

340-02-2000

DOCUMENTATION OF SIGHT RECORD -- Paul Hess

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) -- 1 basic definitive

DATE: 1 December 2000 TIME: 1130

LOCATION: Presque Isle, Erie County, Pennsylvania; lake waters south of Leo's Landing.

OBSERVER: Paul Hess, 1412 Hawthorne St., Natrona Heights PA 15065
(other observer Sam Sinderson)

CONDITIONS: cloudy, but bright enough to see general plumage features at 200 yards.

OPTICS AND OBSERVATION: 8x32 Leica binoculars. We watched the bird in flight over the water for about 10 minutes at distances from 200 yards to as close as 25 yards.

DESCRIPTION:

Size -- slightly but noticeably larger in wingspan, length, and general bulk than the Bonaparte's Gulls flying over the water in the same area.

Plumage -- body and tail entirely white; head white with prominent dark spot behind eye and two faint dusky "stripes" extending from upper face across the crown; mantle light gray; upperwings the same light gray with a white wedge across primaries and black primary tips that gave a narrow dark edge to the outer wing; underwings dark dusky on the outer portion and when the bird wheeled at close range the inner portion appeared much paler or even whitish.

Bill and legs -- red.

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES: The gull differed conspicuously from the nearby Bonaparte's in its larger size, dark primaries on the underwings, and at close range the red bill.

COMMENTS: This was a remarkably quick discovery. We had just gotten out of Sam's car, and I raised my binoculars to begin scanning the flying gulls. In the first instant I was looking straight at this bird, immediately saw its dark underwings, yelled "Black-headed Gull" to Sam, and he quickly found it too.

EXPERIENCE WITH THE SPECIES: It was my third Black-headed in North America. The previous two were in December 1998 at Niagara Falls, Ontario, and Lake Arthur, Butler County, Pa. All three were in basic definitive plumage. I saw countless Black-headed Gulls during two trips to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, but most were in alternate plumage.

This account is written 4 December 2000, from brief notes made just after the sighting.

Paul Hess

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

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

Date of Sighting: 1 December 2000 to 1 December 2000

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Paul Hess

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Paul Hess

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

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					X
R. Jones J. Stanley			X					
B. Reid			X					
P. Rodewald B. Leburn			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6					1
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/0/1

Signature (Secretary):

Date: 12/24/01