

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

8 February 2001

Randy C. Miller
607 Woodland Dr.
Manheim, PA 17545-9553

Dear Randy,

Thank you for submitting documentation for the Swainson's Hawk at Gov. Dick Tower on 14 September 1997, the Mew (Common) Gull at Memorial Lake State Park in January 1998, and the Thayer's Gulls at Memorial Lake in December 1997. After careful review, the committee regrets that it cannot accept these records.

On the hawk, a majority of members felt that the bird was most probably a Swainson's, but several believed that the description was not sufficient to rule out melanistic individuals of other Buteo species.

On the Common Gull, one member voted to approve it, but the other six were reluctant though they thought the bird was likely a Common. Among the latter group's doubts were concerns about the "white spots" on the outer primaries and a "blackish...carpal bar," neither of which would be expected on a first-basic Common Gull.

On the Thayer's, one member voted for acceptance, but the majority who declined listed several troubling features of the description: the pinkish-based black bill (first-winter Thayer's should have an entirely black bill at least through December); no mention of the bird's size relative to other species, and no description of the tertials (fairly solid in Thayer's; mottled in Iceland). These latter members felt that more detail would have been necessary to rule out a dark Iceland or an intergrade Thayer's x Iceland conclusively.

The committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not mean that the bird was not the species reported, but rather that the committee believes the documentation submitted does not support the identification with certainty. We hope that this will not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rarities you may find in the future.

Finally, the committee apologizes for the unacceptably long delay before all members were able to vote on the record. Circumstances beyond our control caused the problem, and we believe that we are back on a timely track.

Sincerely,

For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

P.S. Beginning this year observers will receive postcards acknowledging that the committee has received their documentation. In addition, whereas observers formerly were notified only when reports were not accepted (in disappointing or irritating letters like this one), they will now receive cards announcing that their records *have* been accepted.

Records #186-01-1997, 344-01-1998, 348-04-1997

344-01-1998

RARE SPECIES REPORT

SPECIES: Common Gull Larus Canus		1 st Winter	NUMBER SEEN: 1
SIGHTING DATE: 1 Jan. 1998		SIGHTING TIME: 3pm - 4:15pm	
LOCATION:	COUNTY & STATE: Leb. Co. PA DISTANCE & DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN: Memorial Lake State Park DIRECTIONS, IF APPLICABLE: 7 miles north of Annville on 934		
HABITAT: Mostly frozen apx. 100 acre lake			
SIGHTING CONDITIONS:	LIGHTING: mostly cloudy DISTANCE: 100 yards EQUIP. USED: 15x45 Bushnell Spotting Scope LENGTH OF SIGHTING: 1 1/4 hour		
DESCRIPTION:	VOICE: not heard SIZE: slightly smaller than Ring-billed Gull PLUMAGE: Head-white but streaked from crown to bottom of neck with dark brown. Heavier streaking on head. Side of neck streaked. White around bill base. White throat and underparts with a few spots on upper breast and flanks. Mantle and scapulars dark grey. Rump appeared white. undertail appeared white. white tail with solid black tail band. ANATOMY (bill length, leg color, etc.): Bill-apx. Ring-billed Gull length but thinner. Grey-pink base with black tip. Legs Grey-pink. Eye - dark. BEHAVIOR: Standing on the ice and swimming. With apx. 500 Gulls roosting for the night.		
FAMILIARITY WITH THIS & SIMILAR SPECIES: This is my first First Winter Common Gull. I saw the Adult Common Gull in Berks Co. on 6 Jan. 1992.			
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES: Smaller than Herring Gull and Ring-billed Gull. Dark grey mantle and scapulars obvious at all angles.			
HAS A PHOTOGRAPH BEEN TAKEN? no IF SO, BY WHO?			
Have any additional observers filled out a rare species report? If so, who?			
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Use back of form for more space): Description cont. - Wings - upper. Blackish outer primaries with to white spots. Blackish secondaries and Carpal-bar. underwing not seen well. Wing tips beyond tail at rest. Tertiaries brownish with white edges. Greater coverts grey-brown. Lesser + Median coverts brownish-grey with whitish edges. The head was roundish.			
SIGHTING & REPORT BY: Randy C. Miller			
ADDRESS: 607 Woodland Dr.		PHONE #(717) 664-3778	
Manheim Pa 17545			
SIGNATURE Randy C. Miller		DATE: 1/16/1998	

344- -1998

On 1 Jan. 1998 a beginner birder and myself went to Memorial Lake in Leb. Co. The lake was almost frozen over. A 50 yard strip of water 100 yards away had a large concentration of gulls. 450 Herring Gulls, 8 Great Black-backed Gulls, 4 Lesser Black-backed Gulls (2 1st winter, 2 adults) 7 Iceland Gulls (all 1st winter) 15 Ring-billed Gulls and another odd gull.

The first thing that I noticed on the gull was its dark grey back. I watched it swim in the water and walk on the ice. At all angles it was darker grey than the adult Herring Gulls and adult Ring-billed Gulls. I studied the gull off and on for 1 1/4 hr., 3pm to 4:15. Then the flock of gulls flew up in the air. Most went back down on the ice, but a few birds headed south. I could not find the gull after 4:15. All the Ring-billed Gulls were gone. This bird, based on the field marks, appeared to be a 1st winter Common Gull.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Mew (Common) Gull (*Larus canus canus*)

Date of Sighting: 1 January 1998 to 8 1 January 1998

Location: MEMORIAL LAKE STATE PARK

County: LEBANON

Observer(s): Randy Miller, Bruce Weaver

Date of Submission: 1998

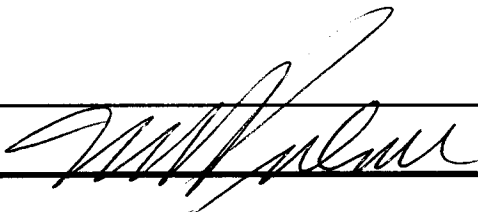
Submitted by: Randy Miller

WRITER 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	
D. Couchman				X				
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes				X				
J. McWilliams				X				
B. Reid			X					X
P. Rodewald					X			
TOTALS			1	4	1			12
DECISION				X				

Comments: 0/5/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 9/28/00