

339-02-1995

SENECA ROCKS AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRD SIGHTING DOCUMENTATION GUIDE

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of rare or unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all except as a guide. Attach additional sheets as necessary. PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. The following checklist can be used to remind yourself of items that you want to include in this report. Not all of these points will be seen, nor are they all necessary to correctly identify a species, but not including something you saw lessens the value of your documentation. PLEASE REPORT WHAT WAS SEEN, NOT WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SEEN.

SIZE, SHAPE, AND PLUMAGE DESCRIPTION:

- Give size compared to a common bird
 Shape (warbler, thrush, hawk, etc.)
 Head: colors and pattern
 Eye: color, ring, stripe, lore, brow
 Bill: length, color
 Legs: color, length, toes (number, type)
 Upperparts: nape (neck), back, rump
 Tail: colors, shape, pattern, length
 Underparts: throat, breast, belly, flanks, vent
 Wings: colors, wingbars, length, wing linings, shape
 Parts of bird that couldn't be seen

BEHAVIOR:

- Posture
 Feeding method
 Flight pattern
 Vocalization
 Preening or sleeping
 Other species present
 Interactions with other birds
 Nesting (building, brooding, etc.)

NUMBER, SEX, AGE:

- Number of birds
 Sex by plumage or behavior
 Age by plumage or behavior

LOCATION:

- Place name (town, park, SGL, etc.)
 County and State
 Habitat (field, woods, water, plants, etc.)

CONDITIONS:

- Time of day
 Temperature
 Sky/cloud cover
 Precipitation/snow cover
 Water (depth, waves, % ice)
 Wind (speed, direction)
 Moon phase
 Sun (location in relation to you and bird)
 Length of sighting
 Distance to bird
 Optics (binos, scope, power of each)
 Experience with this species, years birding
 How were similar species eliminated?
 Field guide used (during and after sighting)
 Was description written from notes made during observation, notes made after observation, or memory? Was field guide used prior to writing field notes? No
 Other observers (are they reporting?)
 Sketch or photograph (sketches, no matter how basic, are extremely useful)

SPECIES Little Gull DATE SIGHTED 4/4/95

SIZE, SHAPE, AND PLUMAGE DESCRIPTION:

When compared to Ring-billed Gulls, it was very small, about 6-8" smaller in length. I originally mistook it as a Bonaparte's Gull, but when the bird was sitting, I noticed no black on the wings or back and when it was flying there was no black on the wings. The black on the head also came all the way down the back of the head, not stopping on top in the back like a Bonaparte's. It had reddish (reddish orange) legs, a black bill, black eyes, no eye ring. There was gray on the back when sitting, and the wings were gray underneath when flying, but the trailing edges and tips were white underneath. It was low light level. I can't say the gray underneath was darker, but it could have been.

It was definitely noticeable. The underparts were noticeable white. There were also 7 double crested cormorants on the creek with the bird, a first as I know on the Redbank in New Bethlehem.

Head

wing underneath



Black came down the back of the head



white tip + edges were easily seen against the gray.

No black was seen when it was sitting as should have been seen in a Bonaparte's Gull.

* After the sighting, I used Natl. Geographic + Golden Guides to confirm and eliminate species.

BEHAVIOR: The bird was sitting among 11 Ring-billed Gulls, I almost missed it until a few of them moved. I then almost signed it off as a Bonaparte's Gull. I sat there, then flew in a little circle back to where it was sitting and stayed that way until I left. Its flight was different than the Ring-billed's, more "drifty", not as powered or forceful. I observed the bird for about 5 minutes before I had to leave for work.

NUMBER, SEX, AND AGE: 1, unknown sex, mature (it seemed), breeding plumage

LOCATION: ON A SAND BAR ON Redbank Creek behind Willis's Garage in New Bethlehem, Clarion County, Pa.

CONDITIONS, TIME, WEATHER, OPTICS, EXPERIENCE:

I have seen Bonaparte's Gulls and did not see the Field MARKS on this one, I have seen Little Gulls in winter plumage at Niagara falls, but this is a first for breeding plumage. The time of day was early morning, barely light, with cloud cover and wind. It was 45°F and the night before was stormy, rainy, with heavy downpours as a front moved through, a second front was due to move through during the day. The time was about 7:20 AM. I was using an Orion 60mm spotting scope with a 25x lens, I did not have my Field guide with me. The bird was 100-200 yds away from me.

NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, DATE OF WRITE-UP: 4-5-95

John G. Fedak
221 WASHINGTON ST
New Bethlehem, Pa 16242

814-275-4086

Little Gull
337-02-1995

4-4-95 7:20 Am
Cloudy, windy, 45°F

New Kalamazoo on
Red bank creek behind willow
Garage

very small when compared to Ring-bill
Gulls [↑] About 6-8" smaller in length

Grayish back - no black in wings,
wing tips and trailing edges white
legs, black bill, black eye (no eye ring),
Black head, all the way back, underparts white.



not



Black seemed to cover entire
head, including the back part



white tip
Edges easily
seen
No Black seen when
it was sitting.

Bird was sitting on small bar with
11 ring-bill gulls - I first thought it was a
Bonaparte's Gull, which I have seen before com-
monly on the creek with ring-bills + herring.
There were 7 D.C. Cormorants in the water
near by when the bird flew, it flew
"daintily" - not like the ring-bills who seemed
more "forceful" in flight.

The weather The night before was
windy and rainy with heavy down pours

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Little Gull (Larus minutus)**

Date of Sighting: **4 April 1995 to 4 April 1995**

Location: **NEW BETHLEHEM**

County: **CLARION**

Observer(s): **John Fedak**

Date of Submission: **1995**

Submitted by: **John Fedak**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater				X				
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
S. Feldstein			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

J. C. Haas

Date:

5-1-96