

Nick Pulcinella

From: <JerryMcW@aol.com>
To: <nickpulcinella@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2006 2:23 PM
Subject: California Gull documentation

346-02-2006

Hi Nick,

Below is my written documentation for the California Gull I found on 20 February 2006. Unfortunately I was not able to obtain photos since it didn't stick around long enough for me to grab my camera. I think it was a bit too far away to really get convincing photos anyway.

California Gull
Larus californicus

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: February 20, 2006

Time: 1:40 to 1:45 PM

Weather: Mostly clear

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Viewing conditions: very good

Viewing distance: about 200 to 300 yards

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

Description: Most of Presque Isle Bay froze over last night concentrating 3000 to 4000 gulls off Leo's landing, the only large patch of open water in the bay. As I was searching through a feeding group of Ring-billed and Herring gulls I spotted a darker mantled adult gull among them. It was slightly smaller than the Herring Gulls, but larger than the Ring-billed Gulls. It dropped down on the water to catch a fish and I could clearly see that the mantle was a darker shade of gray than the adult Ring-billed and Herring Gulls next to it. The darkness of the gray on the mantle was somewhere between a Herring Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull, but not as dark as a Laughing Gull. Its bill was long and yellow with a red and black spot merged at the gony with the black spot nearest the tip of the bill. It looked like the black may have extended a little onto the upper mandible. The eye appeared dark. The head was rounded and not blocky-shaped like Herring Gull and was white with a few dark streaks on the nape and down the neck. The tail and entire underside was white. I could clearly see the yellow-green legs when it was feeding over the water. In flight the outer primaries were black with a small white mirror in P9 and a larger one in P10. The mirrors overlapped when the wing was not fully spread looking as if there was a single white mirror. The combination of small size, darkness of mantle, greenish-yellow legs, rounded head, red and black spot on gony, and apparent dark iris rule out all forms of Herring Gull. The mantle was too light to be any of the Lesser Black-backed Gull forms. Adult Lesser Black-backed Gull also shows more red in the gony and the legs are usually a brighter yellow. Other gulls present here were Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull.

Since my view of the bird was short and the distance was such that I feared I would lose the bird if I looked away, I was not able to obtain any photographs.

This was the third one I have seen in Erie County, one of which I documented with a photograph. I have seen thousands in all plumages in Colorado and along the Pacific coast.

Jerry McWilliams

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: California Gull (Larus californicus)

Date of Sighting: 20 February 2006 to 20 February 2006

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County : ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2006

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson				X				
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
J. Heller			X					
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments:

6/1

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

11/16/06