







340-01-2000

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Larus ridubundus

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: April 29, 2000

Time: 7:45 to 8:45 AM

Weather: Viewing conditions were good to excellent.

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Kowa TSN 4 at variable power

Viewing distance: as close as 200 yards.

Details of sighting and description: Chuck Gehringer, Randy Stringer and I were scanning the water off the south end of Gull Point when I identified a Black-headed Gull in alternate definitive plumage flying low over the water in the direction of the International Paper Company. At the time I spotted the bird it was about 1/2 mile away and heading in our direction. I alerted Chuck and Randy and they got on the bird as well. It continued to fly closer until it was about 200 yards away and then it landed on a sand spit off the south end of Gull Point with about 12 Bonaparte's Gulls (*L. philadelphia*), a Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*), and a Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*). We had good looks and a nice comparison with Bonaparte's Gulls. It looked like a large pale mantled Bonaparte's Gull when perched. The dark brown (looking black in poor light) hood extended down to the throat, across the face, behind the eye, and over the back of the head. The nape and neck were white. There were white eyelets above and below the eye. The bill was dark red (looking black in poor light) and heavier than the Bonaparte's bill. The mantle was paler gray than the Bonaparte's Gull. The breast, belly, undertail coverts, and tail were pure white with a slight pink blush to the lower breast. The legs were heavier than Bonaparte's Gulls and dark red not pinkish as in Bonaparte's of the same age. In flight the upper wings were the same color as the mantle. A white wedge beginning with the narrow end at the wrist extended to include the outer four primaries at the widest end. Most of the primaries were tipped with black. The undersides of the outer four or five primaries were black; they are white in Bonaparte's Gull. This was the only characteristic to separate it from Bonaparte's Gulls when it was in flight. I took two rolls of film of the gull. Most shots were taken while the bird was perched, but I also took some of the bird in flight. All photographs were taken through the scope. We last saw the Black-headed Gull flying through the channel in the direction of Presque Isle Bay at 8:45 AM

I have seen and identified six of the seven records in Erie County. All but one have been adults in alternate definitive plumage. In July 1998 I studied and photographed many Black-headed Gulls in various plumages in London, England.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Date of Sighting: 29 April 2000 to 29 April 2000

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

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	
G. Armistead	X							
D. Couchman	X							
P. Hess	X							
R. Ickes			X					
B. Reid	X							
P. Rodewald R. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	6		1					
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Date: 11/20/01