





340-01-1992

Litmer

PORC

RARE SPECIES REPORT

SPECIES: Common Black-headed Gull,
Larus ridibundus

NUMBER SEEN: one (1)

SIGHTING DATE: 22-23 February 1992

SIGHTING TIME: 22 Feb: 1030-1045 hr, 1330-1345 hr
23 Feb: 0945-1030 hr, 1100-1130 hr

LOCATION

COUNTY & STATE: Original sighting in Cecil County, MD
(22 Feb, 1030 hr). First PA sighting in
Lancaster County (22 Feb, 1330 hr).
All sightings on 23 Feb in PA.

EXACT SPOT (of first PA sighting): one-half mile below
end of the discharge canal of Peach Bottom
Atomic Power Station, 200 yards from the York
County shoreline, Conowingo Pond, Susquehanna
River. We did not see the bird enter York
County.

HABITAT: Open water of the Susquehanna River. Perched on
floating wood three times during the two hours of
observation. Also sat on the water.

SIGHTING CONDITIONS

LIGHTING: Variable, but often excellent, especially on
second day.

DISTANCE: 40 feet up to one-half mile; most often 50 to
100 feet.

OPTICS: Bushnell Customs 10X 40

LENGTH OF SIGHTING: Total observation time during the
two days equals about two hours.

DESCRIPTION

VOICE: No vocalizations heard.

SIZE: Approximately midway between Bonaparte's and Ring-
billed, by direct comparison.

PLUMAGE: First winter plumage, except that bill, legs,
and feet were reddish-orange, not yellow, and
hood was in early stage of development.

Head white except for dark spot behind eye, dark
band on hind-crown that connected the two spots,
and dark band across the crown that joined
the eyes.

Nape (below second band), side of neck, chin,
throat, breast, flank, belly, and undertail coverts
were all white.

Upperwing light gray with broad brown diagonal
carpal bar. Tips of primaries and secondaries
black; black was more extensive in the first

several primaries.

Underwing light colored, with relatively little black on outer primaries.

Tail white with broad black terminal band, wider than Bonaparte's terminal band. Terminal band complete, not broken.

ANATOMY: Eye black.

Bill longer than Bonaparte's, nearly as long and thinner than Ring-billed. Bill, legs, and feet reddish-orange, near color of Caspian Tern bill. Black tip on bill

BEHAVIOR: Never saw it fly more than 10 feet above the water; usually lower. Preferred popcorn over bread when both were offered. Displayed buoyant flight. Once went into an erratic swooping flight, diving up and down, back and forth, for 5-10 seconds. Swooping flight reminded us of feeding Black Tern.

FAMILIARITY: I have observed: Black-headed (1 adult in breeding plumage); Little (2 adults, breeding and winter); Bonaparte's (1000+ in all plumages).

COMPARISON: Larger than Little or Bonaparte's. More brown on upperwing than Bonaparte's. Reddish-orange bill with black tip clinches the identification.

PHOTOS: R.Schutsky, D.Heathcote, E. Witmer, J. Witmer.
Total of about 300 exposures.

ADDITIONAL RSR: Tom Garner. Schutsky and Heathcote writing article for PA Birds.

ALL KNOWN OBSERVERS: Bob Schutsky, Cathy Hicks, Lori Heathcote, Dan Heathcote, Larry Lewis, Jerry Book, Jason Book, Eric Witmer, Jan Witmer, Tom Garner. All observations by boat on 22-23 February. Bird was not relocated through 27 February with daily searches from shore and a 4-hour boat search with chumming on 27 February.

COMMENTS: First Lancaster County, PA record. Fifth PA record; all others from Presque Isle. Third(?) Maryland Piedmont record: I know of two from Conowingo Dam in recent years.

SIGHTING AND REPORT BY: Robert M. Schutsky, P.O.Box 10,
1921 River Road, Drumore, PA 17518.
717-548-2121 (work)
215-593-5924 (home)



DATE: 24 February 1992, from field notes taken 22 and 23 February 1992

Record No.: 340-01-1992

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Common Black-headed Gull

Date of Sighting: 22 February 1992 to 23 February 1992

Observer(s): Robert Schutsky, Eric Witmer

Date of Submission: 1992

Submitted by: Robert Schutsky, Eric Witmer

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater	X						
B. Haas	X						
F. Haas	X						
R. Ickes	X						
G. McWilliams	X						
S. Santner	X						
J. Skinner	X						
TOTALS	7						
DECISION	X						

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Bm Haas

Date:

2-27-93