

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Mew Gull

Scientific Name: *Larus canus*

Date: December 21, 1985 Time: 3:00 PM

Length of time observed: 2 minutes

Number: 1 Age: First winter

Sex:

Location: Salt Lake Dump

Latilong: 5

Elevation (if known):

Distance to bird: within 10 feet

Light conditions: foggy but because of the nearness of the gull visibility was not hampered.

Optical equipment: 7x35 binoculars

Weather: foggy

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

The gull appeared somewhat smaller than the nearby Ring-billed. The head appeared rounder, and the dark eye larger than Ring-billed Gulls. The bill was dark at the tip and pale at the base and much thinner than Ring-billed. The predominant color of the under parts was a soft brown, especially on the belly and sides but had some white on breast. The head and nape were washed with brown. The primaries on the standing bird appeared brown. The brown central areas of the wing coverts had convex edges. There was tail band but the heavily marked tail coverts were heavily marked. This subterminal band and heavily mottled tail coverts lacked ^{much} contrast. The wing linings were a fairly even colored light brown with no great contrasts. Legs were dingy pinkish.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery:

Behavior: The bird circled over head several times then it momentarily on the ground then flew off.

Habitat: Salt Lake Dump.

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

Most points of difference were discussed under "description". The Ring-billed Gull has a thicker bill, lighter underparts, less mottled tail coverts, has a less rounded head and appear smaller eyed. An excellent point of differentiation which was looked for and clearly seen at close range, when the bird lit, is the convex center of the wing coverts. These are a harder brown and concave in the ring-billed mew.

What experience have you had with this and similar species: I have seen numerous Mew Gull in California. Last year I studied at close range a first-winter mew Gull for many days over a three week period. Photographs were sent to experts who verified the identification. I spend hundreds of hours at the SL dump last winter studying gulls and know Ring-billed well.

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

For this particular individual none. In the past at various field guides American Birds March 1980 - A method for separating juvenile and first winter Ring-billed Gulls and Common Gulls, and have had numerous discussions on the subject with Guy McCaskie, Paul Lehman and Jon Dunn.

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 _____ notes made later _____ from memory _____

Observer: Ella Sorensen

Signature: Ella D. Sorensen

Address: 3368 Marsha Dr.
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Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Date prepared: Dec 22, 1985

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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