

August 26, 2005

Devich Farbotnik

Thank you for submitting all the documentation for 2004. There were 4 reports which were not accepted. These are a Thayer's Gull on 14 December, a California Gull on 27 October, a Sharp-tailed Sparrow on 9 October, and a Pink-footed Goose on 16 November. Also the committee nearly unanimously voted to place your father's report of a White Ibis on 3 March at his farm in **Class IV-B**: A record for which there exists insufficient evidence for evaluation, simply because the description of the call note was all that really clinched the bird and no-one felt the description was diagnostic.

Of these, the Goose and the Sharp-tailed Sparrow were simply not clear enough on the video to be identified. The Sparrow is obviously a Sharp-tailed and will be accepted as that, but no-one could tell from the video if it was a Nelson's or a Saltmarsh. The committee accepted the Thayer's 2-1, but 4 members abstained from voting, including me. In my comments I noted that I saw the bird and called it a Thayer's. The committee essentially doesn't know what to do with young Thayer's and are deferring judgement on these birds until a better understanding of where the plumage, morphological, and taxonomic limits between Kumlien's and Thayer's lie (basically passing the buck).

The California Gull was the toughest decision. Personally I am not sure I could rule out a large (most likely female) Ring-billed Gull. First year Ring-billed Gulls can look very like California Gull and have a similar molt pattern, the range of variation between juvs and 1<sup>st</sup> winters can match the range of variation in 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle California Gulls. Some Ring-bills will retain juvenile wing coverts through the first winter, and some will lose almost all coverts and look more like a 2<sup>nd</sup> yr bird. Also the bill on the bird looked, pink-based in the video which would suggest a Ring-billed since California Gulls should lose the pink base in the first year, and have a yellower bill base. Basically everyone felt that a clearer look to reveal the fine plumage features was needed, and that eye-color alone was not enough to clinch the ID.

Thanks again for sending in all the documentation.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp

**Chair:** Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee  
613 Howard Ave.  
West Chester, PA 19380  
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

346-62-2002

SPECIES (common and scientific name) California Gull - Larus Californicus  
Subspecies (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) \_\_\_\_\_

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): 2nd winter

DATE OF OBSERVATION 10/27/02 TIME on video

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Bucks County

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Core Creek County Park

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Devich Farbotnik  
Address P.O. Box 135  
City Revere State PA ZIP 18953  
e-mail (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):  
\_\_\_\_\_

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) on Lake

DISTANCE TO BIRD 250 ± feet

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) partly cloudy, sun was slightly to the right of the gull - bad lighting conditions

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Leica APO Televid 77 spotting scope with 20x60 Zoom, Sony Video Camera

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed - size relative to other species present; "jizz" = e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual): I picked out this bird while scanning through the other gulls. The California Gull caught my attention by the size. It was smaller than Herring Gulls and bigger than the Ring-bills it was with. It was a second year bird with a brown eye. I could not tell if the mantle was darker because of the lighting conditions

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

**BEHAVIOR** (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) sitting in water, flew once

**VOCALIZATIONS**

**SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:**

Photograph \_\_\_\_\_ Video recording ☒ Audio recording \_\_\_\_\_ Drawing \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name me

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

**IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:**

General condition \_\_\_\_\_

If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known \_\_\_\_\_

**SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES** (how you eliminated others) size too big for Ring-billed Gull  
too small for Herring, brown eye

**DISCUSSION** – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES**

I have seen many of them out west

**ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION?** (why or why not) Because of the size and brown eye, I don't think it could be anything else

**REFERENCES CONSULTED:**

During observation Sibley

After observation Sibley, National Geographic guide

**DATE OF THIS REPORT:** 4/15/03

**SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER** Devich Paulotnik

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: California Gull (Larus californicus)

Date of Sighting: 27 October 2002 to 27 October 2002

Location: CORE CREEK PARK

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Devich Farbotnik,

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Devich Farbotnik

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

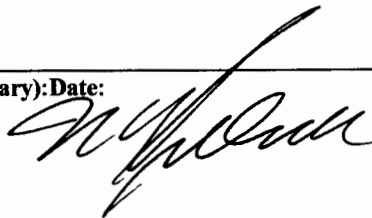
Specimen: No

Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
<i>R. Witmer</i>								
<del>G. Armistead</del>								X
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Guris					X			
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X			X				
B. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp					X			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>DECISION</b>				X				

Comments: 2/4/1

Signature (Secretary): Date:



2/4/05