

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPER BIRD SIGHTING
 FOR
 THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

23-90-22

Species: Common Black-headed Gull | Larus ridibundus
 (Vernacular name) | (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

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We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 14 April 1990 Time Bird Seen: ~10:00 to ~11:30 a.m.

Locality: Jim Hamm S.W.A. and Union Res.
Longmont, Colo.
 Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: KOWA TSN-4 20-60X scope / Nikon 9x30 binoc's.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: _____ Plumage: ad. breeding plumage

Light conditions: Excellent, bright & diffuse sun at all angles

Distance from bird, and how measured: As close as 100 yds., estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

I first saw the bird floating on the water of Jim Hamm pond with Bonaparte and Franklin's Gulls; it took off from here and flew to the water's edge where it perched on the muddy edge. Then it flew off to Union Res. where it flew around, high off over the water, then landed.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Plains reservoir

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Many, John Prather and Bob Andrews the morning I was there.

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

About 15" long gull. Approx. the same size as Franklin's Gulls nearby but more slender, especially in the head; also longer-winged and more slender overall than Franklin's Gull. Bill med.-sized (larger than Bonap. Gull), slender, slightly down-curved and dusky red overall without a black tip. Hood is dark chocolate-brown (not black) and shaped differently than Franklin's G's. being cut high on the hind neck and lower down on the throat. The hind border of the hood was mottled, grading into the white neck. Light gray mantle, superficially like Bonap. Gull but overall larger and longer-winged. Red legs & feet. Smaller white crescents around eye than Frank. Gull. In flight, wing pattern is like Bonap. Gull, with white wedge on outer wing & black-tipped primaries. Underwing a dark sooty color.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--on flight feathers i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Franklin's Gull: different wing pattern above; has light not dark underwing. Different-shaped black hood.
Bonap. Gull: Most similar, but Bonap. Gull is sl. darker gray above, smaller, faster wing-flapping; lighter underwing; had black bill & hood.
Little Gull: Smaller, different wing pattern; black hood w/ diff. shape
Laysan Gull: Much darker; larger, different wing pattern
Sabine's Gull: different wing pattern, no red bill.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I've had experience with all other black-headed Gulls ^{esp.} except Com. Black-headed. I've never seen breeding-plumaged Sabine's or Little Gulls.

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory .

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Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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