x binocular, 20x scope, 15x camera lens.

Previous experience: I saw one adult in breeding plumage at Churchill.

References before/after viewing: We looked at the National Geographic Guide and *Seabirds* while viewing the bird.

Time of notes: after about 1 hour of viewing; Final typing: 20 hours.

What species? Ross' Gull How many? 1Location? Red Rock Reservoir - Marien CountyType of habitat? Gravel bar below the damWhen? date(s): October 31, 1993 time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. approximatelyWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Ray Cummins, Tom Johnson, Jim Sinclair, Jim + Joyce Durbin, others
Beth Proescholdt, Russ Widner, Ann Johnson, Gladys Black, Randy Pinkstonothers before or after you: Jim Fuller, Pete Wickham, Armstrongs, Tom Kent

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Russ and I saw it briefly from the south side and saw a pinkish blush on its front as it walked along the gravel bar. It went behind the pelicans and we lost it. Went to the other side. Just as we got there, it took off flying and I saw the all white wedged tail a bit and the darkish color gray of an underwing as it flew toward the dam. Watched a bit and then lost it. Pretty soon it was back to the gravel bar 20-25 yards away and we all had good looks at it.

It was a small gull about $\frac{1}{2}$ the size of nearby Ring-Billed Gulls. It had a short, small black bill and a whitish head with a darkish-looking eye. It had long light gray wings that really extended beyond its tail. It had short legs and bright red legs and feet. It walked quite a bit on the gravel bar and looked like a mourning dove walking about. Its wedge-shaped tail was all white. It flew short distances a few times. It had a definite pinkish blush on its chest, belly, and maybe undertail. It had some black on its head that at times looked like part of its black collar under its neck and at times looked like a black smudge behind the eye. It really stood out in all the Ring-Billed Gulls on gravel bar when spotted and at other times it blended in with them real well. It was lovely!

Similar species and how eliminated:

No other gull quite like this with wedge-shaped tail, pinkish blush, and small size.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: :

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

on south side - Sun behind us and bird 80-100 yards away.

At Campground area - Sun at side somewhat and looking into the sun. 20-25 yards away on gravel bar and up to 120 yards away flying to dam. 8X30 Binocs. 22X Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

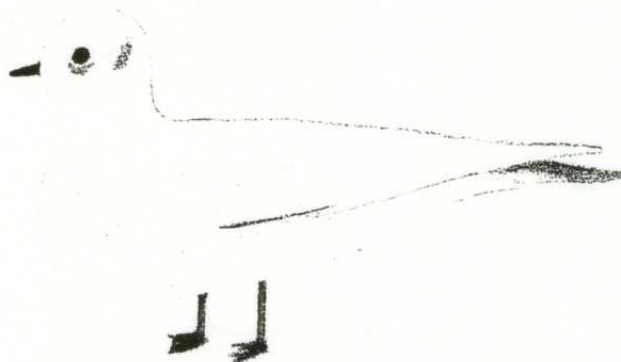
Have seen a couple in Churchill.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic guide - Birds of N. America

How long before field notes made? 9:00 p.m. on this form completed? NOV. 7, 1993
OCT. 31, 1993

DOCUMENTATION FOR FIRST STATE RECORD



Species: Ross' Gull, Rhodostethia rosea, adult in basic plumage

Date: October 31, 1993

Time: 13:40-14:40 CST (This bird was initially found the same morning by Jim Fuller and Pete Wickham)

Location: below Red Rock Reservoir dam, Marion County, Iowa

Other Observers: Jim and Joyce Durbin, Ken Lowder, Beth and Mark Proescholdt, others

Description (see drawings and attached notes made immediately after observation): Resting on an exposed stone bar in the Des Moines River $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below the dam, among several hundred Ring-billed Gulls, numerous American White Pelicans and Herring Gulls, and scattered Bonaparte's Gulls. On one occasion, it flew to the tailwaters area to feed.

Size of Bonaparte's Gull. Small white gull with relatively large, round head, tiny bill, and short legs. Somewhat heavy-chested. Long, pointed wingtips at rest projected well beyond tail tip. Gait conspicuously dove-like, with short strides and jerky head movements. Faint rosy hue to white of underparts, nape, and face.

Head: large and rounded; white except for small dark smudge below eye, and larger dark spot behind eye which was continuous with a faint gray cap (the latter spot suggested a remnant of the alternate-plumage collar); eye large and black; tiny black bill quite a bit shorter than that of nearby Bonaparte's Gulls. Underparts: Entirely white with rose suffusion. Upperparts: Back, scapulars, and wing coverts very pale gray; rump and uppertail coverts white. Remiges: white except for dark gray or black outer web of outermost primary; undersurface of primaries gray, slightly darker than mantle. Tail: entirely white; distinctive wedge shape observed in flight. Legs: deep orange-red.

(over)

Ross' Gull, page 2

Conditions: clear to partly cloudy, north wind, cold (bird's appearance preceeded by an "Alberta Clipper"); observed from 20-30 meters under excellent sunlight (sun from our left) with Zeiss 10x40 binocular and Kowa telescope.

Similar Species: Bonaparte's is the only regularly-occurring small white gull in Iowa. Adult has longer bill, less rounded head, black primary tips, and lacks rose suffusion on underparts. Distribution of white and gray on upper wing is also different on the two species. Ross' upper wing appeared to be uniformly white or very pale gray, whereas that of Bonaparte's was gray contrasting with white outermost primaries. Interestingly, I thought one of the Bonaparte's there had a wedge-shaped tail.

Little Gull smaller, proportionately longer-billed, has darker undersurface of primaries.

Common Black-headed Gull larger, has proportionately longer, paler bill, and dark underwing.

Ivory Gull all-white, larger, has heavier bill and black legs.

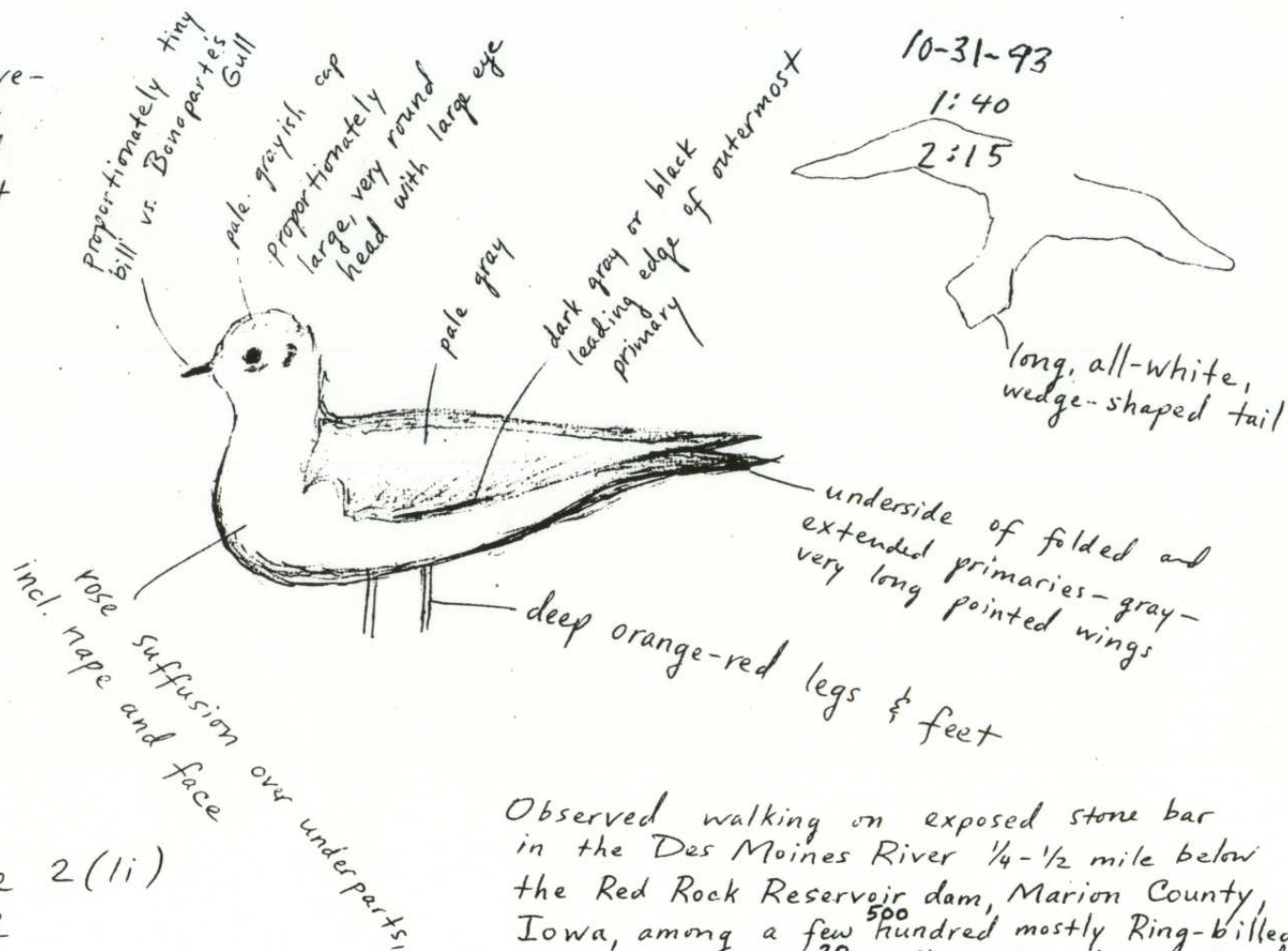
Previous Experience: None with Ross' Gull. I have observed each of the other potentially confusing species at least once before.

--Randy Pinkston
526 Reno Street
Iowa City, IA
52245-3039
Ph. (319) 351-0592

Original notes made immediately following observation on the 31st

93-26

Walked very dove-like, with short jerky stride, and quick fore-and-aft and side-to-side head movements.



Bald Eagle 2 (11)
Dunlin 2

Observed walking on exposed stone bar in the Des Moines River $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below the Red Rock Reservoir dam, Marion County, Iowa, among a few ⁵⁰⁰ hundred mostly Ring-billed Gulls, also ²⁰ Herring Gulls, and a few scattered ¹⁰ Bonaparte's Gulls.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

93-26

What species? Ross Gull How many? 1

Location? spillway, Red Rock Dam, Marion Co.

Type of Habitat? gravel bar + spillway

When? date(s): Nov. 1, 1993 time: 7:25 to 8:05 AM CST

Who? your name and address: Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd, Davenport IA 52801

Others with you: Brian Blewus, Kelly McKay

Others before or after you: no

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Small, primarily white gull with short, black bill. Beginning of a neck collar present at sides of head, black ^{feather} breast & belly with noticeable bleary cast. Wings with bluish grey mantle ~~and~~ bluish grey below also. Tail white, wedge shaped. Legs pale pink. Size of Bonaparte's Gull generally, perhaps a bit smaller. Flight very tern-like. Birds in adult winter plumage

Similar species; how eliminated: Bonaparte's Gull - (two were present) - black spot behind eye, tail rounded, black edge to wing tips, larger bill.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. Sun at 90° angle to bird, in flight within 25m, perched about 150m.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen this species in breeding plumage in Canada

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? 2 1/2 hrs this form completed? 3 hrs

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

DOCUMENTATION

SPECIES: Ross' Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*)

HOW MANY: One (1)

LOCATION: Red Rock Reservoir (below Dam)

HABITAT: Swiftly flowing main channel of water; side channels had visible sandbars and slowly moving water. Spillway below dam. Very large lake on opposite side of dam.

DATE: November 1, 1993

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 7:41 to 9:15 a.m. Bird observed flying and sitting.

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Jim Fuller, October 31, 1993

DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street, West Des Moines, IA 50265

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Reid Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street, West Des Moines, IA 50265

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: This very small, pigeon/dove-like gull was just waiting for us to locate him this morning, thankfully. It appeared to be an adult which was molting into winter plumage. It had gray, long thin wings with white trailing edge from the secondaries back to the body. The primaries were darker grey than the secondaries. The bird was gray over the back and mantle. The tail was white and wedge-shaped. The bird had bright, reddish-orange, short legs. The eye was dark. The gull had pale rosy-pink coloring on its breast and belly. The head and throat was a paler rosy-pink than the body. The gape was red. Behind the eye was a dark smudgy streak. There was a thin line of blackish grey that extended brokenly up over the top of the head. The gull was a little bit smaller than the Bonaparte's which was sitting near it and the Ross' Gull was much smaller than the Ring-Billed and Herring Gulls also present.

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: The rosy-pink coloring, wedge-shaped tail and size eliminated every other bird which could be considered.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Partly cloudy sky, with periods of bright sun. Viewed from a distance of approximately 70 to 150+ yards.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: This was my first experience viewing this bird.

EQUIPMENT: Bushnell 8 x 36 Custom Binoculars

Ross' Gull Documentation continued
Pam Allen

REFERENCES CONSULTED: After Field Notes made:
National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds
of North America, Second Edition, c. 1983, 1987.
Edition, c. 1982, 1986. P. J. Grant, Gulls: A Guide to Identification, Second
Edition, c. 1982, 1986. The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, Vol.
2, c. 1983.

HOW LONG BEFORE
FIELD NOTES MADE: As bird was being observed.

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS
FORM COMPLETED: December 3, 1993.

PHOTOGRAPHIC
INFORMATION: Photographic slides (4) enclosed. Photographs
taken by Reid I. Allen with a Minolta X700 camera with Vivitar2x converter and Kowa
TSN-4 spotting scope with 800 mm photographic adaptor.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Sightings in Iowa

What Species? Ross' Gull

How Many? 1

Location? Redrock spillway Marion Co.

Type of Habitant? Gravel bar in th Des Moines River

When? date(s): 10-31 1993

Time: 9:00am to 10:00am

Others with you: Tom Johnson & Many others

Circumstance?

Description: The Ross' Gull looked just like a Mourning Dove as it walked among the many Ring-billed Gulls. It was all white with a slight pinkish cast to the breast. Very small short black bill for a gull. The narrow faint black incomplete hood stripe and necklace was interrupted around the face. Red feet. In flight, the white wedge shaped tail was distinctive.

Similar species:

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? No

Viewing conditions: Good light at 50 with a Kowa spotting scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None

References: National Geographic during sighting.

How long before field notes made? 5 wks

This form completed? 5 wks

*This documentation was sent
by Ray Curran/TJK*