

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL
Larus ridibundus

340-02-1992

Date; April 12, 1992

Time; 12:30 PM to 12:35 PM

Observer; Jerry McWilliams

Location; Off of Beach 11 on Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co., PA

Viewing distance; Approx. 100 yards

Weather; Variably cloudy (altocumulus), northwest wind less than 15 mph, temp. about 35°F

Optics; 10 X 40 Zeiss Dialyt Binocular

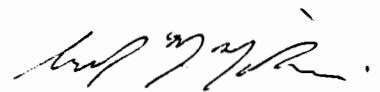
Description; I had searched through approximately 20,000 Bonaparte's Gulls (*L. philadelphia*), mostly a mixture of basic definitive, pre-alternate definitive, and alternate definitive plumages with less than 5% in immature plumages for 5 hours before discovering this bird. I identified at least 9 Little Gulls (*L. minutus*) as well; 1 in alt. I, 1 in alt. II, 2 or 3 in alt. def., and 4 or 5 in basic defin. or pre-alternate definitive plumages.

At 12:30 PM a loose flock of 150 or more Bonaparte's Gulls flew in to join a flock of about 4,000 birds. In this incoming flock I saw a flash of black. I immediately got on the bird and saw that it wasn't a Little Gull, but instead it looked like a large Bonaparte's Gull with the undersides of the outer primaries blackish which identified it as a Common Black-headed Gull. The bird landed approximately 100 yards straight out from me on the water in the large flock of Bonaparte's Gulls. At this time I could study the bird and had direct comparison with associating Bonaparte's on the water to add support to my identity. The gull was in alternate definitive plumage. Its entire bill was red and was longer and slightly thicker than the Bonaparte's. The dark hood looked blackish (looking darker than the grayish black hoods of the Bonaparte's) and extended to the back portion of the crown not down to the nape as in Bonaparte's. The mantle, upperwing, scapulars were lighter gray than the Bonaparte's. There was some pink blush on the upper breast. The gull was slightly larger than the Bonaparte's, but not large enough to make it easy to pick out of a flock.

After a couple of minutes of riding on the water, it flew with a few hundred Bonaparte's at which time the blackish undersides of the outer primaries could be seen again. The flying flock got caught in the wind and began twisting, turning, and breaking up at which time I lost sight of it. Many of the birds came back in and joined the flock on the water, but I could not relocate the Common Black-headed Gull.

This is the second Common Black-headed Gull I have seen in this plumage in Erie Co.. I have seen many in Switzerland.

Jerry McWilliams



Record No.: 340-02-1992

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Common Black-headed Gull

Date of Sighting: 12 April 1992 to 12 April 1992

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1992

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater	XXXX		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):

Date:

7/2/93