

California Gull 1
8 Sep 1990
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA
S. Dinsmore, et al.
IBL 61:20, 62:22, Dinsmore 1992

Record Number: 90-33
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Stephen J. Dinsmore, 8, 14-23 Sep, 11-14 Oct
Pam Allen, 19 Sep
Jim Fuller, 20 Sep
Ann Johnson, 22 Sep
Tim Schantz, 23 Sep
Mark Proescholdt, 14 Oct

REFERENCES

Field Reports: 61:20
Records Committee: IBL 62:22
Dinsmore, S. D. 1992. California Gull at Saylorville
Reservoir. IBL 62:24-25.

VOTE: 1 A-P, 6 A-D

A-D: Too many birders for me to disagree.

A-D: Well described. Photo by R. Allen supports size and mantle color and doesn't contradict bill pattern. However, photo by itself would not be diagnostic so can't accept as A-P.

A-P: Good written descriptions by all observers. I believe the photograph is adequate to support an A-P designation. The mantle color can clearly be seen in comparison to Ring-billed Gulls both in front and back of this bird so that the color cannot be affected by light. Under magnification, it can also be seen that the eye is dark and the dark spot on the bill does not extend over the upper mandible. I could not see any red on the bill but that is not surprising given the size of the bird in this photograph.

A-D: Convincing details of this adult bird.

A-D: Excellent set of supporting documentations.

A-D: Preponderance of written evidence is in agreement for this species. There was some difference of opinion among the documentations as to leg color but for the most part there is agreement on the most important field marks seen and described. I believe this record to be beyond reasonable doubt. The photo does not help to substantiate this record.

A-D: Good details, descriptions, and documentations along with comparisons of other gull possibilities.

spotting of variable density; may be lighter or darker than illustrated." The underwing coverts and body appeared about the same shade to me, and the lighting and distance may have precluded my seeing any streaking. This bird appeared lighter than the two immatures I saw at Dudgeon Lake in 1989 (Conrads et al. 1989).

LITERATURE CITED

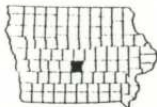
- Clark, W. S., and B. K. Wheeler. 1987. A Field Guide to Hawks of North America. Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 198 pp.
- Conrads, D. J., M. Phelps, and T. H. Kent. 1989. Mississippi Kite at Dudgeon Lake. *Iowa Bird Life* 59:118-120.
- Dunne, P., D. Sibley, and C. Sutton. 1988. Hawks in Flight. Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 254 pp.

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CALIFORNIA GULL AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

At 7:45 a.m. on 8 September 1990, I arrived at Oak Grove Beach Recreation Area at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County. About 60 Ring-billed Gulls were resting on the beach, and among them was a larger, darker-mantled gull. The bird was similar in size to the largest Ring-billed Gulls, but slightly larger than others. I approached closer and noted that, when compared to a Ring-billed Gull, the bird had duller yellow legs, a stouter bill with black and red spots near the tip of the lower mandible, and a darker gray mantle.



From 8:14-9:27 a.m. I was able to study the bird at close range as it fed and rested with the flock of Ring-billed Gulls at nearby Cherry Glen Recreation Area. The bird was slightly larger than most of the Ring-billed Gulls, although one or two of the biggest Ring-billed Gulls were as large as the bird I was studying. Proportionately, the bird was heavier and larger-headed than a Ring-billed Gull. The mantle was dark gray. I estimated the mantle color to be about midway between those of a Ring-billed Gull and a Lesser Black-backed Gull. The wingtips were mostly black with large, white mirrors near the tips of the outer primaries. There was a noticeable white trailing edge to the wing. The head was mostly white with some obvious dark brown streaks on the crown and nape, and a few on the side of the head. Eye color was not seen well, though it appeared dark every time I examined it. The bill was yellow with single red and black spots, somewhat blended together, near the distal end of the lower mandible. The red spot was immediately above and slightly posterior to the black spot. The bill was heavier than the bill of a Ring-billed Gull and had a distinct gonys. The legs were pale gray-green, unlike the bright yellow legs of a Ring-billed Gull. Leg length appeared similar to a Ring-billed Gull. The underparts and tail were white. Based on the plumage, I concluded that the bird was an adult California Gull in basic plumage.

After studying the bird in detail, I contacted other birders. The bird was not relocated until 14 September, despite searching on previous days. I observed the bird several times between 14-23 September and noted the following. The bird was clearly an adult in basic plumage. The dark brown streaks on the crown and nape were

separated from the dark gray mantle by a white collar across the back of the neck. I again studied the size of the bird and the bill structure as compared to nearby Ring-billed Gulls, and confirmed what I had noted earlier.

On 11 October 1990, I located an adult California Gull in basic plumage feeding with Ring-billed Gulls at the north end of Saylorville Reservoir near Jester County Park. This bird had light-brown streaking on the head and nape and appeared noticeably larger and heavier-bodied than the Ring-billed Gulls it associated with. I believe that this may have been a different bird than the individual noted earlier in September.

California Gulls are rare but regular vagrants to the Midwest, with smaller numbers occurring east to the East Coast. *American Birds* lists records for 13 states east of the Mississippi River since 1980. Most records occurred from July to December, with a few of the birds overwintering. Adults were reported most often, though young California Gulls may be missed because of their similarity to other gulls.

This is the second record of a California Gull in Iowa. The first record occurred on 24 November 1989 at Credit Island, Scott County (Petersen, P. C. 1991. California Gull at Davenport, first accepted Iowa record. *Iowa Bird Life* 61:121-122). It is interesting that a second California Gull appeared in Iowa in fall 1990, a first-winter bird at Coralville Reservoir, Johnson County (Kent, T. H. 1991. First-winter California Gull at Coralville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 61:123-124). This species is probably more regular in Iowa than these records indicate. California Gulls breed as closed as Waubay and Bitter Lakes in northeastern South Dakota, about 150 miles from northwestern Iowa. In Iowa, this species should be looked for in fall, especially August to November. Based on records from surrounding states, spring records are less likely, but could occur during March to May.

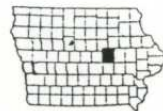
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IOWA'S FIRST BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

PETER C. PETERSEN

At mid-morning of 18 September 1989, Brian Blevins and I were birding Otter Creek Marsh from the southeastern corner of the pond areas. We noticed a medium-sized raptor flying from south to north about 300 meters west of us. We could see it was long tailed and had pointed wings, but the predominant pale plumage, very light-gray body, and light-gray primaries made it clear it was not a falcon. We both noted the black area on the leading edge of the inner wing from the bend to the body. As we had both seen this bird previously, we said "Black-shouldered Kite" almost simultaneously. The kite was chased by a Red-winged Blackbird which the kite dove at. The blackbird provided a good size comparison. I was using 10 x 40 Zeiss binoculars and Brian had 7 x 35 binoculars. The sky was clear and the sun was to the side and somewhat behind us making for excellent viewing conditions. After the bird flew out of sight, we drove to the north border of the area but we did not encounter it again. Since the species is expanding its range northward, it should be looked for, especially during the migration seasons.

This is the first accepted record of this species for Iowa but there are several records from nearby states. These include a 9-10 May 1987 record from near Galesburg, Knox Co., Illinois, (Bohlen, 1989, *The Birds of Illinois*, Indiana Univ. Press, p. 45)



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