

Lesser Black-backed Gull

3 Dec 1984

Red Rock Res., Marion Co., IA

*Kent + *****

IBL 55:27, 57; Kent and Bowles 1955

Record Number: 84-36
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Thomas H. Kent (3 December)
Francis L. Moore (3 December)
Robert K. Myers (3 December)
Beth Proescholdt (3 December)
Thomas J. Staudt (3 December)
Peter C. Petersen (3 December)
Dennis Thompson (3 December)
Carl J. Bendorf (4 December)
Mark Proescholdt (5 December)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Thomas H. Kent, 3 Dec, P-0155 (IBL 55:22)
Francis L. Moore, 3 Dec, P-0152
Peter C, Petersen, 3 Dec, P-0147

REFERENCES

Kent, T. H., and J. Bowles. 1985. Lesser Black-backed Gull at Red Rock Reservoir. IBL 55:21-22.
Photograph: IBL 55:22 (P-0155)
Field Reports: IBL 55:27
Records Committee: IBL 55:57

VOTE: 6-I-P, 1-II

II, legs not visible in photo.

I-P, saw bird.

I-P, no problems.

I-P, Only problem might be elimination of Yellow-footed Gull, but as stated by Myers, bird size (also range considerations) probably rule out livens. Probably will become at least casual in Iowa.

I-P, If no one ever saw a rare gull in Iowa again I'd be happy, but if one must then this is the way to do it--adult bird, compared directly with Ring-bills and Herrings, seen very well, photographed. Assuming we can eliminate Yellow-footed Gull by range, this must be a Lesser Black-backed. Assuming we can eliminate any gull by range is perhaps unwise.

Kent, T. H., and J. Bowles. 1985. Lesser Black-backed Gull at Red Rock Reservoir. Iowa Bird Life 55:21-22.

Lesser Black-backed Gull at Red Rock Reservoir

21

Thomas H. Kent
211 Richards Street
Iowa City, IA 52240

John Bowles
Central College
Pella, IA 50219

At 8:15 a.m. on 1 December 1984 the junior author and David R. White were viewing an estimated 1,000 gulls in the north tailwater area at Red Rock Dam, Marion County, when a black-backed gull was discovered. Most of the gulls (90% Ring-bills, 10% Herring, 1 Bonaparte's) were circling below the dam or roosting on sand bars created by low water. The black-backed gull was seen on a small bar opposite the inlet and stood apart from the other gulls. Initially the bird appeared to be the size of a Herring Gull but later comparisons and photographs indicated that it was definitely smaller than Herring Gulls but larger than Ring-bills.

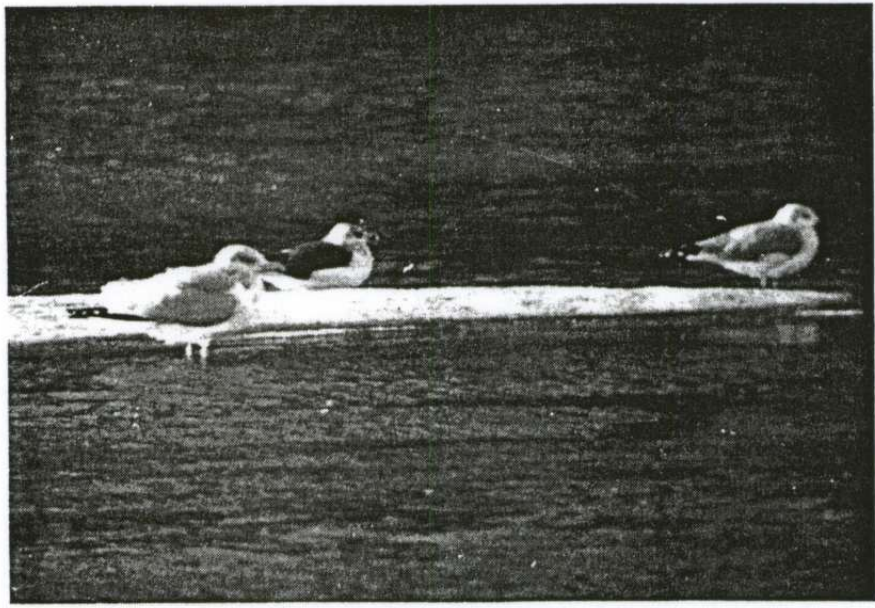
Bowles returned the next afternoon with Darwin Koenig and found the bird in the same spot. A positive identification of Lesser Black-backed Gull was made based on yellow leg color. Many observers saw the bird over the next three days on the same bar or further down river. The last sighting was on 5 December.

The following description, which is characteristic of an adult winter or fourth winter Lesser Black-backed Gull, is a composite of several documentations and photographs. The bird was easily spotted because of its very dark mantle. It was larger than all Ring-bills and smaller than all Herring Gulls that ventured near it, although it was closer to the size of a Herring Gull. The feathering was all white except for the dark back and upper wing surface, black primaries, and light gray streaking on the neck. The bill was as long or longer than that of a Herring Gull but narrower; it was light yellow with a subterminal red mark on the lower mandible. The eye and legs were yellow. The upper surface of the primaries was black with a single white mirror on the first primary. The back and inner portion of the upper wing were a dark charcoal gray. There was a prominent white trailing edge to the flight feathers that became narrower and scalloped along the outer primaries. When the bird was standing, the wings projected beyond the tail.

The size and/or leg color distinguish the Lesser Black-backed Gull from all other dark mantled gulls that have been reported from North America. The Great Black-backed Gull, an East Coast species that has been seen in Iowa, is distinctly larger than a Herring Gull with a massive bill, pink legs, and a mantle that is as dark as the wing tips. The Slaty-backed Gull, a Siberian species seen near St. Louis in January 1983 for the first record in the lower 48 states, is also larger than a Herring Gull and has pink legs and more white in the wing tip than a Lesser Black-backed Gull. The Western Gull, an inhabitant of the Pacific Coast, is the size of a Herring Gull with pink legs and a massive bill. The Yellow-footed Gull, a bird of the Gulf of California recently separated from the Western Gull, is slightly larger than a Herring Gull with larger bill, but otherwise has plumage quite similar to the Lesser Black-backed Gull. The Yellow-footed Gull is not a known vagrant to the east. The California Gull, which could occur in Iowa, is the size of a Lesser Black-backed Gull and has a mantle darker than that of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. However, the mantle is obviously lighter than any of the dark-mantled gulls and the legs are greenish.

The Lesser Black-backed Gull is a European gull that winters in Africa but strays regularly in small numbers to the East Coast of North America and has extended its range in recent years to the Great Lakes and Gulf Coast. It was first found at Cleveland in 1977 and has been observed yearly since then on Lake Erie. There also are records from Michigan (4), Indiana (4), and Illinois (7), including two on the Mississippi River north of St. Louis (also in Missouri). There is a

Kent, T. H., and J. Bowles. 1985. Lesser Black-backed Gull at Red Rock Reservoir. Iowa Bird Life 55:21-22. (cont)



Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Ring-billed Gulls, Red Rock Reservoir, 3 December 1984. T.H. Kent photo

Wisconsin record from Milwaukee in 1980. A Minnesota/Wisconsin bird at Duluth/Superior from 19 October to 4 November 1984 arrived with a storm from the east (Eckert 1984). It is possible that this same individual migrated south with Herring and Ring-billed Gulls to Iowa. To the south, there is an early Texas record from 1952 and several along the Gulf Coast since 1969. One individual returned to the Texas coast for several years and a one-footed bird was seen on the Florida/Alabama coast over a seven year period. Other unusual locations include Denver in December 1976 (Webb and Conry 1978), Monterey County, California in January 1978 (Binford 1978), and Oklahoma City in February 1984.

Lesser Black-backed Gulls appear in winter or as migrants, usually at the time of freeze up. Most records have been from October through March with the earliest in Alabama on 17 September and the latest at Chicago on 27 April. There are, however, three summer records from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territories.

REFERENCES:

Binford, L.C., 1978, Lesser Black-backed Gull in California, with notes of field identification. *Western Birds* 9:141-150.

Eckert, K. R., 1984, Minnesota's first Lesser Black-backed Gull: October birding part II. *The Loon* 56:240-243.

Webb, B. E., and J. A. Conry, 1978, First record of a Lesser Black-backed Gull in Colorado. *Western Birds* 9:171-173.

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1 adult, 3 Dec 1984, Red Rock Res.,
Marion Co. Iowa.

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240

Reported to me by Darwin Koenig who saw it on the afternoon of 2
Dec after it had been found by John Bowles of Pella on 1 Dec. With
me were Jim Fuller, Tom Staudt, Francis Moore, Bob Myers, Beth
Proescholdt, Phyllis Harris, Carol McMillan, Pete Petersen, and
Dennis Thompson.

Time: 8:30-9:45 AM. Habitat: Des Moines River below Red Rock
Reservoir dam.

"A dark mantled gull next to a Ring-billed Gull--bigger than a
Ring-bill. Yellow legs, yellow eye. Bill light, probably yellow
with a prominent subterminal red mark on lower mandible. The
primaries are dark, much darker than the mantle. There it flies."

"The mantle and inner wing is slightly lighter than the tip, which
is black. There is white along the trailing edge of the wing with a
scalloped effect at the border of the distal primaries and probably
one small mirror anteriorly near the tip. The tail is all white.
The neck is streaked with brown and the underparts are all white.
The wings appear to be long and narrow, perhaps longer and narrower
than a Herring Gull, but there is no Herring Gull nearby for
comparison. The bird caught a fish and was chased by Ring-billed
Gulls."

"The bird sat on a small sandbar in the river and exposed its
yellow legs only when in moved around. Both adult and first year
Herring Gulls landed near the Lesser Blacked-backed Gull, providing
a good size comparison. The bird was intermediate in size between
the Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. The bill appeared long and
narrow compared to the Herring Gulls."

Song: not heard. Behavior: as above

Conditions: The bird was about 75 yards away, 3/4ths of the way
across the river. Sunlight was at a 90 degree angle. 10x
binoculars, 20x scope and 15x camera lens were used.

Similar species: Size and yellow legs exclude Great Black-backed,
Western, and Slaty-backed Gulls. Size excludes Yellow-footed Gull.
Mantle to dark for California Gull and leg color too yellow.

Agreement: No one disagreed.

Previous experience: none with this species. Have seen others
except for Yellow-footed.

References/time used: Looked at National Geographic Guide the day
before and after watching bird for a while.

Time of notes/typed: dictated while watching, typed 8 hours later

What species? Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) How many? 1 adult

Location? Below dam at Red Rock Reservoir, Marion Co., Iowa

Type of habitat? Sitting on sandbar in Des Moines River below Red Rock dam.

When? date(s): December 3, 1984 time: 8:34 am. to 9:15 a.m.

Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

others with you: Bob Myers, Tom Kent, Pete Petersen, Tom Staudt, Beth Proescholdt, Jim Fuller.

others before or after you: m. ob.

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.

The bird was found below the dam at Red Rock Reservoir sitting on a small sandbar over half-way across the Des Moines River. The bird walked around the sandbar as it was being viewed. The bird had a very dark gray to blackish wings and mantle. The bird was larger than Ring-billed Gulls that were standing and flying close to this bird. It was also smaller than the Herring Gulls that were nearby. The bird's bill was yellow. The gonyx spot was bright blood red color. The bird had a grayish-brown wash on the head around and behind its eye. The head, neck, throat, breast, belly, upper tail coverts, ~~lower~~ under tail coverts and tail was white. The eye appeared dark. The back (saddle), upper wing coverts, tertials, secondaries and primaries were a very dark slate-gray color. There was a thin leading edge on its wings and a little wider trailing edge to the wings. There appeared to be either one large or two smaller mirrors in the primaries. The legs were yellow, about the same color as the bill. The mantle (saddle) was very dark which would suggest that this bird was of the *Larus fuscus fuscus* subspecies. There was little contrast between the primaries and the rest of the upper surface of the wing and back. In flight the underwing surface mostly white in the underwing coverts; the primaries (underwing) were dark gray with the dark gray color trailing out into the under surface of the secondaries.

Similar species and how eliminated: Not as large as Great Black-backed Gull, darker on back and wings than Ring-billed and Herring Gull. None of these other gulls have yellow feet and legs like this bird did.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Excellent viewing conditions, sunny, cold. Seen from approx. 100 yards using 10x40 Leitz binoculars, Celestron C90 at 33X and at 20X through Nikonmat FTN Camera, Bushnell Spacemaster 20x60 telescope on hand held stock mount.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Saw one other Lesser Black-backed Gull at Cape Henry, Virginia Beach, VA on 12/15/76. Familiar with Great Black-backed, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 1/2 Hr. this form completed? 12 Hrs.

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

What species? Lesser Black-backed Gull - ^{Larus} fuscus How many? 1 adult

Location? Red Rock Reservoir - North-tail water

Type of habitat? Shallow river with sandbars + rocky points below main dam

When? date(s): Dec. 3, 1984 time: 8:34 A.M. to 9:15 A.M. (we left - bird stayed)

Who? your name and address: Robert K. Myers 1236 Sylvia Ave., Waterloo, Iowa 50701

others with you: Francis Moore, Tom Kent, Tom Staudt, Jim Fuller, Beth Proescholdt, ^{Pete} _{Peterson}

others before or after you: Darwin Koenig

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.

The gull was resting on a sandbar and would occasionally fly about and return. Once it had a fish.

Head, neck, breast and belly were white. Head + neck had some dark streaking (brownish) down to back. Head was rounded-pigeon like.

Bill was yellow and had a very obvious bright red spot on the front end of the lower mandible. Bill was not as massive as in herring gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Could not tell eye color.

Back and wings were very dark (slate) gray - almost blackish - The primaries were black being a shade darker than rest of wing or back. In flight the gull showed very little white in ^{outer} primaries but did have a white trailing edge on dorsal side of wing. _(spots)

Tail + rump were white.

Legs and feet were yellow. (obvious)

The gull was a little larger than the ring-billed gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) it was with and some smaller than a herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) that landed by it for a time.

Similar species and how eliminated: The yellow legs + feet rule out *Larus argentatus* and *Larus marinus* and *Larus occidentalis*. *Larus livens* can be ruled out because of its limited range and more massive bill.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Excellent conditions - except for the cold - at times in bright sunlight. Distance was approx. 80 yd. I used 7x35 B&L binocs. + 25X Bushnell scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: This is my first for this sp.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Guide, Gulls by Grant, Seabirds by Harrison

How long before field notes made? on the spot this form completed? same day

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240
(over)

Larus fuscus fuscus shows a very black back, wings + primaries. There is not much ^{or any} contrast between primaries and rest of wing or back. In winter the heads usually remains more white (showing less streaks) than following sub-species. I do not think this bird was L. f. fuscus.

Larus fuscus intermedius has a blackish back + wings but the contrast between wing and primaries is still ^{very} evident. I think our bird was this sub-species.

Larus fuscus graellsii has ash-grey wings and back (darker than herring) and shows contrast between ~~back~~ the primaries and the rest of wing ~~is~~ and back. This could be our bird but I think our bird had a darker back than L. f. graellsii would show. I am not, however, at all familiar with the actual color tones and some intergradation does occur.

What species? Lesser Black-backed Gull How many? 1Location? Red Rock ReservoirType of habitat? spillway + river below damWhen? date(s): Dec 3, 1984 time: 8:35 to 9:10 AMWho? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscombothers with you: Carol McMillen, Pauline Mairs, Tom Kent, Tom Staudt,others before or after you: Francis Moore, Bob Myers, Jim Fuller, Pete Peterson, Gil Mark Proescholdt, Hank Zalatel, Carl Bender, Sanduck, Gene + Eloise Armstrong, Gladys Black

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.

This gull was first seen on a sandbar on the far side of the river - a large gull, larger than the Ring-billed Gulls, and smaller than the Herring Gulls - about 1/2 way between in size. It was darker than the others, noticeably so - a charcoal-colored back and wings, with black wing-tips, a white head with faint brownish streaks, a white tail, yellow legs, and yellow bill with red spot - a winter adult Lesser Black-backed.

I also saw it on Dec 4 + 5 when it flew and the charcoal back + black wing-tips were very noticeable with white trailing edge on wings.

Similar species and how eliminated: Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull; Herring Gull sized (almost) but much darker charcoal-colored mantle, larger than Ring-billed, much smaller than Great Black-backed and charcoal-gray mantle - not black - also yellow legs.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Sun shining from side, 100 yards (approx), binoculars + scopePrevious experience with species and similar ones: never a Lesser but one sighting of Great Black-backed in Maine, many Herring + Ring-billed.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Guides - Nat'l. Geog, Peterson, RobbinsHow long before field notes made? Made at once this form completed? Jan 1, 1985

What species? Lesser Black-backed Gull How many? 1Location? Red Rock Dam Marion Co. IowaType of habitat? Reservoir outflowWhen? date(s): December 3 1984 time: _____ to _____Who? your name and address: THOMAS J. STAUDT 517 DEARBORN IOWA CITY,

52240

others with you: Tom Kent, Francis Moore, Bob Myer, Pete Petersonothers before or after you: many others

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.

The bird was a winter adult. Bill color was yellow with a red spot on the lower mandible. The head was white with light brown streaks that continued on to the hindneck. Eye color was light, there was a dark smudge behind the eye. Breast and underparts were white.

The mantle was a dark gray almost black. This color extended out evenly across the upperwing surface to the noticeably darker wing tips. There was a white trailing edge to the secondaries and inner primaries. The leg color was yellow.

The bird was slightly larger than the Ring-billed gulls but smaller than the Herring gulls that were standing near it. Standing, the bird's wings extended beyond the tail. The tail was white.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Ring-billed, Herring, and California adults have paler gray mantles. Western Gull has pink legs. Size comparison indicated above.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Full sun, behind and to our left. 40 yds est 7X binoculars 20X scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

None with this species

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? during observation this form completed? same day

1. Species Lesser Black-backed Gull 2. Number of birds: 1
 3. Location below Red Rock Dam County: Marton
 4. Date: Dec 3, 1984 5. Time bird seen: 8:45 AM to 9:45 PM ^{off}_{on}

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Gull larger than Ring-bills, smaller than Herring, both nearby,
 mantle slate grey, black wingtips, white below, head white
 with brownish streaks. Eye light, bill yellow, some red toward tip.
 Legs yellow. Tail white. Not observed in flight, see photo

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard

8. Description of behavior: in water + on sandbar, standing + resting

9. Habitat - general: Des Moines R. below Red Rock Dam
 specific: sandbar in river

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

Too small for Great Black-backed.
Leg color eliminates Slaty-backed Gull

11. Distance (how measured)? 100 yards, est.

12. Optical equipment: 10x binocular
40x scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
clear sky, sun from left, 90° angle to bird + observers.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: Had seen in
Europe + Indiana, about 20 observations

15. Other observers: Gil Sandvick, Tom Hunt, Tom Staudt, Bob Myers, Francis Moore,
Both Proescholdt.

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Darwin Koenig + John Boules

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
checked all field guides + Harrison-seabirds prior to observation to
determine field marks to look for. Don't feel I was influenced.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 15 min.

Peter C. Peterson
 Signature

Address: 235 McClellan Blvd

Date: Dec 3, 1984

City, State: Davenport, Iowa

(over)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

84-36

1. Species Lesser Black-backed Gull 2. Number: 1

3. Location Below dam at Red Rock Res Marion Co. Ia.

4. Date: 12/3/84 5. Time Bird seen: 10:00 to 10:30

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Gull - mantle was dark gray. At rest wing tips extended beyond tail and were black with some white spots visible. White area separated the gray back and black wing tips. The tail (seen when preening) was all white. The head and neck were white, but heavily streaked with gray. There was a small dark patch around the eye. Couldn't tell eye color. The bill was yellow, with a red spot on the lower mandible. The bill didn't have a "massive" look, it seemed to be straight instead of thicker at the end. The legs were yellow.

7. Description of voice, if heard: The rest of the body was white. When raising its wings, a white trailing edge was visible.

8. Description of behavior:

Resting, with its head tucked a lot. Seemed skittish when another gull would land next to it. Would move a few feet to another part of the sand bar. Was standing in shallow water.

9. Habitat - general: near a sand/gravel bar below in the east margin tailwaters of R.R. Dam.
specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

Was standing next to both Ring-billed & Herring gulls. Was intermediate in size between the two. The mantle was distinctly darker than either of above. Back darker than California gull, no black on bill. Yellow legs and smaller bill than Western gull.

11. Distance (how measured)? 50 yds (?) 12. Optical equipment: 10x20 scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Good light. Sun almost directly overhead.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
None. First dark-backed gull I've ever seen.

15. Other observers:
T. Staudt, T. Kent

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
A. Koenig.

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Had Nat. Geo. bird guide with me. Used it and Audubon Master Guide for comparison with similar species.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 8 hours.

Signature Dennis Thompson Address: 2019 44th

Date: 12/3/84 City, State: Des Moines, Ia. 50310

(over)



8436

BIRD DOCUMENTATION FORM

CARL J. BENDORF
825 7TH AVENUE
IOWA CITY IA 52240

SPECIES: LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
LOCATION: Dam at Lake Red Rock
DATE: 4 December 1984

NUMBER: one
COUNTY: Marion
TIME: 8:45 AM TO 10 AM

HABITAT: In spillway just below dam; estimated 3000 gulls feeding over water or resting on sandbars. Probably 95% Ring-bills, the rest Herrings.

DESCRIPTION: (As transcribed from recorded notes made while viewing bird) "I am watching one gull which is slightly larger than adjacent Ring-bills. The mantle is a very dark gray and is immediately noticeable as different from the lighter pearl-gray mantles of the Ring-bills. This is an adult bird and all white underneath and on tail and on the head except for gray streaking on the top of head and back and sides of neck. The bill is bright yellow with a very bright red spot on the lower mandible. The bill is medium size but not heavy and bulbous like that of a Herring, however, it is slightly deeper than that of a Ring-bill. The legs are yellow. The primaries are dark black and contrast with the dark gray mantle of the folded wing."

The bird spent most of the time either standing on the edge of a sand bar or in shallow water. Periodically it would fly up a bit and come right back to the same place. At one point, a Red-tail flushed all the gulls and I relocated the Lesser Black-back down river about 100 yards and watched as it picked at the roots of an uprooted tree.

SIMILAR SPECIES--COMMENTS: Yellow legs separate from both Greater Black-backed and Western. Mantle and leg color separate from Herring.

AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT OF OTHERS: Seen by many others both before and after. Present with me were Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, Gladys Black, Beth Proescholdt, and Phyllis Harris.

LIGHT CONDITIONS: Overcast with sun directly behind. Excellent light.

DISTANCE: 75 yards (Estimated) EQUIPMENT: 20X scope, 7X binos.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES: First experience with this species. Have not seen Greater Black-backed, but familiar with both Western and Herring.

REFERENCES, PERSONS CONSULTED BEFORE WRITING DESCRIPTION: none

FIELD NOTES MADE? Recorded notes made while viewing bird.

THIS FORM DONE? one week

What species? Lesser Black-Backed Gull How many? 1Location? Red Rock Reservoir and Dam - Marion Co.Type of habitat? Below the dam on sandbarsWhen? date(s): Dec. 5, 1984 time: 9:45 a.m. to 9:49 a.m.
10:00 a.m. to 10:04 a.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Beth Proescholdt (112)others before or after you: Hank Galetel, Tom Kent, Carl BendorfDescribe 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.
Phyllis, Herry's, many others

After considerable searching, we found that the gull had returned to a sandbar below the dam and was with many Ring-billed and Herring gulls on the sandbar. It was generally between the size range of Ring-billed and Herring gulls. It was standing out of the water and had yellow legs and feet. It had dark slaty-gray charcoal back and wings and a red spot on the lower bill. It was 35-40 yards away and had white between its folded charcoal gray wings and dark wing tips. Its white head was faintly streaked with brown lines. We opened the car door to get out and all the gulls flew. We found it again on a small sand bar 90 yards away and I saw it through the scope. As it flew, it showed an all white tail and dark grayish-black wings. It really stood out from Ring-billed and Herring gulls with its similar species and how eliminated: Great Black-backed Gull has black back and wings and yellow feet, much blacker back and wings, is larger, and has pink feet and legs.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

cloudy and overcast, distances estimated, 7x35 Binoculars22x ScopePrevious experience with species and similar ones: First time for Lesser Black-Backed Gull. Saw my first Great Black-backed Gull in Maine this summer.References and persons consulted before writing description: Natl. Geog. Birds of N. America, R.T. Peterson's Guide to the Birds, and Robbins' Birds of North AmericaHow long before field notes made? Right after this form completed? Dec. 29, 1984viewing

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240