











PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

2469 Hammertown Road  
Narvon, Pennsylvania 17555-9726

8 June 1994

Frank Haas  
2469 Hammertown Road  
Narvon, PA 17555-9726

Dear Frank,

Thank you for sending documentation on the California Gull at Blue Marsh Lake on 9 December 1992 to P.O.R.C. After careful review, the committee felt that some of the characters depicted in the photographs and mentioned in Dean Kendall's written description suggested that the bird could in fact have been a Herring Gull. The bill did not seem long enough for a California Gull and there seemed to be too much black at the bill tip. The head seemed to be too pale for California Gull and seems to support Herring Gull more. The bird does not seem to show a dark bar on the greater coverts as should be found in California Gull. The presence or absence of pale primary windows cannot be discerned from the photographs, and the description does not mention this (a crucial character). The bird is mentioned as small in size but there is so much size variation in Herring Gulls that this cannot be used as a concrete character in support of California Gull.

Please do not let this discourage you from submitting documentation on any rarities you find in the future.

Sincerely,



Ed Kwater  
Chairman

cc: Dean Kendall

Record # 346-01-1992



346-01-1992

The following is a transcript of the notes sent by Dean Kendall re the 1st winter California Gull at Blue Marsh L., 9 December 1992. It is done only to make the reading easier. An @ sign means I had trouble discerning the precise word(s).

California Gull *Larus californicus*

Observers: Jason [Horn], Ernie Schiefer, Ed Barrell, Warren Faust.

Location: Blue Marsh swim beach  $\pm$  1430-1630.

Weather: Clear and sunny, little wind, mid-30s

First spotted it maybe 15 minutes before 1600 on the beach with Ring-bills and near a few 1st winter Herring at < 100 yds; the smaller size sweeping with binoculars is what first drew my attention; with the scope the bill jumped right out: long and slender, clean pink with a near dip-in-ink black tip (distal 1/4, or only very slightly more); very shortly then the whole group lifted, and we followed the bird in flight to where it lit out on the water at maybe 400 yds max; wings extended a fair bit beyond tail but @  $\pm$  not Herring; on the water the ass end of the bird stuck up higher than the Herring/Ring-bills or so it independently struck several of us. ; watched it there among and successively near various ad. and 1st and 2nd yr. Herring (including apparent 1st yr Herring with bicolor bill) and Ring-bills, and while it eventually swam to within 200 yds or less and then flew back to the beach, 20 or so minutes later. Subsequently we were able to study it sitting and repeatedly in flight at 100 yds and less over the next  $\pm$  1/2 hr till it flew off with others heading out maybe toward Ontelaunee or Reading, getting on 1645.

In comparison with all the Herrings it was at one time or another adjacent to, including smallish ones with rounded heads. This guy always appeared still smaller in both size and bulk (the head also always smaller though not dramatically more so than the smallest Herrings; head quite rounded; the bill thinner than all but the smallest Herrings, with little if any thickening at gonyial angle (some smallest Herrings similar in that way, although most Herrings showing a definite swelling there; my quite strong impression however was that proportionate to the head size, the bill was longer (also in relation to its thickness) than any of the Herring; at certain angles it appeared that the black of the tip of lower mandible reached very slightly farther back than that of upper, but in most views it appeared sharply cut off square across; basal and 3/4 of bill a clean pink (in bright sunlight sometimes looking rather bright pink); legs pink (Warren Faust; for all my study I never got or took a look myself); the dark eye stood out very boldly on the pale brown face; I didn't take field notes and cannot now fully detail the body plumage, but it was similar in pattern to 1st winter Herring with indistinct patterning of mantle/coverts brownish (in some lights some of the blotching on mantle grayish brown) reaching onto the secondaries/tertials making them lighter than primaries, which however were not very contrasting dark (i.e. not black-brown, just darkish brown); the bird was rather light about the face/throat/upper breast, without that giving it any of the sort of white-headed look one sees with some Herring (and many others); one thing I took particular note of was the breast/belly/flanks appeared very evenly pigmented, not dark just even and solid, without marking or blotching, a palish medium brown or gray-brown; as best I recall in flight the tail solid dark (brown) contrasting with upper tail coverts but not outstandingly so (i.e., no black on white effect). Wings: pattern similar to 1st winter Herring with fairly strong seeming - single dark secondary bar, dark outer primaries with something of the window-effect of Herrings pale inner primaries, but only weakly so; the rest of wing (the secondary coverts)  $\pm$  solid or evenly mottled, but darkish brownish/grayish; I didn't try to compare wing shape/proportion to Herring.

(??): I could discern no 2nd secondary bar. The texts (and few pictures) I've seen on this are not as one voice on this-need still to check Grant. Despite the single secondary bar, one would be hard put to make this bird into a Herring Gull; in every other respect the bird was distinct, enough so that either on shore or way out on the water a quick scan was all that was needed to relocate it, it stood out so. Not even the smallest, most round-headed, most 2-tone billed Herring would make the grade. I've seen (since I've recently had cause to look) 1st winter Herrings here that show a double secondary bar; ?how about a California Gull that shows only a single?



p7  
1992

(Clessr b-b gull?)

1986

Calif Gull, cont.

August

164

Sunday

(9 dec cont'd)

17

229-136 Week 33 PAYE week 20

12th after Trinity

8 am

make the grade, i've seen (since i've recently had cause to look) 1st winter here. That shows a double 'sec' bar; how about a Calif. that shows only a single?

Clessr. b-b. gull, 1st winter? pale headed indiv. w even, drk on white checkering from mantle down to the sec's; size and proportion in range; all drk bill; in flight showing ± all (evenly-mottled) drk wing (save fr prim's) rather than broad or double drk trailing bar; no apparent 'window' (no pale imprints)

12 noon

full moon / full lunar eclipse tonight, beginning maybe < 1/2 hr after sunset / moonrise, and lasting ~ 3 1/2 hrs from start to finish. (begin 4:59 EST, full drk 6:06 EST) lasting ~ 1 hr 15 min; back to full 8:29 EST) with binos one could see the unit moon quite clearly

2

red fox Ed spotted it across the lake, on the shore of the wooded peninsula that juts out from the W. shore, just above dam; ran along the beach a few hundred yds before briefly sitting then disappearing into the brush; didn't act at all sick - probably just unexpected and unwanted company.

5

iceland gull 3 (1 2nd winter, 2 1st winter) the one 1st winter a sm. q; the 1st 2 1st winters a saw (together) over here (4 dec) we both Irish 'O's, (ie not particularly round-headed)

August

M T W T F S S M T W T F S S M T W T F S S M T W T F S S M T

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Record No.: 346-01-1992

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **California Gull**

Date of Sighting: **4 December 1992 to 9 December 1992**

Observer(s): **Dean Kendall, Frank Haas**

Date of Submission: **1992**

Submitted by: **Dean Kendall, Frank Haas**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater							X
B. Haas				X			
F. Haas							X
R. Ickes							X
G. McWilliams						X	
S. Santner				X			
J. Skinner						X	
TOTALS				2		2	3
DECISION				X			

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

Date: 7/2/93