



360-1993-01

REPORT OF AN UNCOMMON OR RARE SPECIES AND/OR HIGH NUMBERS

SPECIES: Sabin's Gull, Xema sabini

OBSERVER(S) WRITING ACCOUNT: Paul Schwalbe & Glenna Schwalbe

OTHER OBSERVERS: Margaret Higbee and several other birders were present during our first observation, we were alone for our 2nd. and 3rd. observations.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 28 September 1993

DATE OF REPORT: 16 October 1993

LOCATION: Prince Gallitzin State Park, Cambria County

SIGNIFICANCE OF OBSERVATION: Only six state records for this species a/o May 1992

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH OBSERVATION WAS MADE: The individual observed was seen three different times, always in flight over the lake at the State Park. It was first seen at a distance across the lake through a telescope, at the south end of the lake at about 9:55 a.m. About an hour later it was again discovered at the north end of the lake near the dam breast, and watched for about 50 seconds and as close as about 60 yards. For both of these first observations the sky was overcast with winds strong enough to raise white-caps on the water. The third observation was at about 11:30 a.m., again at the southern end of the lake from a parking area just west of the main marina and visitors center. At this point the wind had died down somewhat and there was bright sunshine. The bird was watched as it flew west along the far shore of the lake in front of us, then as it crossed over the water towards us, and finally as it flew east along the near lake shore. This observation was the best of the three, as we watched it turn and dive toward the water surface, then up again to about 20 ft. over the water, exposing its head, tail, mantle and upper wing surface to us several times. This last observation was for about two minutes and as close as about 75 yards.

DESCRIPTION: Drawings were made and notes were taken on the spot in the field, during the second and third viewing of the bird. The following description is from these notes and comparisons are made with the aid of references. The typical Sabin's tricolored wing was obvious and easy to see. The black outer triangle, the large-based white middle triangle, and the inner triangle next to the body (and of the same color as the mantle) were all noted several times. The tail was forked with a black terminus. The black on the tail was at times difficult to see because it blended in well with the dark water and other background colors. At these times the tail appeared to be more deeply forked than it

actually was (see drawing). There were no strong markings on the head as there would be in adult basic plumage, a black collar was not present. Instead the grey of the mantle seemed to go up the nape, over the top of the head to the whitish forehead. This color on top of the head may have been brownish-grey. All this suggest that the bird was molting into 1st. basic from juvenile plumage. We did not note the bill or leg color.

Tail ---->



The color of the saddle and inner wing (mostly the lesser & median coverts) looked pure grey. However, this is not how the juvenile is described by the references we checked, which call these areas a "dark grayish brown" (Peterson 1990), "clove-brown" (Harrison 1983), "grey-brown" (Cramp et. al. 1983), and "has brown back and wing coverts" (Godfrey 1966). etc. The saddle and coverts of this bird did not entirely fit any of these descriptions. The illustration in Godfrey, Plate 34, 4 (b), is the closest we could find to the bird we saw. Cramp et.al., 1983, says that the moult sequence is "uncertain" for this species. Thus we concluded that this bird was in moult as stated above. Except for banking before a dive toward the water, the bird did not soar, the wings were in constant motion.

ELIMINATION OF OTHER SPECIES: Juveniles: Ross's Gull has wedge-shaped tail, Black-legged Kittiwake has dark collar on nape and black on coverts, Bonaparte's has dark ear spot, Little Gull has dark ear spot and crown.

EXPERIENCE: We have seen this species in Alaska on two different occasions.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: We used a Leitz 8 X 40B Trinovid and a B & L 8 X 42 Elite.

REFERENCES/LITERATURE CITED:

Cramp, S., Chief Editor, 1983. Handbook of the Birds of Europe the Middle East and North Africa. III:Waders to Gulls. Oxford University Press.

Godfrey, W. E., 1966. The Birds of Canada. Ottawa.

Harrison, P. 1983. Seabirds. Houghton Mifflin Co.


Peterson, R. T. 1990. A Field Guide to Western Birds. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Signed

Barbara Schwalbe Oliver P. Schwalbe

RARE SPECIES REPORT

360-01-1993

SPECIES: Sabine's Gull		NUMBER SEEN: 1
SIGHTING DATE: 9/27/93		SIGHTING TIME: 2:45 P.M.
LOCATION: Prince Gallitzin State Park	COUNTY & STATE: Cambria County, PA DISTANCE & DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN: 3 miles from Patton, PA. DIRECTIONS, IF APPLICABLE:	
HABITAT: Lake		
SIGHTING CONDITIONS:	LIGHTING: Overcast DISTANCE: As close as 20 yards to 100 yards EQUIP. USED: Celestron C-90 40x Scope, Zeiss binoculars 10x40 LENGTH OF SIGHTING: 30 minutes	
DESCRIPTION:  Immature	VOICE: ————— SIZE: Small gull, Bonaparte's size. Smaller than Ring-billed. PLUMAGE: Sooty gray-brown started at top of head extending down nape and back. Forked tail with dark band which seemed thicker in the middle. Wing pattern then went into a bright white triangular ANATOMY (bill length, leg color, etc.): shape — then into a very dark BEHAVIOR: narrow triangle. Bill appeared to be all dark. Flight was very acrobatic.	
		
FAMILIARITY WITH THIS & SIMILAR SPECIES:		
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES:		
HAS A PHOTOGRAPH BEEN TAKEN? Yes		IF SO, BY WHO? Gloria Lamer, Roger Higbee, Greg Cook
Have any additional observers filled out a rare species report? If so, who?		No
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Use back of form for more space):		
SIGHTING & REPORT BY: Gloria A. Lamer		
ADDRESS: RD#1 Box 183-d Penn Run, PA 15765		PHONE # 412 349-1159
SIGNATURE: Gloria A. Lamer	DATE: 9/28/93	

Barb + Franklin,

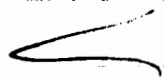
I've enclosed a photo of the Sabine's Gull to be used for documentation. The bird is pretty small in it but it does show the triangular wing pattern fairly well.

We haven't come across a good enough photo for publishing yet — maybe Rick Wiltraut?

I hope the two of you are doing well and getting some time to do some birding.

Take Care,

Gloria



Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

SABINE'S GULL - 1 was seen at Prince Gallitzin SP on 9/27 (G. Lamer). It remained through 10/2 and was seen by many birders from across the state.

Note: Barb, these are some of the observers we know about:

Alice Beatty, Greg Look, Margaret + Roger Higbee, Mr. Mrs. Dick Byers, Paul + Glenna Schwalbe, Pat Kawks, Sarah + Randy Gerrish, Georgette Syster, John Salvetti, Linda Wagner, Mary Jane Seipler, Eugene Zielinski, Dave Kyler, Rick Wiltraut, Deanne Hoffman, Joyce Hoffmann, Walf Shaffer, Frances Michny

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of**

Species: **Sabine's Gull (Larus sabini)**

Date of Sighting: **27 September 1993 to 2 October 1993**

Location: **PRINCE GALLITZIN STATE PARK**

County: **CAMBRIA**

Observer(s): **Gloria Lamer; Paul & Glenna Schwalbe**

Date of Submission: **1993**

Submitted by: **Gloria Lamer; Paul & Glenna Schwalbe**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **YES** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas	X							
N. Pulcinella	X							
E. Kwater	X							
R. Ickes	X							
G. McWilliams	X							
P. Schwalbe								X
J. Skinner	X							
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7</b>							
<b>DECISION</b>	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*F. C. Haas*

Date:

*9-25-94*