

~~Allen Laurie Larsen~~

Allen: Nick Pulcinella

346-01-1997

## NEW JERSEY RARE BIRD COMMITTEE

CALIFORNIA GULL (Larus Californicus)

LOCATION - Florence, Burlington County, NJ

OBSERVER - Ward Dasey

29 Ark Rd

Medford, N 08055

DATE - March 12, 1997

TIME - about 4PM

TIME STUDIED - about 15 minutes

OPTICS - Kowa TSN-4 30 wide

DISTANCE - maybe 75 yds. close enough for eye color on the Herrings

FAMILIARITY WITH SPECIES - spent almost a decade in coastal California

OTHER GULLS PRESENT - several thousand Herring Gulls, several hundred Ring-bills, a few Iceland, a Glaucous, and several Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

LIGHT CONDITIONS - very bright, sun over my left shoulder, bird slightly upriver to the right in front of the large flock of gulls with a few Ring-bills. The light washed out the gulls making even the Lesser Black-backs look rather pale. Still the California was darker backed although this would have been easy to overlook on a quick scope sweep. I picked the bird out first by its bill and then noted it was slightly darker. Once the back color was noted it was easy to refind. (I have noted from studying Herring Gulls that the unmolted hooded birds look darker backed than fresh plumaged birds. My guess is a darkening with wear. By March 12 nearly all Herrings on site had molted. The reverse seems to be true on first winter birds, they get lighter).

AGE - adult in fresh plumage.

BILL - much thinner than a Herring Gulls. Just to be sure I double checked the nearby Herrings. Longer and thicker than a Ring-bills. Red Gony's mark with a black mark in front. The black mark entered the upper bill but didn't seem to reach the top of the upper bill.

HEAD - rounded, but not high rounded like an Iceland. Not flattened like a Herring, and small compared to a Herring. There were a couple of leftover winter marks on the side of the hind neck.

EYE - dark, looking a bit larger than a Herring Gull eye. I could easily see the light eye color of the Herring Gulls and the Ring-bills at this distance. The bird was a bit far away to pick up the orbital color.

GAPE - several times I could see the red gape. The bird called a lot and at certain angles the red would light up.

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BACK - as stated above it was perceptibly darker than the Herrings, and Ring-bills, but not as dark as a Lesser Black-backed.

UNDERPARTS - bright white, as was tail.

PRIMARIES - black with 4 windows. They were longer than the nearby Herrings and the windows were further apart. This helped give the bird a stretched appearance.

LEGS - several times the bird lifted off the water and set down again. The legs were yellow, a fairly bright yellow. Their brightness was probably an artifact of the light conditions which made all gulls legs look brighter than usual.

STRUCTURE - how to put this into words. The bird was light bodied, slender when compared to Herrings. It looked low and stretched out on the water. It was not chesty like a Herring. Even when Herrings have their heads low they look rather blocky; not this bird. The light bodied nature of the bird was also notable when it took wing.

CERTAINTY - There you have it. I will admitt I have actively been looking for a California Gull at Florence. In the past month I've spent at least 40 hours combing the Herring Gulls for anything that looked different. Florence has provided a unique opportunity to educate myself on large gulls. I've been struck by just how large of a range there is in this one species. For many individuals in this flock I will never be completely certain of their species. This is especially true for some smaller first winter Herring types. Another thing I've noticed on some adult Herrings is a black mark on the lower bill in front of the red gonys. In none of the Herrings did this mark intrude into the upper bill giving an almost ring-billed effect. I feel certain of the identity of this bird. This was no quick bad look at something that got away. Hopefully someone else will find it and contribute their own notes or photos. I don't much care to be hanging out alone on this one.

Sincerely,

Ward Dasey

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

Date of Sighting: 12 March 1997 to 12 March 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

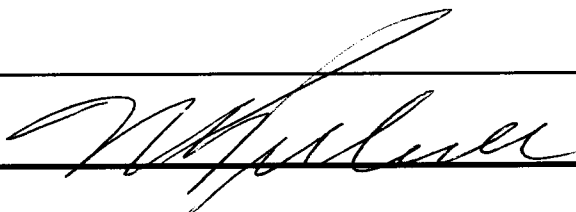
Recording: NONE

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			<del>X</del>			X		
J. McWilliams								X
T. Floyd			X					
TOTALS			<del>2</del>			1		4
DECISION								

Comments:

2/1/4 GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

8/24/00

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation - Round Two

Species: California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

Date of Sighting: 12 March 1997 to 12 March 1997

Location: DELAWARE RIVER

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Ward Dasey

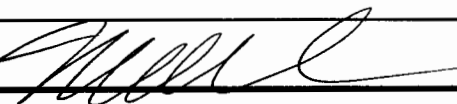
Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Ward Dasey

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead								X
F. Haas			X					
R. Ickes								X
P. Hess					X			
D. Couchman					X			
J. McWilliams								X
P. Schwalbe			X					
TOTALS			2		2			3
DECISION					X			

Comments: 2/2/3

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

1/19/01