

Ivory Gull
20 Dec 1975
Rathbun Res., Appanoose Co., IA
C. C. Ayres
Ayres 1976

Record Number: 81-AU
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION AND LETTERS [obtained 1999, not reviewed]

Charles C. Ayres documentation dated 2-18-76

Letter: Judge Charles C. and Darleen Ayres to Vernon L. Kleen, January 11, 1976

Letter: Vernon M. Kleen to Judge Charles C. Ayres, 21 January 1976

Letter: Charles C. Ayres to Vernon M. Kleen, February 21, 1976

Letter: Charles C. Ayres to To Whom it May Concern, undated

Comments: apparently from 3 reviewers, written on form and letters

REFERENCES

Ayres, C.C. 1976. A rare Ivory Gull at Rathbun Lake. IBL 46:15-16.

Christmas Bird Count: IBL 46:7, 8

Records Committee: IBL 64:69

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Tom Kent to Records Committee, 13 Sep 1993

VOTE (1981) 1-II, 5-III, 1-VI (V?)

III, Apparently a III but remoteness of record raises some doubt. Wish more had been said on size, etc.

III, incomplete description, but key marks seen.

III, many observers, good view of field marks.

VI (V?), The details are diagnostic as given but do not reflect the kind of documentation required for such an unusual record: no information as to the nature of the dark flecking, size, body proportions. No attempt was made to photograph even though a camera/telephoto was available, and even a bad photo of this distinctive species would have been diagnostic. No indication given that notes were made at the time, or that the description given was not contaminated by wishful thinking from comparison with field guides. A tantalizing record, but the bird is so rare and the documentation so amateurish that I don't think it should be accepted.

III, We have desc. of only one obs. Details brief for rarity of bird.

III, single sight observation by several observers: Descriptions OK but sketchy. Since the immature pagophlia described is easily distinguishable (in contrast to Iceland Gull) the record seems plausible.

III, Description satisfactory - if well seen should be distinctive. Leisurely observation at close range (for a gull!). REVOTE (at meeting, 1 May 1981): 5-III, 1-IV, 1-VI

REVOTE (1993): 6 A-D, 1 NA

A-D, Seems to be an old accept record and I would not change.

NA, This documentation is typical of its time -- better description of lunch than the bird! The

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REVOTE (1993): 6 A-D, 1 NA

A-D, Seems to be an old accept record and I would not change.

NA, This documentation is typical of its time -- better description of lynch than the bird! The entire description is general and vague. There is no size comparison with other birds. There is no description of the bill. Where the "dark fleckings" were is not noted. Most troubling to me is no mention at all of the dark spotting around the face and bill. While I'm aware that this can be variable in extent, it is so distinct that I can't believe anyone would not at least mention it. The question here seems to be -- as a species becomes more common, or its "pattern of vagrancy" more established -- how much less in the way of documentation do we accept? This would be only the second (first!) Iowa record of Ivory Gull. I, like the committee members who voted on this the first time, believe it could be an Ivory Gull. But this species is still too rare to accept this vague of a documentation.

A-D, I can see why the Records Comm. had problems with the published description, even though it is a virtually unmistakable bird. Wymore's brief notes add key support -- black primary tips and the tame behavior characteristics of this species. We also now have some precedent for this species' occurrence in the Midwest. This, in conjunction with Ayres' comments, clinches this one. Hats off to the Secretary for tracking down this additional information.

A-D, First winter.

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

81-A4

What species? Ivory Gull How many? 1

Location? Lake Rathbun

Type of Habitat? Shoreline

When? date(s): December 20, 1975 time: 1:15 to 1:20

Who? your name and address: Tom Johnson

Others with you: Judge and Darleen Ayres, Gary and Madeline Wymore and others

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.

These are notes from December 20, 1975 from my notebook. Ivory Gull 1:15 p.m., 20-30 temperature, wind 15 mph NW, Island view on ice, 75 feet away. Bird sitting looks like young bird in Robbins Zinn book, black spots on tail and side, black legs and eye. When flew underside pure white.

This came in
after the
re-review, which
passed 6-1
TK

Similar species; how eliminated:

As stated in Ayre's article the members of the two cars decided separately on Ivory Gull, without consulting each other. I knew unusual gulls very poorly at this time but Gary Wymore was a respected birder and very meticulous and we agreed on the I.D. in our car. Since then I have improved my skills and would certainly know now to better document unusual findings. I started keeping records in 1974 - so was early in my career. I feel today as I did Dec. 20, 1975

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No (over)
If yes, explain:

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

Manon 7 x 50 binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

None

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? _____ this form completed? 18 years

same day - I wrote in car - I wasn't driving

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

81-AU

that we saw an Ivory Gull and it wasn't a black legged Kittiwake
which I have seen in Iowa and Alaska.

81-AU

13 September 1993

To: IOU Records Committee
From: Tom Kent
Re: Request for reconsideration of record

Record: 81-AU Ivory Gull

Reason for request: Only one of two negative voters provided reasons.

Comment: This record was rejected on a very close vote, with only one negative voter commenting. In light of the more recent sighting and experience with this species as a vagrant in the Midwest, I think this record should be reconsidered. See letters from Kent to Johnson, Wymore to Kent.

81-A4

24 August 1993

Tom Johnson
P.O. Box 1045
Centerville, IA 52544

Dear Tom,

I have been reorganizing the I.O.U. Records Committee files and looking at old records that were evaluated in 1981-82. I have encounter some that might merit re-evaluation, among them the Ivory Gull record from Rathbun in 1975.

Do you have any notes about this record? Do you remember any additional details that were not recorded by Judge Ayres in his article (enclosed)? Are any of the other observers still around, and would they have notes?

Any information you could supply would be appreciated.

If this fall turns out to be as exciting for birding as last fall, I may be down to Rathbun yet this year.

Best regards,

Tom Kent
211 Richards St.
Iowa City, IA 52246

Gary D. Wymore

81-A4

P.O. Box 231
PELLA, IOWA
50219

SEPTEMBER 13 [1993 TK]

DEAR MR. KENT—

I AM WRITING TO SEND WHAT RECORDS I HAVE, REGARDING OUR SIGHTING OF AN IVORY GULL AT LAKE RATHBUN, DECEMBER 20, 1975. TOM JOHNSON OF CENTERVILLE, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT THAT DAY, PHONED ME AND SAID THAT YOU WERE SEEKING ADDITIONAL VERIFICATION. AT THE TIME OF THE SIGHTING, I DIDN'T SEND IN ANY REPORT BECAUSE THOSE PRESENT SORT-OF "DRAFTED" CHARLIE AYRES TO DO THAT, AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE GROUP. MRS. M. K. HALLBERG IS STILL LIVING, BUT NOT WELL AND I HAVE ASKED HER TO TRY AND LOCATE ANY NOTATION SHE MAY HAVE MADE. THE ENCLOSED COPY FROM MY OWN "LIFE LIST" BOOK IS WHAT I AM SENDING TO YOU. IT DEFINITELY WAS AN IVORY GULL, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED. HOPE THIS WILL BE OF SOME HELP.

GARY WYMORE

GULLS

81-AU

52

BEERMANN'S GULL <i>Larus beermannii</i>	DATE:
	LOCATION:
	REMARKS:

IVORY GULL <i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	DATE: <u>Δ DECEMBER 20, 1975</u>
	LOCATION: <u>Δ LAKE RATHBUN, LAST LOOP</u>
	REMARKS: <u>A CLOSE OBSERVATION DETAILED ACCOUNT PUBLISHED BY CHARLES AURES IN IBL-MARCH, 1976. ALONG WITH TAME BLACK LEGS & FEET, BLACK "SPOTTED" WING TIPS. SEE AUDUBON FIELD GUIDE - PLATE 23</u>

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	DATE:
	LOCATION:
	REMARKS:

RED-LEGGED KITTIWAKE <i>Rissa brevirostris</i>	DATE:
	LOCATION:
	REMARKS:

SABINE'S GULL <i>Xema sabini</i>	DATE:
	LOCATION:
	REMARKS:



A Rare Ivory Gull at Rathbun Lake 81-AU

Ivory Gull

CHARLES C. AYRES, JR.
922 N. Green St.
OTTUMWA

Ayres, C. C. Jr. 1976.
A rare Ivory Gull at
Rathbun Lake. IBL 46:
15-16.

This is the second year that Darleen and I have been invited to assist in taking the Christmas Bird Census at Rathbun Lake in Appanoose County, Iowa, and we were happy that Mrs. R. L. Scott of Seymour and Bill Heusinkveld of Centerville extended the invitation. Though it was a busy time of the year we had no difficulty in finding members of the Ottumwa Bird Club who were glad to join us and as a result Mrs. M. K. Hallberg, Virgil and Jean Corzette, Bernard and Florence Fulton, Mrs. Maldeline Wymore, Gary Wymore and Tom Johnson went with us on December 20, 1975, the date fixed for taking the count.

The weather was fairly cooperative with the temperature ranging from 20 to 30 degrees above zero and no snow on the ground. There was, however, a northwest wind which brought with it a suggestion that snow and colder weather were in the offing. Mother Nature made good on the suggestion by producing some snow flurries later in the day. There was considerable open water in the lake and for the most part the waterfowl kept well out of it or on the ice adjacent to it. When our cars approached the shore the birds generally paddled away or took to the air and our Zoom 60 Balscope was given extensive use for better observation.

Our group worked the Buck Creek Area on the north shore of the lake in the morning but found nothing unusual except possibly a Great Blue Heron that was looking for food along the icy shore. I could not help but feel that it would be a lot more comfortable wearing a pair of longjohns in that weather.

Shortly before noon we drove across the 2 mile long dam that holds the water in the beautiful 11,000 acre lake with its 180 miles of shoreline and met the other census takers for lunch. What with freshly fried chicken, potato chips, bread and butter and other fixins including plenty of hot coffee I feel that this period between 12 noon and 1 p.m. is one of the nicest times during a Christmas count. We left the birder's feeder at 1 o'clock to begin our afternoon of field work. Our group from Ottumwa was delegated to cover the Island View Area and with two less persons as Fultons had left, we started out with four persons in each of two cars. As we searched the designated area we added some new birds for the day to our list, among them being six Killdeer which we encountered singly and which seemingly enjoyed running a short distance in front of us as we slowly drove along. Little did we realize at that time that within the next few minutes we would be privileged to experience one of those 'once in a lifetime' thrills that make a field trip totally unforgettable; that we would see a species of bird never before seen in Iowa.

As we drove north out of Walnut City and turned to the left following the road close to the lake we saw a gull on the shore about a hundred feet from us. We knew at once that it was something unusual and as it searched for food we quietly stopped and from the cars studied it through our binoculars and the Balscope. Once the bird suddenly tossed what appeared to be a piece of shell some two or three feet into the air paying no further attention to it. To me that act was an indication of disgust at finding that it was not food. Fully five minutes passed as we watched and compared this gull with those shown in Roger T. Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* and another fine guide *Birds of North America* by Robbins, Brunn, Singer and Zim. There was no question about it, before us was an immature Ivory Gull, *Pagophila eburnea*. The small size, pure white base color of the body and especially the wings, the dark fleckings and the black legs and feet were enough to

identify it and when it flew at the closing of a car door we could see narrow, dark subterminal band on the tail. We searched the rest of the afternoon and at least five other days trying to find it again but to no avail. We alerted Thomas Long, the ranger in charge of the area, in the hope that he or someone else at the lake may see it and we intend to make further attempts ourselves.

Why didn't we get a picture of this rare bird? My camera and telephoto lens were in the trunk of the car in which we were riding. Let that be a lesson to you prospective bird photographers.

Recently we received from our friend, Richard D. Mooney of Des Moines, a New Hampshire newspaper clipping announcing that an immature Ivory Gull was seen in Salisbury, Massachusetts, three days after we spotted our bird at Rathbun Lake on December 20th. The article states that this is the second rarest gull in the east and has been seen in Massachusetts only ten times in more than two hundred years. One has only to look in the books on birds to find that comparatively little has been written about the Ivory Gull. We have found articles about it in only nine of the ornithological works in our library including the two guides above mentioned and the only illustrations are paintings or pictures taken of museum specimens. P. A. Taverner, in his fine book *Birds of Canada*, concludes his seventeen line account of the bird with this sentence, "Too rare except in the far north to be further mentioned."

Now perhaps, somewhere in Iowa either flying over or sitting on the icy shore of one of our lakes, or rivers or possibly even a farm pond, this beautiful Ivory Gull may be trying to maintain its life until a strange urge directs it to return to its nesting grounds on one of the islands of the faraway Arctic seas.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Ivory Gull, Pagophila @burnea 2. Number: One
3. Location Rathbun Lake in Appanoose County, Iowa, 7 miles north of Centerville. Surface area 11,000 acres, about 180 miles of shoreline. Corps of Engineers project.
4. Date: December 20, 1975 5. Time Bird seen: 1:15 P. M. to 1:28 P. M.
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): Small gull, 16-17 inches long; plumage snow white contrasting with black legs and feet; bill dark, lighter at tip and shorter than the head; lores and forehead soft, light gray; some dark flecks on back of neck and on upper back; dark gray tips on primaries, secondaries and tail feathers forming narrow subterminal band on the latter; some dark spots on wing coverts and scapulars and four very noticeable on tertials; the spots on the tips of the flight feathers very noticeable when bird took to wing.
7. Description of voice, if heard: None heard
8. Description of behavior: Bird was searching for food on the icy shore. Once it picked up what appeared to be a pinkish piece of shell and tossed it into the air showing no further interest in it. Its movements both on the ground and in flight were faster than other gulls
9. Habitat - general: I have seen.
specific:
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:

11. Distance (how measured)? From bird when on shore to our car less than 50 feet. This was measured by measuring tape. 12. Optical equipment: B & L Zoom 60 Balscope and 7x35 binoculars (1 per person)
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): Light overcast, but visibility good. Sun behind overcast was at our backs as we looked north. No obstructions between us and the gull.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: No previous experience with this or the Iceland Gull. Have seen the Glaucous Gull on west coast years ago.
15. Other observers: My wife and I were riding with Virgil and Jean Corzette. Mrs. M.K. Hallberg and Thomas Johnson were riding in the other car with Mrs. Madeline Wymore and Gary Wymore.
16. Did the others agree with your identification? I would say that the four persons in our car individually determined that it was an immature Ivory Gull. All of us are adults and active in field. My wife and I have been banding birds for over 15 years. Mrs. Hallberg is also a bander.
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: The four in the other car whose names are mentioned in question 15 made their identification of the bird as an immature Ivory Gull before they got out of their car to talk with us.
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: More than 100 volumes on birds in our library but relatively little about the Ivory Gull. Bent's Life Histories of N.A. Gulls and Terns (Vol.2); Birds of America by T. G. Pearson et al Birds of Eastern N. America by Chapman, Birds of Mass. and Other New England States by Forbush, Birds of Colorado by Alfred Bailey, Birds of Canada by Taverner and a few other books were consulted. Books, illustrations, and text had no influence on our identification of the Gull nor on the description given here except to confirm the fact that it was an Ivory Gull.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? Wrote this description from my notes taken at the time the bird was seen.

Signature

Charles C. Ayres Jr Address: 922 No. Green St.

Date: 2-18-76

City, State: Ottumwa, Iowa 52501

81-AU
922 North Green Street
Ottumwa, Iowa 52501
January 11, 1976

Vernon L. Kleen
Division of Wildlife Resources
Illinois Department of Conservation
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Mr. Kleen,

Since you head the Central South Region of American Bird, we felt you should be advised of the sighting of an immature Ivory Gull, *Pagophila eburnea*, at Lake Rathbun in southeast Iowa. This sighting occurred on December 20, 1975 on the south shore of the lake and was observed by a group of eight Ottumwa Bird Club members led by us. We were slowly skirting the lake in two cars during the afternoon part of the Christmas Bird count. The Ivory Gull was observed by the birders for nearly five minutes as it stood on the icy shoreline seeking food about one hundred feet from the cars.

Both groups of birders identified it as an Ivory Gull before conferring with each other. The bird flew away when a member of the first party slipped from his car to check with the other party. The gull flew to a more distant point and a B and L spotoscope was used, then it flew out over the open water and settled down on it. Choppy waves and distance made further observation impossible.

Subsequently, we have been back to the lake four times but have been unable to locate it again. As ill luck would have it, our camera was in the trunk of the car when the first sighting was made.

If you would like further details concerning the sighting, please let us know.

Observers were: Mrs. M. K. Hallberg
Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Corzette
Tom Johnson
Gary Wymore
Mrs. Alvin Wymore
Judge and Mrs. Charles C. Ayres, Jr., leaders

Knowing that such rare sightings should be documented as authentically as possible, it might be well to let you know that we have been licensed bird banders since 1960 and that Mrs. Hallberg has been a sub-bander under us since 1961. We are both past presidents of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Judge Ayres having served three years and Darleen for two. Judge Ayres is also a past vice-president of the Inland Bird Banding Association.

We received a news clipping of a sighting of an Ivory Gull in Salisbury, Massachusetts on December 23, 1975, three days after our sighting. This may prove to be a winter of unusual movement among the northern species.

Again, let us know if we may provide any other needed information.

Sincerely yours,

Charles C. Ayres Jr.
Judge Charles C. and Darleen Ayres



81-AU

21 January 1976

Judge Charles C. Ayres
922 North Green Street
Ottumwa, IA 52501

Dear Judge Ayers:

Thank you for your note of January 11, 1976, concerning your observation of an immature IVORY GULL. As you know, before we can publish any record of such extraordinary magnitude, we require thorough documentation and written descriptions in the field at the time of observation (see American Birds reports) and close scrutiny of the written record by several national experts.

Things that we well require (and this is true for all extraordinary records regardless of the observers) are total descriptions as written in the field without consultation from books; why the bird was not one of the other similarly appearing species; why it was not just an aberrant coloration of a more common species; detailed drawings (in the field) of notable field marks--both while bird was sitting and flying; etc.

In reference to the bird in Massachusetts, several Iowa birders went to Massachusetts just to observe that bird--that bird was highly documented and photographed.

Again, thank you for your letter; I look forward to receiving the total description and detailed report of your unique observation.

Good birding!

Vernon M. Kleen
MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION
American Birds

cc: Pete Petersen

81-144

AB
To 10RC

CHARLES C. AYRES, JR.
922 N. Green St.

OTTUMWA, IOWA

AREA CODE 515
TELEPHONE
682-1697

February 21, 1976

Mr. Vernon M. Kleen
American Birds
Department of Conservation
605 State Office Building
400 South Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Mr. Kleen:

Thank you for your recent letter with the documentation blank. I have filled same out and enclose it herein. Sent a copy to Pete but this letter was delayed. The flu of one variety or other has been hitting hard around here. Am enclosing a separate with some further information which I think should be submitted and considered with the Documentation if this not out of the way. The blank does not have an over abundance of room.

We had a marvelous opportunity to study the bird from a distance of less than sixty feet. We had changed to another car and put our camera equipment in another car trunk and the bird flew when a car door was opened. While the light was good yet with color film, when the bird flew it went beyond camera range and with a haze over the water a picture was impossible. On one of the later trips over to try and locate the gull we did band a Snow Bunting which is our first and I believe is the first banded in the state. It is a beautiful bird.

I used to live in Chicago and later in Wheaton and birded extensively for years in the area. I think I knew every bush and tree in Jackson and Lincoln Parks in Chicago and also in most of the forest Preserves in the area. Just happened to run across a record of a Yellowthroat which I saw in Lincoln Park on May 10, 1920, and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher seen by the South Pond in the same bark in 1921. Did a lot of birding in Rosehill Cemetery in Rogers Park. But that is some time ago. I remember meeting a man in the park near the old Academy of Science. It was Orpheus M. Schantz and he was very active in bird organizations in Chi. I was just a boy but he was nice to me and I have never forgotten him.

Hope to meet you some time. Thanks for your assistance.

Sincerely

Charles C. Ayres

P. S. It was an Ivory Gull.

*If other Documentation forms
should be filled out by other parties
I'll be glad to see it if you feel advisable.*



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Re: IVORY GULL, *Pagophila eburnea*, (immature) seen at Rathbun Lake in Appanoose County, Iowa, on December 20, 1975, at 1:15 P. M.

My wife, Darleen, and I led a party of eight from Ottumwa, Iowa, to assist local birders of the Rathbun Lake area in taking a Christmas Census. All of us are members of the Ottumwa Bird Club which I organized over thirty years ago. At least three and possibly five of us are members of the Iowa Ornithologists Union of which my wife and I are past presidents. Three of us are also members of the Inland Bird Banding Association of which I served one term as a vice-president. I mention these facts not because I feel that we are incapable of misidentifying a bird but to show that we are not without experience in field work and recognize the importance of looking for and noting the various markings and characteristics necessary in identifying a bird. My own experience extends over the past sixty years.

We rode four persons to a car and each person was equipped with a pair of 7x35 prism binoculars. We also had our Bausch & Lomb Zoom 60 Balscope in the car in which we were riding but unfortunately our camera equipment had been put in the trunk in the interest of conserving space inside the car.

When we came upon the gull in question there were no others in the immediate vicinity though there were ring-bills out over the open water in the lake. We stopped immediately for it was apparent that it was something unusual. The beautiful white base color of the body and wings contrasted sharply with the black legs, feet and bill as well as the dark flecks on the flight feathers. From a distance of less than sixty feet we studied the bird through our glasses and the Balscope, afraid to get out of the car for fear of scaring the bird away. Fortunately the people in the other car felt the same way though finally when one of them opened their door the bird flew off well out of camera range before we could get our equipment out of the trunk and ready for use. We would have liked to have a picture to place with the collection of bird pictures we have taken over the years.

The identification was not a matter of me saying what it was. We studied it and noted the markings. We watched as it moved along the icy shore, its movements quicker than that of other gulls. The word nimble came to my mind as I watched it. At times it almost ran across the ice. The black bill was lighter at the tip and grayish at the base and was shorter than the head. We in our car all agreed that it could not be anything but an immature Ivory Gull and when the others got out of their car they had made the same decision. True we looked at our guides but that seems to be the usage. Both books only confirmed the identification made by eight experienced and competent birders. Any person in our position and with our equipment who could not recognize it as an immature Ivory Gull should trade their binoculars for a white cane.

Five later days we drove to the lake (45 miles one way) and tried to find the bird to no avail but not surprising with 180 miles of shoreline to cover. We obtained offal from freshly killed cattle and spread on the shore ice hoping the bird might be drawn to it. We alerted the authorities at the lake of our sighting. This was all we could do. Sorry that none of us were artists. We spent our time studying the bird and are abidingly convinced that it was an immature Ivory Gull.

Thanks for your consideration.

Charles C. Ayres Jr.

81-A4

This sounds great! Why didn't they inform other birders? This area is only 70 miles from Keokuk!!

AB

Acceptable. Will document.

Accept

CHARLES C. AYRES, JR.
922 N. Green St.

OTTUMWA, IOWA

AREA CODE 515
TELEPHONE
682-1697

I would ACCEPT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Re: IVORY GULL, *Pagophila eburnea*, (immature) seen at Rathbun Lake in Appanoose County, Iowa, on December 20, 1975, at 1:15 P. M.

Except for quibbling about how he determined size, I find no fault with the description. This is an interesting record, considering the Ivory gull (imm.) found in Mass. Dec 21 and the 3 imm. Ivory Gulls from Montreal in Jan.

My wife, Darleen, and I led a party of eight from Ottumwa, Iowa, to assist local birders of the Rathbun Lake area in taking a Christmas Census. All of us are members of the Ottumwa Bird Club which I organized over thirty years ago. At least three and possibly five of us are members of the Iowa Ornithologists Union of which my wife and I are past presidents. Three of us are also members of the Inland Bird Banding Association of which I served one term as a vice-president. I mention these facts not because I feel that we are incapable of misidentifying a bird but to show that we are not without experience in field work and recognize the importance of looking for and noting the various markings and characteristics necessary in identifying a bird. My own experience extends over the past sixty years.

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AB