





346-01-2002

California Gull

Larus californicus

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: Nov. 18, 21, 22, and 23, 2002

Time: many times of the day from about 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Weather: Mostly cloudy on all four days

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Viewing conditions: good on all days

Viewing distance: Perhaps as close as 150 yards

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and TSN 4 Kowa scope at 35X

Description: Dave Wilton and Ben Coulter called me at work and told me they had found an adult California Gull in basic plumage off beach 11. I immediately drove out to beach 11 and found the bird within 15 minutes. It was sitting with a few hundred gulls which were mostly Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. I saw it again the next three days in the same area. I observed the gull standing on a sand bar, swimming in the water, and in flight. When standing with Herring Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls it was intermediate in size between the two species. Its mantle was slightly darker gray than the Herring and Ring-billed Gull which could be difficult to discern in poor light or when it was turned at an angle. The darkness of the mantle color was easiest to see when it was on the water with other adult Herrings and Ring-billeds. The bill was dull yellow and as long as a Herring Gulls, but narrower, especially at the gonydeal. There was a red spot at the gony with an adjoining black spot in front that extended as a thin black line across the upper mandible. The head was quite rounded with a sloping forehead. Brown spots forming streaks was heaviest on the nape and lower side of neck. Streaking was limited on the crown with little to no streaking on the face, however there was some dusky feathers surrounding the blackish iris. The entire underside, including the tail, was white, and the legs and feet were dull greenish yellow. I also noticed that when the bird was sitting the white trailing edge to the secondaries and scapulars were wider than the other gulls of the same age standing next to it. In flight the white subapical spots in primary 9 and 10 were larger (especially on P 10) than the Herring Gulls and the black primaries were sharply demarcated forming a rather straight line across the wing similar to that of and adult Black-legged kittiwake. This dipped in ink look is created by the lack of black extending down the outer web of primaries 9 and 10 which Herring and Ring-billed Gulls usually show.

This bird was seen by many birders. See photos of this gull in flight and on the water.

I have seen thousands of California Gulls throughout the west.

10/27/02

12:20 - dusky black
1:15

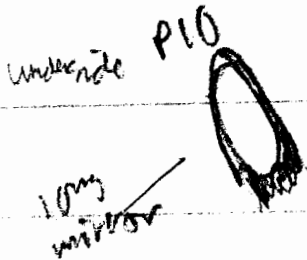
black

red

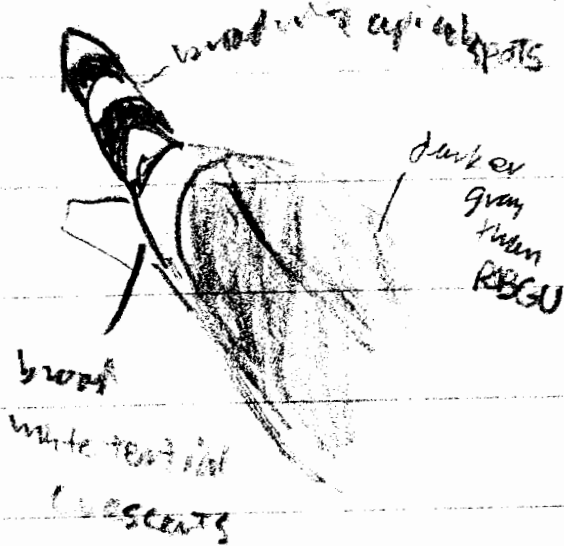
dark

row

orange-brown



• notes taken while watching the bird.



eye - dark/dark sandy

head - whitish brown sandy
slightly brownish
esp. around eye, base
light streaks

bill - pale yellow / white
upper mandible,
black and dulled on lower

long and slender, little
drooped tip

Gonydeal
angle

body - white under

mantle/wings - gray, darker than RBCU, HERCS

broad white tips to primaries

broad white testal crescent

white scapular crescent

primaries extend beyond tail about a bill length

extensive black w/ large white

legs yellowish

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