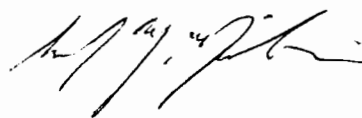


340-01-1989

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL (Larus ridibundus)

While observing a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls (Larus philadelphia) on April 1, 1989 off Beach 11 on Presque Isle State Park, I caught a glimpse of a dark underwing of a gull as it made a brief flight from one end of the flock to the other. After watching the flock of gulls for approximately half an hour the bird flew again for a longer period, allowing me sufficient time to identify the bird using 10 X 40 Zeiss Dyalyt Binoculars as an adult Common Black-headed Gull. The underside of the leading primaries were very dark contrasting sharply with the greyish underwing coverts and white underside. This characteristic marking was unlike the pale primaries of Bonaparte's Gulls which were flying directly next to the Black-headed Gull. The wings were noticeably broader than the Bonaparte's wings and the over all size of the bird was noticeably larger as well. The rosy pink underside of the Black-headed Gull was easily detected in flight, pinker than any Bonaparte's Gulls present. When the bird landed on the water with the Bonaparte's it was very difficult to locate, partially due to the distance (several hundred yards between the flock and myself). The next day after making several phone calls many other birders were present and the bird was found again in the same area. The bird was studied on the water with several types of scopes including an 8" Celestron with a 45 or 50X eyepiece. With this magnification and its light gathering capabilities the bird could be easily studied. The bird was in fresh alternate plumage. The head was very dark brown looking black at a distance. The hood did not extend as far down the nape as a Bonaparte's. The bill was noticeably heavier and longer than the latter with bill pigment very dark red most evident in the center of the mandibles. In direct comparison to the Bonaparte's the mantle and upperwing coverts were slightly paler and the larger size of the Black-headed was apparent. Viewing was good under variably cloudy skies (altocumulus and stratus). Observers present on April 2 were Ed Kwater, Frank & Barb Haas, Steve Santner, Bill Stocku, Dave Darney, Jim, Jean, and Sam Stull, and Joyce Hoffman all of who saw the bird.

Jerry McWilliams,



Description also submitted by Jerry McWilliams  
and published in PA Birds Vol. 3 no. 2.

PREPARED BY

DATE

Black-headed Gull - Presque Isle, Erie County, April 2nd

1989

Ed Kwater.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 1989, Jerry McWilliams called to inform me that he had just found an adult Black-headed Gull in alternate plumage in a flock of Bonapartes Gulls at Presque Isle. I arrived at Presque Isle the following morning at approximately 7.30 a.m. with a small group of birders from Pittsburgh. We assembled on beach 11 and proceeded to scan the Bonapartes flock. Jerry McWilliams, Frank & Barb Haas, Bill Stockw, Dave Dorney, Jean, Jim and Sam Stull and Joyce Hoffman were also present. After about an hour and a half Jerry re-located the bird in the gull flock. Following his directions I also found the bird in flight a couple of hundred yards away. During the next 2 hours I had at least 4 or 5 fairly brief views and noticed the following characteristics.

The bird was slightly larger than a Bonaparte's Gull with broader wings. The ~~bird~~ hood was dark chocolate brown, appearing black in some lights. The neck was white unlike the gray neck in Bonapartes Gull. The mantle and most of the upperwings were pale gray, slightly paler than in Bonapartes. The outer primaries were white with black tips. The underwing was slightly darker than in Bonapartes with the almost black underides of the primaries being the most obvious difference between the two species. This



character alone could be used to pick the bird out in flight from the Bonapartes flock, as it contrasted with the white, translucent underside of the primaries in the latter species. The underparts were white with a distinct rosy pink tinge. The bill was longer & heavier than on a Bonaparte's. It was very dark red, almost black and the color was not obvious most of the time. On the water the bird was much more difficult from the associated Bonaparte's and was easily lost in the flock if not seen alighting.

During the observation period, visibility was good under partly cloudy conditions. The bird was observed using  $\times 10$  binoculars &  $\times 20$  spotting scope. This was the third record for PA, the other two both being at Presque Isle.

Previous experience - hundreds of thousands in Britain and Europe. 2 others in North America.

Record No.: 340-01-1989

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # / of /

Species: Common Black-headed Gull

Date of Sighting: 04/01/89 - 04/02/89

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1989

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas		X					
F. Haas		X					
R. Leberman		X					
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS		3	4				
DECISION							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*B. Haas*

Date: 12-26-89