

338-01-1988

1431 Bridge Street
New Cumberland, PA 17070
December 6, 1988

Pennsylvania Birds
Franklin and Barbara Haas
769 Forge Road
Media, PA 19063

#338

Dear Friends:

Ransay Koury suggested I write to you and give you my observations of the Franklin Gull we saw at the boat landing in West Fairview on August 29, 1988. I looked up my notes for reference. The gull was standing with a ring-billed gull and was definitely smaller. It was gray, not in adult plumage, with a darker patch on each side of the head, and had a dark gull bill. When the wings were folded two or three white spots showed on the back primary tips. If it had not been for the white spots I might have thought it was a laughing gull although it was too small.

I examined the gull through 9x26 binoculars and a twenty power scope. It was about 100 yards away (Ramsey's estimate). After checking all the references I cannot see that it could be anything but a Franklin's gull.

I regret that I did not take more notes--never dreamed that it was so important. I am sorry my observations are not more detailed.

Sincerely,

Anne Kutzy

G. Anne Kutz

Verification of Unusual Sight Record

SPACE

Species: Franklin's Gull

Date: 8/27, 8/29, 9/17/88

Number: one

Age: adult

Sex: unknown

Locality (exact address or other specific information to describe location, such as x miles north of x intersection):

Where the Conodoguinet Creek joins the Susquehanna River - West Fairview Boat Launch

THIS

County: Cumberland

City: Boro of West Fairview

Elevation:

Time: 8/27 noon to 1pm

Length of time observed:

8/29 10:30 to 11:30

Habitat: 9/17 2pm to 2:30 River.

IN

Distance to bird: 50 feet to several hundred yards. Light conditions: good to excellent

Optical equipment: Mirador 10x40 Binoculars, Bushnell 20power spotting scope

Observer: Ramsay J. Koury, Jr.

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

WRITE

Anne Kutz

DESCRIPTION. Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern color, and any unique features.

NOT

This bird was associating with a group of 25-30 ring-billed gulls, but was noticeably smaller. Its bill was smaller, and dark. The top and back of the head were dark and the dark area extended onto the cheek. The eye had white above and below in a broken eyering.

DO

The breast and stomach were white. The back and upperwings were dark gray. A white band separated the gray from the black ~~with~~ wingtips. There were prominent white tips on the primaries. The underwing was pale with dark tips (white tips visible on primaries). The legs were dark. Tail was pale.

Behavior:

The gull sat in shallow water, ^{and} on several small islands with ring-billed gulls. It did fly around several times giving excellent views of the wing pattern. No call was given.

DO

Voice and/or call notes:

none observed

NOT

Describe what specific feature(s) you saw and/or heard that caused you to come to your conclusions:

The small size, small bill, extensive dark on head, and most importantly the wing pattern.

WRITE

What similar species might it have been, and how were these eliminated?

Laughing gull - Does not have either white tips on primaries or white band between gray wing and dark tip. Also too much black on head for winter plumaged bird. Bill smaller.

What experience have you had with this and similar species?

I have seen thousands of Laughing Gulls, but only 2 Franklin's Gulls. One of these, however, was also an adult in winter plumage, very identifiable by the

IN

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this wing pattern description:

"Seabirds", Nat'l Geo's Birds of America.

Significance of record in the area and/or the state:

very unusual.

THIS

Additional material (attach drawing (drawings encouraged), photograph, tape recording if available):

Signature: Ramsey Hawryl

Address: 123 Old Ford Dr
Camp Hill, PA 17011

717-761-1871

SPACE

Date prepared:

notes taken day of sightings.

Additional details

The plumage of this bird appeared to be the same each time I observed it. Since the sightings covered three weeks (assuming it was the same bird) I assume the bird had already finished molting.

I have never seen a winter-plumaged Laughing Gull with this extensive black on the head, nor did I find any illustration of a Laughing Gull in winter plumage with this amount of black on the head.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # / of

Species: Franklin's Gull

Date of Sighting: August 29, 1988

Observer(s): Ramsay Koury, G. Anne Kutz

Date of Submission: 1988

Submitted by: Ramsay Koury, G. Anne Kutz

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas			X				
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman		X					
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner				X			
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS		1	5	1			
DECISION		#	X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Bm Haas

Date:

8-18-91