

1-13-1991

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Verification of Unusual Sight Record

Common Name: Lesser Black-backed Gull Scientific Name: *Larus fuscus*

Date: Jan 18 1991 Time:

Length of time observed: 3 minutes

Number: 1

Age: probable
winter adult
(fourth winter?)

Sex:

Location: SL landf. 11

Lat/long: 5

Elevation: about 4200 feet

Distance to bird: 40-50 feet

Light conditions: good

Optical equipment: 8x42 Elite binoculars

Weather:

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

Ring-billed and California were standing next to bird so direct comparisons were possible.

Gull was slightly larger than California. Mantle was obviously darker than any other gull ~~present~~ ^{observed} that day. It was as much darker than Calif than California was from Ring-billed. This was noted repeatedly with all three in ^{same} binocular field. The iris was pale yellow. There was fairly heavy streaking of a soft medium brown on the head. It was composed of streaks fairly even over the head down the nape, the least around bill. Around the eye it was darkest forming somewhat of a fan shape . The bill was thicker and longer than a Calif., not as thick or curved as Herring. If the bill were cut into 5 parts the basal 3 parts were yellow, next 1/5 consisted of a dark smudge with the diagonal sides that seemed to encircle the bill. ~~The last 1/5 was~~ The tip 1/5 was yellow. The primaries on the perched bird were black + contrasted with the slate gray back. 4 white spots were visible on the tips of the primaries. Fairly broad white tertial ~~to~~ edges contrasted with the dark back. When the gull flew there was a fairly broad white trailing edge.

Voice or call notes: None heard

Behavior: Sat on a snow bank on the edge of the rim of the basin where they were dumping & churning. Showed antagonism to other gulls.

Habitat: Large urbane dump.

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

gulls do not have specific fieldmarks rather everything must be added up and evaluated. Any dark backed gull in Utah is going to be unusual.

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

Greater Black backed, is much larger darker than the subspecies of Lesser BB we would expect, has pink legs (Craig kindly observed yellow legs)

Western - larger billed, pink legs

Hybrids are always possible but everything was so "classified"

Lesser - Black backed we were unable to come up with any hybrid that would resemble a Lesser BB

What experience have you had with this and similar species: I spent 3-4 days/week

2-3 hrs/day through winter of 1985 working on gull id. ~~Have been~~ Am familiar and aware of problems with Herring, California, Ring-billed, Thayers, mew, Glaucous winged. Have been studying Lesser backed literature last few months - have been looking for this gull - Actually this being an adult was one of the easier gull ID's. Western I have seen in California

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

Grant - we have been studying for years.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

State first

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

Observer: Ella Sorensen

Signature: Ella Sorensen

Address: 3868 Marsha Dr West Valley City UT 84120

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Craig Kneedy

Date prepared: Jan

1991

Return this form to: Utah Ornithological Society.
C/O Ella Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, Utah 84120