

Great Black-backed Gull  
23 Oct 1994  
Black Hawk L., Sac Co., IA  
\*Pete Ernzen  
IBL 65:15, 82

Record Number: 94-43  
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Pete Ernzen, 401 Taylor, Ida Grove [2/23/95]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:15

Records Committee: IBL 65:82

VOTE: 7 NA

NA, Most likely identification is correct but documentation lacks head shape, bill color and shape, and mantle color. No other birds mentioned for size comparison.

NA, The fact that the bird was initially thought to be a Bald Eagle suggests that the bird had a dark mantle, but that point was never specifically made. Assuming it was a dark mantled gull, and I assume it was, Lesser Black-backed gull was not eliminated. The observer is to be commended for submitting a documentation even though the view was brief, and the bird was not well seen.

NA, a large gull with white trailing edge is not enough detail to evaluate this sighting. The heavy overcast also would have made size more difficult to determine.

NA, Possibly correct but should have more details for acceptance of an extra-limital record.

NA, Not seen well enough to be sure. Ken Brock, regional editor of Field Notes, wrote as follows, "Great Black-backed Gull: Documentation inadequate. Bird poorly seen and poorly described."

NA, No description of "black back." I guess this can be construed from him thinking it was a Bald Eagle (but this would make it a large brown backed bird). Was this because of size and color or just size? Cannot be much else but I think we need mantle and upper wing color on this one to be sure.

NA, While I think that the observer's conclusion is probably correct, the description is inadequate to justify same. Size is an important factor, but this ID is probably left unmade.

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

1994

94-43

What species? *Great Black Backed Gull*

How many? *1*

Location? *Blackhawk Lake*

Type of Habitat? *Lake*

When? date(s) *Oct. 23*

time: *10<sup>34</sup>* *about 30 sec.* to

Who? your name and address: *PETE ERNZEN 401 TAYLOR IAA GROVE IA.*

Others with you: *None*

Others before or after you: *Bob Livermore Sioux City did not see bird*

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.

*Large Gull - initially thought bald eagle due to size. Never saw bird from front. Once I put my binoculars to bird I noticed Gull shaped wings, white trailing edge to the wings, grayish white on underside of wings. white tail extended up the rump to the back.*

Similar species; how eliminated: *Because I did not see the bird from front I could not eliminate other species - However due to its extreme size I eliminated all other species.*

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?  
If yes, explain: *No*

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. *Cloudy - late morning - no rain or fog middle of lake 300-400 yds - est. Bushnell Falcon 7x35 357 at 1000 Coated lens*

Previous experience with species and similar ones: *none*

References and persons consulted before writing description:

*National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America - Audubon Society  
How long before notes completed? *Field Guide to Birds of Eastern NA.**

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Bird flew to other side of lake - then west  
out of sight.