

344-01-1997

Ward Dasey  
29 Ark Rd  
Medford, NJ 08055  
609-953-1685

Atten: ~~Laurie Larson~~ Nick Pulcinella

Laurie, if you think the committee would want to look at this, it's OK with me. If you want them, I'll forward my original notes and some bad sketches. You might pass on that this bird was and may still be present. Interested parties should be looking at this anyway: so many pebbles are likely to have a gem or two.

**FIRST WINTER MEW GULL (larus canus)**

Location - Florence, NJ

Date - 1/25/97

Observers - Ward Dasey, Alfred Driscoll

Optics - Questar, and Kowa TSN-4, X30 wide.

Light conditions - medium overcast, sun to south, good conditions.

Distance form bird - 150'

Length of observation - 1:30PM to 1:50PM

Experience with species - I lived in central California for some 10 years. Al has seen many. We did check the Geo Guide on site; of some help. After I recorded my notes from memory at home and checked Al Driscoll's recollections of the bird I consulted the article in BIRDING on Common/Mew/Ring-billed Gulls, and several other publications such as SEABIRDS and GULLS.

THE BIRD - Overall a little smaller than a Ring-billed Gull, browner on head and nape, slender bill, round head, big eye. Frankly we got on it because it looked a little different than the Ring-bills, more heavily mark with brown.

**IMPRESSIONS OF BIRD WHILE ON THE WATER**

HEAD - lots of brown streaky spots. Head more brown on head and nape than any similar age Ring-bill.

BILL - looked thin compared to Ring-bills. Dark at end and a dull flesh toward the base.

MANTLE - fully molted to an adult mantle as expected. Dark gray in color. We made a carefull comparison with the 20 or so Ring-

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bills of all ages with it. All had a pearly gray mantle, none approaching the dark gray of this bird; this bird approached but did not reach the gray of a Lesser Black-backed Gull nearby. The gray was closer to Lesser Black-backed than Ring-billed Gull.

PRIMARIES AT REST - solid dark gray-brown.

UPPER TAIL - all brown. Al thought it seemed slightly lighter towards the rump. I did not see this. This bird was not band tailed like a Ring-billed or a Common Gull.

CHEST - brown spotted streaking.

BELLY - not visible because the bird was on the water.

#### IMPRESSIONS OF BIRD IN FLIGHT

BELLY - brown with some spotting, darker than chest. Ring-billed Gulls in flight there showed a white belly.

UNDERWING - an even light brown, this included the primaries.


UPPERWING - dark brown primaries. Al noted the secondaries were a lighter brown, darker than the whiter Ring-billed secondaries. I did not note secondaries.

TAIL - above and below the tail feathers were all dark brown, no suggestion of a tail band. There was brown barring on the rump.

CONCLUSION - This is at least a good candidate for a Mew Gull. I have been looking for this species among Ring-bills since I arrived from the west coast. Until now I have not even had a good possibility. I feel that several of this birds field marks lead to the conclusion it's a Mew. First of all I find characteristics like the round headed, slender bill, big eye, equivocal for the purpose of Mew Gull ID. Many first winter Ring-billed Gulls look like this, including several at Florence that day. For me the notable field marks were these: 1. the all dark brown tail; 2. the brown belly; 3. the dark gray mantle. Especially the first and third characteristics are hard to imagine into existance in the perfect light we had. I guess that Common Gull would be the more expected "canus" on the east coast. This bird just didn't add up to a Common Gull any more than it added up to a Ring-billed Gull.

I realize that with some species, such as those Thayer's type gulls last year, you are in need of photographs to prove their occurrence. I'm wondering whether I should bother to report sight records on these birds at all? My take on such birds is that all their occurrences or possible occurrences should be reported whether they are destined to be excepted or not.

Sincerely

  
Ward Dasey, with Al Driscoll's approval.

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Mew Gull (Larus canus)

Date of Sighting: 25 January 1997 to 25 January 1997

Location: DELAWARE RIVER

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Ward Dasey

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Ward Dasey

Written Description: YES

Photo: NO

Specimen: NO

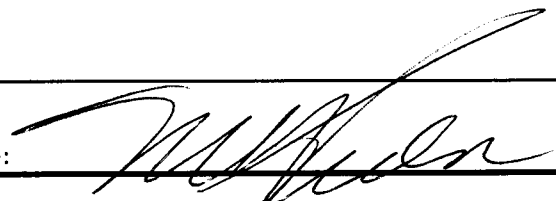
Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
K. Parkes								X
R. Ickes				X				
P. Hess			X					
J. McWilliams								X
T. Floyd			X					
TOTALS			4	1				2
DECISION								

Comments:

4/1/2 GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

8/24/00