

Iceland Gull
 15 Dec 1974
 Lock and Dam 14, Scott Co., IA
 Ernest Sadler

Record Number: 85-AC
 Classification: NA

rereviewed in for revised state list; IBL 56:43, Petersen 1975

[This record and the next were reviewed together in 1981, but inadvertently not given an 81 number. See attached page for 1981 vote and comments, which were not entered into the computer record. /thk, 3 Sep 1993]

DOCUMENTATIONS

Earnest Sadler, 15 Dec 1974

Elton Fauks, 22 Dec 1974 [Campbell's Island, Illinois]

REFERENCE

Petersen, P. C. 1975. First Iceland Gull for Iowa. IBL 45:23.

Records Committee: IBL 56:43

VOTE: 1-II, 3-III, 2-IV, 1-V

'V, Weak and conflicting descriptions of a very rare, difficult-to-identify bird. Thayer's was not considered at that time.'

'IV, Based on Sadler documentation I have nothing but "small gull", which an Iceland is not, to separate from Glaucous Gull. Falk's Ill. bird is sized OK for Iceland but I have to assume both reports are of same bird.'

'II, Two re-reviewer comments. both III's, say the doc. from Sadler lacks bill notes to separate from Glaucous. yet Sadler says bill "small." amd "yellow." Observations of Iceland Gulls since 1974 have convinced me of validity of this sighting.'

'III, The all-white wings and size limit the identification to Iceland-Kumlein's-Thayer's complex. Since the gull was an adult and had pure white primaries Iceland Gull is logically concluded. It must be noted that Sadler did not look for other features such as eye color and fleshy eye-ring color as he was unaware of their importance. Record is in ILLINOIS if Campbell's Island is in that state.'

'V (PCP 1/28/75, if in IA); IV (Sadler 12/15/85) Need better detail on primary pattern to be conclusive. (A) Fawks sightings in Illinois (Dec-Feb 1974-75). (B) Was PCP sighting in IA or IL? (1/28/75). (C) Sadler sighting: description suggests adult Iceland (as does Fawks'--could be same bird). Both saw pale gray mantle and wing coverts, and white wingtips and trailing edge. No coloration in wingtips. Suggests glaucoides--which is Palearctic in distribution. Kumlein's would show smoe grayish coloration in primaries. Glaucoides extremely unlikely in N. Am., let alone in interior.

'III, Location: seems OK for Iowa, though perhaps should see a map. Some sightings clearly in Illinois. Ones by Lock and Dam 14 in Iowa or in center of river, I think. Petersen's small gull on Jan 28 not identifiable. Too small. But may not be the same individual. Sadler's documentation looks OK to me.

Difficult--impossible-- to eliminate albinos but Glucous surely unlikely. Thayer's also seems eliminated.'

REVOTE at meeting of 10/5/85: Fawks' sighting considered in

Records Committee, Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Iceland Gull

Printed: 09/03/93
15 Dec 1974 RC No. 85-AC (cont)

Illinois. Sadler and Petersen sightings separated.
Sadler sighting: 1-II, 1-III, 3-IV, 1-V, 1-abstain
Petersen sighting: 2-IV, 3-V, 2-abstain

Reviewed in 1981 but not given number (by accident)

1981 wte + comments, not in computer
Iceland Gull

85-AC

1. RC 1981 3-II, 1-III, 3-IV
"IV, poor description, Iceland is larger than ring-bill not smaller. A bird present so long should be photographed."
"III, Many observers, multiple sightings, field marks noted, but a high difficulty factor."
"IV, Time/place fit; but details minimal; also the Iceland has a red bill spot, not an unmarked yellow bill. No mention of distinctive proportions of this species. And what was the entirely white gull smaller than a ring-bill seen by PCP? Iceland is 3" longer, an adult bird has a pale grey back."
"II, My obs. not as good as Sadlers and Henderson, but Fawks gave me fine verbal desc. on 12-2-74 on the phone. See Loon vol 51 No 3 and Birding News Survey winter 1980-81."
"IV, several observers, several occasions -- 12/2 -- Feb 18, several individuals: description of an adult says nothing about wing pattern. Small yellow bill and pink feet also occur on Glaucous-winged Gull. Description of an all white (presumably 2nd yr.) bird gives no detail. Other 'immatures' were not described at all. Many questions about these arise. Could the all white bird be an Ivory? How can a Iceland be noticeably smaller than a ring-bill?"
"II, May have been more than one bird -- the Sadler bird (Dec 15) may have been 3rd yr, whereasthe Petersen bird (Jan 28) may have been 2nd yr (or 1st). Descriptions and observer reliability appear to eliminate Glaucous Gull."

RC 1981 second review after receipt of documentations 4-II, 2-IV, 1-V

"V, Fawks description seems reasonable but apparently in Ill.

Sadler's and Petersen's descriptions inadequate for 1st state record.

?Thayer's Gull not considered."

"II, High difficulty factor, but numerous sightings by competent observers."

"II, On basis of number of obs., size, white primaries rule out

Kumlein's, Thayer's."

"II, Bird appeared smaller to me than to others -- may have been combination of distance and angle. Note Sadler obs. made from Iowa; other obs. made from Illinois."

"IV, 2 documentations of small white-winged gull. I am no more certain about this record than I was when we reviewed the IBL article alone the first time. The record's validity seems to rest solely on size.

No characteristics of bill or plumage are described that would separate this from glaucesens. In light of recent Birding (1980) article showing that Kumlein's is more likely inland, the likelihood seems remote."

"IV, I would like to call this a II or III, but lack of good description of bill size versus Glaucous Gull raises some doubts in my mind.

Otherwise, description is OK, especially size comparisons. Not adequately differentiated from adult Glaucous Gull. Observers good however."

85-AC

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation
by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Iceland Gull
DATE SEEN: 15 December 1974
SITE OF OBSERVATION: Scott County
OBSERVERS: Ernest Sadler
DATE OF REVIEW: October 1985
METHOD OF REVIEW: Committee discussion
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: IV

COMMENTS: In light of the much improved information regarding identification of gulls which is available today, the Committee re-evaluated this record.

While the description certainly is suggestive of an Iceland Gull (pale gray mantle, white wing tips), the absence of any darker coloration in the wingtips would tend to eliminate Thayer's Gull (a recently separated species) and Kumlein's race of Iceland Gull. Both show dark gray or black in the primary tips. An Iceland type gull with white wing tips would belong to the glaucoides race, which has as yet never been recorded with certainty in the lower 48 United States. All records in the lower 48 to date have been of the Kumlein's race.

Thus the Committee was not convinced that the record was correct without reasonable doubt.

Some consolation can be taken from the fact that some authorities consider Thayer's Gull and the Kumlein's and glaucoides Iceland Gulls to be races of the same species. The taxonomy of this group has not yet been settled.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I: labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II: acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III: acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV: probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V: record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI: probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

Species Ice Land Gull 2. Number: 1

1. Location Lock & Dam 14 Le Claire, Iowa

3. Date 12/15/74 5. Time Bird seen: 9:30 A.M. to 9:33 A.M.

4. 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):

Small, white gull, Shape seemed more streamlined. Not as heavy looking as other gulls. Bulky. Plumage gave an all white appearance, some below. No markings on ^{variation} in color from below. Back appearance - some variation in shade, very slight gray with a lighter appearance from tip of wings along the back of wings. No markings on bill - yellow. Feet - pink.

6. Description of voice, if heard: Not heard.

7. Description of behavior: Sailing & dipping, some wing movement.

8. Habitat - general: Water -
specific: Behind Lock & Dam 14 - Mississippi River.

9. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Ring-billed ^{gull} eliminated because of grey back & black on wings. many present. Glaucous gull mainly because of size & spec. bill.

10. Distance from observer: 30 yards 11. Optical equipment: Binooculars 7x35

12. Sky. Light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you: Overcast, good, left & behind bird. Left of myself.

13. Have you seen this species, or a similarly appearing species, prior to this sighting?
Have seen glaucous gull in flight & sitting prior to this sighting.

14. Other observers:
Mark Henderson
Yes

Elton Fawks

15. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Birds of North America - Robbins The book's illustrations did not influence the description, it only helped to identify the species.
Peter Peterson

Signature: Ernest Sadler Address: RR #1

Date: 12/15/74 Location: Le Claire Iowa 52753

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Iceland Gull 2. Number: _____

3. Location From my residence, Campbell's Island, East Moline, Ill.
3 miles downstream from Lock & Dam 14, Mississippi River

4. Date: December 2, 1974 5. Time Bird seen: 11 A.M. to 12 noon

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): Bird was an adult, all white with a bluish gray tint on folded wings. Wings extended beyond tail when at rest. Day clear and still. Bird was resting with about 30 Ring-billed and 6 Herring Gull. Smaller than near by Herring but larger than Ring-billed. When bird finally flew all white wings noted, no black tips. Bird made several turns and all white wings were certain. Bird seen several times in later days flying close to my shore and the difference clearly noted from the first winter Glaucous Gull that flew by at times. See report on it. Iceland also seen twice at Lock 14. Seen at rest 70 feet away, Dec 21 by me and Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Frink. Carefully noted as it flew away from us after 15 min. on the water.

7. Description of voice, if heard: _____

8. Description of behavior: Sitting on ice and or water, resting and once feeding on dead fish. In flight several times.

9. Habitat - general: First seen at mouth of Honey Creek, flowing into Miss. R.
specific: _____

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

11. Distance (how measured): 1st 90 yards away. measured by known size of nearby bridge
2nd. 70 feet est. 12x30 optical equipment:

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): 7x50 and 20 power scope

1st. clear light to by back. 2nd. (21/Dec.) clear, light to our left.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
First, Glaucous Gull seen most winters. At least 2 G. Gulls here this winter.

15. Other observers:
as above and also C. Count 15 Dec.

16. Did the others agree with your identification?
yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Ernie Sadler, Mark Henderson
see C. Count

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Robbins, Peterson etc. Confirmed. I spend two hours a day sitting in living room with glasses and books on hand. Have 35 to 90 gulls in view at all times. Besides the 1st winter Glaucous have seen at least one second winter G. Gull.

John J. Banks

Signature _____ Address: 510 Island Ave.
Date: 22 Dec. 74 City, State: East Moline, Ill. 61244

Iceland Gull

85-AC

Petersen, P. C. 1975. First Iceland Gull for Iowa. Iowa Bird Life 45:23.

First Iceland Gull for Iowa -- During the Davenport Christmas Bird Count on December 15, 1974, 9:30 A.M., an adult Iceland Gull was seen at Lock No. 14, Pleasant Valley, Iowa by Ernest Sadler and Mark Henderson. This description is copied from the documentation form: "Small, white gull. Shape seemed more streamlined, not as heavy looking or bulky as other gulls. Plumage gave an all white appearance from below with no markings or variations in color. Back appearance - some variation in shade, very light gray with a lighter appearance from tip of wings along the back of wings. No marking on bill, yellow and small, feet pink." The bird was in the company of hundreds of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls providing direct size comparison. It was seen at a distance of 30 yards with 7 x 35 power binoculars. The light was good, the weather high overcast and the observers are familiar with Glaucous Gulls. Prior to this observation a bird answering this description was seen on December 2, 1974, at Campbell's Island, East Moline, Illinois, away from the Mississippi channel, by Elton Fawks. This site is about two miles downstream from Lock No. 14. Fawks and Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Frink observed the same bird Fawks had seen on December 2 on December 21 at Lock No. 14 from the Illinois shore. At least two immature Glaucous Gulls were present in the area of Lock No. 14 in late December and early January. Fawks saw the Iceland four times in January and three times in February. On January 28, 1975, the author saw an entirely white gull noticeably smaller than Ring-billed Gulls standing with it at Lock No. 14 at a range of 150 yards with a 20 x scope. The last Iceland observation was by Fawks on February 18. PETER C. PETERSEN, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport.