

Lesser Black-backed Gull  
15 Nov 1988  
Saylorville Res., Polk Co., IA  
\*S. Dinsmore, \*Johnson  
also 21 & 23 Nov; IBL 59:14, 77

Record Number: 88-29  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Steve Dinsmore, 15 Nov  
Ann Johnson, 21 Nov

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 59:14  
Records Committee: IBL 59:77

VOTE: 6-A-D, 1-abstain

A-D. We need to be on the lookout for hybrid Lesser Black-backed x Herring Gulls, but this bird seems to be too dark for that. Dinsmore describes all of the marks needed.

A-D. I got 2 copies of Steve's documentation, none of Ann's.

A-D. Long distance sightings like this are hard to accept but all essential field marks for an acceptable record of this species are present here. I did not have a copy of the Johnson documentation but instead had two copies of the Dinsmore documentation.

A-D. I am concerned that California Gull is adequately eliminated. The only basis for this is mantle "too dark" and legs "more yellow." I am willing to trust the observer's experience, but would like to see the Committee's response to this record. Features not seen are iris color, bill shape, size and markings.  
SENT TO: Steve Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, Ia 50010; Ann Johnson 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211 [3/29/89]

## 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? 15 Nov 1988

Time? 3:44-4:38 p.m.

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

Others who saw bird: Bery Engebretsen

Description of bird: I was scanning through some gulls that were resting on a large mud bar north of Jester Park when I noticed a very dark-mantled gull resting with Ring-billed Gulls. The bird was approximately 25% larger than the Ring-billed Gulls, but was smaller and slimmer than a Herring Gull resting about 50 feet away. The bird's mantle was slate gray, noticeably darker than the mantle of the Ring-billed Gulls it was with. The wingtips were black, slightly darker than the mantle. The bird's underparts and tail were white. The head was also white and was heavily streaked with brown, particularly on the back of the head and the nape. I could not see the eye color. The bill was yellow and was longer and thicker than the bill of a Ring-billed Gull. I could not see any red or black spot on the bill, but that may have been because the bird was too far away. The legs were dull yellow, similar to the leg color of the Ring-billed Gulls. I concluded that I was looking at a winter adult Lesser Black-backed Gull.

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. The mantle was much too dark for a Herring Gull. Separation from California Gull is much more difficult. Obviously, the mantle color of this bird was much too dark for a California Gull, and the legs were more yellow than the legs of a California Gull.

Viewing conditions and equipment: Viewing conditions were excellent with the sun behind me. Estimated viewing distance was 500 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species: I have seen two 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? on the spot

How long before this form was completed? 3 hours

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