

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Verification of Unusual Sight Record

Common Name: Lesser Black-backed Gull

Scientific Name: *Larus fuscus*

Date: JAN. 25, 1991 Time: 12:15 PM

Length of time observed: 4½ min.

Number: 1 Age: 4th WINTER⁺

Sex: ?

Location: SALT LAKE COUNTY
LANDFILL (adult)

Lat/long: 5

Elevation: 4250'

Distance to bird: 45-50 ft.

Light conditions: good, viewed at different
ANGLES to verify
back color

Optical equipment: 10x40 Binos

Weather: Cold/Clear

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

A noticeably dark-backed gull was spotted with California, Herring and Ring-billed gulls. The mantle color was proportionate darker ~~than~~ a California, as a California is to a Ring-billed. The gull was slightly larger than the California and noticeably smaller than the Herring. A fairly broad white area tipped the tertials and stood out in contrast between the dark gray mantle and black primaries. The primaries had a white tip to each (4 or 5). Underparts white, legs were yellow. Noticeable white mantle spot at base of scapulars. Head + neck was evenly streaked by soft brown that coalesced to form a darker area in a wedge shape from the eye across Crown to nape (in other words giving the eye a "punched" appearance). The bill was ^{dull} yellowish, longer and slightly broader than a Calif, but without the bulbous look to the tip (as in Herring). A dark smudge ran diagonally across bill approximately 3/8" from tip. A small area of red was forward to the smudge on lower mandible. Eye ~~light~~.

Voice or call notes:

none heard to disguise it in the cacaphony of other gulls, although it was calling at other gulls

Behavior:

was aggressive to gulls landing near it. Raised head and called at gulls as they lit, often running toward them.

Habitat:

The dump with approx 12,831 other gulls

Describe what specific features you saw or heard that caused you to reach your conclusion:

MANTLE COLOR OBVIOUSLY DARKER than even the Calif.

Yellow legs, light eye, Larger than Calif

Punctured out appearance to eye

I didn't notice a longer winged appearance while lit but seemed so in flight

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

Calif. - has dark eye, grayish green legs, bill color and shape different
scapular edging less contrasting, mantle color lighter than the questioned bird

Gr. Black-backed - much larger and darker

Western - has pinkish legs and a more bulbous bill, larger, and darker eye, head

Slaty-backed - larger, pink legs, head streaking less prominent less streak

Yellow-footed - much larger, doesn't wander

Hybrids - couldn't think of a combination that would be this size with yellow legs.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

None with Lesser-black-backed, fairly comfortable with western, Calif, Gr. Black-backed

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

P.J. Grant, Nat Geo, Audubon Master guide were consulted but description was taken in field

Significance of record in this area or the state:

Probably a first seen by human eyes, but probably the 8,432
to have passed through Utah

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

Sketches made after sighting

Observer:

CRAIG L. KREBSY

Signature:



Address:

314 S. 4500 W. West Point, Utah 84015

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Ella Sorensen

Date prepared:

1/26/91

Return this form to:

Utah Ornithological Society
C/O Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120

Mantle color proportionately darker than a Calit, as bill is to wing-billed. No bulbous appearance to end of bill.

Reddish Spot

DARK ^{small} approx 3/8" from tip running diagonally

HIGHT EYE

streaking brown around eye crown back of head

medium brown streaking down to neck mantle

DARK GRAY

DARK GRAY upper wing & back

Broad white trailing edge to wing in flight

white scapular spots

Contrasting white tertial edging (broader than Calit)

4 or 5 white tips of 1° noticeable in sharp contrast to black 1° feathers

(underparts and tail in flight were poorly observed)

5 to 6 min observation on

Ch. P. 1/25 AM