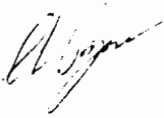


340-03-1997

To: Frank Haas and members of the Pennsylvania Ornithological
Records Committee
Pennsylvania Birds
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555-9726

From: Chuck Tague
422 Olympia Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15211
(412)488-8760
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Concerning: Black-headed Gull in Pittsburgh

December 12, 1997

On November 4, from 08:00 to 08:30 I observed a Black-headed Gull (Common Black-headed Gull), *Larus ridibundus*, roosting with a flock of first winter Ring-billed Gulls on the dock at the boat launch in Riverfront Park in Pittsburgh's South Side.

I returned at 09:00 and located the same gull foraging with ten Ring-bills at an outflow across the Monongahela River about a quarter mile up stream. The bird returned to the boat dock a few minutes later where I photographed it. It flew off around 09:40 and at 10:00, after not seeing it again, I left.

Local people regularly feed an aggregation of Rock Doves, Mallards, gulls and barnyard ducks and geese at the boat launch and I was able to drive my car to about 15 yards of the gull flock. Neither the Ringed-bills or the Black-headed Gull seemed concerned with my presence.

The gull was a winter adult, lacking the tail band and upper wing striping of first winter birds. It was noticeably smaller than the Ring-bills, approximately 70% of their size. It was much cleaner in appearance, with a slightly lighter color gray mantle and dark wing tips with 3 white slashes. On its head it had dark markings around its eye, giving it a large-eyed look. Behind its eye it had a dark ear patch. Two smudgy bands extended across its crown, one from its eye, the other from its ear patch. The feet were bright red and its short beak was dark red with a darker tip. In flight the underwings appeared very dark and on top a white band ran along the leading edge. The band was thin near the wrist but grew wider at the end of the outer primaries.

I compared the Black-headed Gull to three first winter Bonaparte's Gulls that later joined the flock. The Black-headed Gull was considerably larger.

The Black-headed Gull is a Eurasian species, breeding from Iceland across Northern Europe and Asia. It has recently been recorded with increasing regularity in North America, and it has bred in eastern Canada.

340-03-1997

The occasional records in Pennsylvania have been at Presque Isle and along the lower Susquehanna. According to Paul Hess (personal communication) a Black-headed Gull observed by Ron Leberman on July 17, 1994 at Pymatuning Lake is the only other record in Pennsylvania's Ohio River Basin.

I returned about 8:00 A.M. on November 5. Several birders were already there but the Black-headed Gull had not been seen. We watched and searched until 11:00 A.M. with no success.

River Front Park is nestled between the Monongahela River and the railroad in Pittsburgh's Southside at the end of 18th Street, three blocks or so west of Carson Street. It is about a mile and a half upstream from the Point, the confluence of the Monongahela and the Allegheny. The dock and boat launch is along the park road, just before it goes under the Birmingham Bridge.

References

- Godfrey, W. E. 1986. *The Birds of Canada. Revised edition.* National Museums of Canada. Ottawa.
- Harrison, Peter. 1985. *Seabirds: an identification guide..* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- National Geographic Society. 1987. *Field Guide to the Birds of North America.* Washington, D.C.
- Peterson, Roger Tory. 1980. *A Field Guide to the Birds*, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Santer et al. 1992. *Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania.* Pennsylvania Biological Survey, Contribution Number Four.

enclosures: Duplicates of slide transparencies of photographs mentioned in the article.

cc: Ed Kwater
222 Franklin Street
Evans City, PA 16033

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Black-headed Gull (Larus ridibundus)

Date of Sighting: 4 November 1997 to 4 November 1997

Location: PITTSBURGH

County: ALLEGHENY

Observer(s): Chuck Tague

Date of Submission: 1997

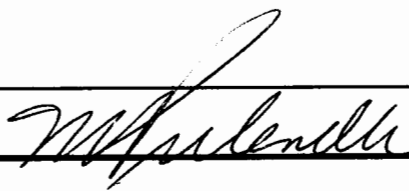
Submitted by: Chuck Tague

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES PHOTO YES SPECIMEN NO RECORDING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman	X							
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess	X							
R. Ickes	X							
J. McWilliams	X							
B. Reid	X							X
P. Rodewald	X							
TOTALS	5							2
DECISION	X							

Comments: 6/0/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

9/28/00