

18-1984

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Glaucous-winged Gull Scientific Name: *Larus glaucescens*
Date: Dec 11, 1984 Time: variable Length of time observed: several hours
Jan 14, 1985
Number: Feb 10, 1985 Age: first winter Sex: ?
1

Location: Salt Lake Landfill

Latilong: 5 Elevation (if known):

Distance to bird: variable Light conditions: variable

Optical equipment: binoculars, scope

Weather:

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

A large gull, light grayish brown plumage.
Bill was all very dark, thick, with more curvature especially in the gonys area.
Overall the bird appeared fairly uniform in color, especially on the back and breast. There was some mottling on the wing coverts but this was less than on the Herring and Thayers Gulls present. Legs appeared pinkish, gray.
The tips of the primaries when the bird was perched were the same color as the wing coverts and certainly not darker. They had even paler edges to the tips.
In flight the primaries were flashy white from below. There was no color all the way to the wing tips. From above they were just light grayish brown. The tail appeared light grayish brown and lacked the tail band seen on Thayers and Herring Gulls. There was no dark secondary bar on the wing.
In flight the gull seemed heavier and bulkier than the Thayers.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: None differentiated from the rest of the 1000s of gulls

Behavior: Sat for long periods of time on a frozen pond, would on occasion fly around and eat garbage!

Habitat: Dump with an adjacent frozen pond.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

Thayers Bill too thick with more curvature, primary tips too light, more evenly colored plumage, primaries from above lacked the tips that were darker than the wing coverts when the bird flew. Bulkier bird. Lacked dark secondary bar.

The combination of large, all dark bill, flashy white ^{under} primaries, no tail band, no dark secondary bar rules out all similar species.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

I have spent 100s of hours sorting gulls out at the Salt Lake dump.
I have seen Glaucous-winged gulls several times in California.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Significance of record in this area or the state:

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting X notes made later from memory

Observer: This is a description which is the combination of many observations
Signature:

Ella and Richard Sorensen

Address: 3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Feb 10 Bob and Georgeen Bond, Clyde Morris and Joelle Buffa

Feb 17 Steve and Verla Hedges, Bob and Georgeen Bond

Date prepared: February 17, 1985

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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