

Sabine's Gull

Record Number: 94-44

5 Sep 1994

Classification: A-P

Black Hawk L., Sac Co., IA

*Padelfords, *****

P-0425, IBL 65:15, 82

DOCUMENTATIONS

Ross Silcock (5 Sep), Box 300, Tabor 51653 [2/23/95*]

Babs and Loren Padelford (5 Sep), 1405 Little John Rd., Bellevue, NE 68005

Pete Ernzen (5 Sep), 401 Taylor, Ida Grove

Thomas H. Kent (6 Sep), 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

Jim Fuller (6 Sep), 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240

Don Poggensee (10 Sep), Lake La June Estates, RR 1, Ida Grove 51445

Mark Proescholdt (10 Sep), Box 65 Liscomb 50148

Ed Thelen, (13 Sep), RR 8725, Spirit Lake 51360

PHOTOGRAPH

Don Poggensee, 10 Sep, P-0425

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 65:15

Records Committee: IBL 65:82

VOTE: 6 A-P, 1 A-D

A-P, And to think it took a back seat to a jaeger!

A-P, Photo is diagnostic. I saw, actually found, this bird and, inexplicably, documented it.

94-44
P-0425



Sabines Gull SAC Co. LAKEVIEW, FL.
XLM Pogonose ©1994 Sept 10, 1994

94-44

Babs & Loren Padelford
1405 Little John Rd.
Bellevue, NE 68005

Documentation for Sabine's Gull

Date Seen: 9/5/94

Time: 8:30 - 10:30 - probably about a half hour total
viewing during that time period

Location: Black Hawk Lake and spoil pond east of the lake,
Lake View, Sac County

Description of Bird: It was a small, dark gray gull, smaller
in size than Ring-billed Gulls that were present for direct
comparison. The mantle color was darker than Ring-billed
mantles. It was a juvenile with a small, all black bill,
white on the front of the face, smudgy gray behind the eye,
and a white collar up the side of neck. The back and mantle
were a brownish gray with mottling. The wing pattern was a
striking black and white, with black primaries and white
secondaries. The pattern was visible above and below. The
tail was white, notched with a narrow black tip.

Behavior of Bird: It was resting on a mud flat in the spoil
pond with Ring-billed Gulls when first noticed. It flew up
several times and then settled back down. After about ten
minutes it flew over us to the main lake, where it sat on the
water. We last saw it on the main lake.

Equipment used: Bushnell 25 x spotting scope and 10x22
Bausch & Lomb Elite binoculars.

Distance from bird: 25 yards to 100 yards

Light conditions: Overcast

Other observers: Roland Barth of Omaha

This documentation is being written on 9/5/94 from notes
taken at time of sighting.

94-44

Iowa Rare Bird Documentation

SPECIES: Sabine's Gull

OBSERVERS: Ross Silcock, Loren and Babs Padelford, Jim Sinclair, Peter Ernzen, and others.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: September 5, 1994

TIME OF OBSERVATION: About 9am and again about 10am

DATE OF REPORT: September 5, 1994

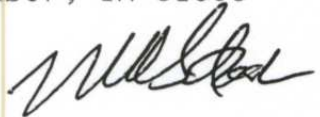
LOCATION: Extreme east end of Blackhawk Lake, Sac County.

DISTANCE FROM BIRD: Closest view about 75 yards.

NARRATIVE: While searching for a reported Long-tailed Jaeger, we were checking a dredge spoil pool adjacent to and east of the east end of Blackhawk Lake. There were about 50 Ring-billed Gulls, 2 Caspian Terns, about 10 Black Terns, and several shorebirds present, including an avocet, when a smaller gull flew in. Upon landing adjacent to the Ring-bills (it was about 2/3 their size), it flashed the diagnostic Sabine's upperwing pattern, consisting of black primaries, grayish brown mantle (inner wing coverts), and white secondaries. This contrasty pattern was observed at leisure as the bird alternately rested and flew short distances while loafing on the spoil pond. After about 15 minutes it flew back to the main lake and disappeared westward. About an hour later, we returned to the area and relocated the bird on the water of the main lake about 75 yards away, beside the dredge discharge pipe boom. It was again seen in flight at this time. At about 10.15 the Long-tailed Jaeger was sighted, and we forgot about the Sabine's Gull.

IDENTIFICATION: As mentioned above, the diagnostic upperwing pattern was clearly seen on several occasions. The white tail was slightly forked, with black tips to the rectrices (I checked the spelling!), and the nape was shadowed greyish, extending onto the sides of the neck, almost forming a collar. The eye area was white, as were the underparts. Mantle was grayish brown. I believe this was a young bird in, or molting into, first winter plumage.

Ross Silcock
PO Box 300
Tabor, IA 51653




DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

1994 94-44

What species? *Sabines Gull* How many? *1 immature.*
Location? *Blackhawk Lake in Sac Co. SE corner*
Type of Habitat? *Lake -*
When? date(s) *Sept 5* time: *Am* to
Who? your name and address *PETE ERZEN 401 TAYLOR IDA GROVE*
Others with you: *Many people who observed Jaegger.*
Others before or after you:

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 brown mottled gull, wedge tail*

black border. white, triangular pattern to wing bordered by black on
wing - brown on wings
black bill *white* *Black* *Brown*


Similar species; how eliminated: *I don't know of any with distinct wing pattern.*

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

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. *Sunny - Sun over Shoulder - 100 - 300 ft*
Distance estimated

Previous experience with species and similar ones: *Nine.*

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America

How long before notes completed? *Several minutes after relocating Jaegger at Blackhawk Lake.*

rown & nape brown

94-44

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Sabine's Gull; *Number:* 1 juvenile

Location: Black Hawk Lake, Ida Co., IA

Date: 6 September 1994; *Time:* 6:40 to 7:30 a.m.

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

Others before/with/after: Seen on the 5th by many; Jim Fuller and Dick Tetrault with me.

Habitat and circumstances: Natural lake about one mile long and a half mile wide.

Description of bird: We first saw the bird standing on a float back lit in early morning light. From the small size with delicate bill and brown mantle, we judged that it was the Sabine's Gull found the day before by many birders who were looking for the Long-tailed Jaeger. We moved around the lake for a close view in good light and confirmed the identification. The back was mottled brown and the head had a patchy brown color. The under parts and neck were whitish. When the bird flew we noted the W-pattern of the upper wing (dark outer primaries, white inner primaries and secondaries, and brown coverts) and the slightly notched tail with black tip. The bird was much smaller than Ring-billed Gulls nearby. We later saw the bird in mid-lake.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar species: The wing pattern and smudgy head eliminates other first-year gulls such as Bonaparte's or Black-legged Kittiwake.

Any one have reservations?: No.

Light: Variable; *Distance:* about 50 yards at closest; *Optics:* 20x scope, 10x binocular.

Previous experience: I have seen several juveniles as well as adults.

References before/after viewing: none.

Time of notes: none; *Final typing:* 2 days.

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

94-44

1994

1

SPECIES: Sabine's Gull (Juvenile)

LOCATION: Black Hawk Lake and adjoining retention pond (Sac County)

DATE & TIME: 6 September (6:40-7:45 AM) and 15 September (8:35 AM-12:25 PM)

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

OTHERS: With me on 6 September were Tom Kent and Dick Tetrault and on 15 September Jane Fuller.

BACKGROUND: This bird was discovered at Black Hawk Lake on 5 September by those searching for the Long-tailed Jaeger. It was seen by many observers through 15 September. I saw the gull the morning of 6 September, but never really well. The wing pattern during flight was seen. On 15 September, I watched it for extended periods often at close range, both standing and flying

DESCRIPTION: This generally small and dark gull was noticeably smaller than nearby Ring-billed Gulls. It had a relatively small head and bill. While standing, it had all white underparts, but grayish-brown upperparts, including top and side of head. (It seemed grayer than the more brownish juveniles I had seen previously) The folded wing tip was black. The bill was small and black, and the eye was dark. The legs were light, appearing to be grayish in color. In flight, it had a distinctive upper wing pattern, with the upperwing divided into three triangular shaped areas. The outermost was black, the middle one was white, and the area closest to the body was dark gray (See diagram). The tail was white and notched, and it had a black edge along the end. The bird's flight seemed to be airy, and it sometimes hovered as I watched it over the retention pond.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Juvenile gulls that might be confused with Sabine's are Black-legged Kittiwake, and Little Gull. Little Gull is smaller, has a square (not notched) tail, and a black spot behind the eye. The Kittiwake is generally lighter, has a black spot behind the eye, and a black bar on the neck, as well as black legs.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: During the two days, I probably looked at this bird from about every direction on the compass, sometimes as close as a hundred feet, and sometimes as far as 600 feet. I watched it standing, flying, and sitting on the water. I used Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars, and KOWA TSN-4 (20-60X) telescope. The day was clear on 6 September, and cloudy with occasional rain on 15 September.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen two previous juvenile birds and one adult of this species in Iowa, and several dozen adults in Alaska.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: I wrote notes the evening of 6 September, and during the ride back home on 15 September dictated my notes to Jane Fuller. I typed this form originally on 9 September, and then retyped it to include both sightings on 16 September. I looked at National Geographic field guide after both sightings.



DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

94-44

What species? SABINES GULL How many? 1

Location? HOLDING POND EAST OF LAKE VIEW, IOWA SAC COUNTY

Type of Habitat? HOLDING POND

When? date(s): SEPT. 10, 1994 time: 3 to 3:30 to 3:45 P.M.

Who? your name and address: DON POGGENSEE LAKE LA JUNE ESTATES R.R. # 1 IDA GROVE, IA. 51445

Others with you: MARK & BETH PROESCHOLDT OF LISCOMB, IA.

Others before or after you: PETER ERNZEN, IDA GROVE, IOWA

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 GULL WITH SPECIAL COLOR PATTERNS.

WON'T GO INTO MUCH DETAIL, BUT WILL REFER YOU TO INCLOSED BLACK AND WHITE AND COLOR PRINTS, FOR IDENTIFICATION.

Similar species; how eliminated:

OTHER GULLS, ELIMINATED BY MARKINGS, SEE PHOTOS.

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

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

EXCELLENT LIGHT 700MM CAMERA LEN

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NONE

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? PHOTOS this form completed? SEPT 13, 1994

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

What species? Sabine's Gull How many? 1 immatureLocation? Black Hawk Lake S.P. — (Sac County)Type of habitat? Dredge pond across the road from the lakeWhen? date(s): Sept. 10, 1994 time: 3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Iowa 50148others with you: Beth Proescholdt, Don Pogensee, Doug Roseothers before or after you: Jim Fuller, Tom Kent, Armstrongs, Russ Widner, 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.

This was a rather inconspicuous gull when it was on the mud flats of the dredge pond, but when it flew, it was stunning. It had striking black wing wedges on the primaries of the upper wings with white triangular areas next on the wings followed by a darker area of the inner part of the wings. It ~~made~~ made a striking wing pattern of dark-white-dark. The gull had an all black bill, a black terminal tail band on its white tail, and a black smudge behind the eye from a partial hood effect. The underwing was whitish but with some grayish wedges at wing tips and a little cross-arm effect on the underwing. I think the gull had dark pink leg color. It had a dark grayish back seen when on the mud flats. It was a smallish gull about $\frac{3}{4}$ the size of a Franklin's Gull and $\frac{1}{2}$ the size of a Ring-Billed Gull nearby. It was by itself often - perched and flying.

Similar species and how eliminated:

A 1st winter Black-legged Kittiwake does not have the striking wing pattern of dark-white-dark on the upper wings, is larger, and has black bar across nape.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain: :

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Mostly sunny, sun at side. 50-80-100 yards estimated.

8X30 Binocs and 22X Scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Saw a Sabine's Gull (juvenile) last fall at Red Rock. Have seen a number of Kittiwakes. References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geog. guide, Robbins' Birds of N. America,How long before field notes made? while viewing this form completed? Sept. 24, 1994

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa 1994 94-44

What species? SABINE'S GULL How many? 1

Location? Dredge Spoil site SE of BLACKHAWK LAKE, Sac County

Type of habitat? Dredge Spoil Site

When? date(s): Sept 13 time: 7:00 to 7:30

Who? your name and address: Ed Thelen RR 8225 Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

others with you: Rob Thelen

others before or after you: _____

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.

Observed a smaller gull at Dredge Spoil site at Blackhawk Lake. Observed black-tipped forked tail and also outer primaries looked black. White triangle on inner primaries and secondaries.

Similar species and how eliminated: _____

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO.

If yes, explain:

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

GOOD SUNNY CLEAR
15x60 Spotting Scope
400mm lens w/ 2x

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NONE

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? next day this form completed? Nov 30, 1994

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