

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

12 February 2002

Devich Farbotnik
PO Box 252
Milford Square, PA 18935

Dear Devich,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the following four records. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it has voted not to accept these records.

Pacific Loon at Lake Nockamixon on 23 April 2000: One member voted in favor of acceptance and six did not. Three of the six viewed the documentation as indicating a record probably correct but not beyond reasonable doubt, while the other three considered the extent of detail in the description to be insufficient to evaluate adequately.

California Gull, Peace Valley Park on 11 May 2000: The Committee voted unanimously against acceptance based on the video. The gulls in the video appeared to be typical 1st winter/1st summer Ring-Billed Gulls.

Yellow-legged Gull, Tullytown landfill on 12 February 2000: The vote was one in favor of acceptance and six not in favor. Those who voted not to accept it emphasized that neither the description nor the video offered sufficient details to make this very difficult identification.

As David Sibley comments in *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, "Identification of adult is extremely complex, as all characters overlap with rare individual Herring Gulls. Positive identification requires careful and extended study and experience with all variations of Herring Gull. Even when all characteristics fit Yellow-legged, the possibility of Herring x Lesser Black-backed hybrids or of very pale-mantled Lesser Black-backed Gulls must be considered."

Slaty-backed Gull, Tullytown landfill on 28 February 2000: The vote was unanimous against acceptance -- again for lack of sufficient details. Three characters essential for identifying a Slaty-backed were not included in the description: trailing edge of the secondaries and inner primaries, tips of the outer primaries, and appearance of the tertial crescent on a standing bird.

As with Yellow-legged, Slaty-backed is a very difficult identification problem, with extensive details required to separate it from a dark-mantled Herring Gull and many rather frequent hybrid combinations of various gull species. As an example of the great range of details required, Ontario's second accepted record of Slaty-backed was supported by five pages of extensive description.

Non-acceptance does not mean that any of these birds were not those species, but rather that the Committee considered conclusive identifications impossible.

We hope these results will not discourage you from submitting further reports on any rarities you find, and we urge all observers to accompany photos and videos with extensive written descriptions especially for the possibility of features that may not be visible in the pictures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record Nos. 002a-01-2000 (Pacific Loon), 346-01-2000 (California Gull),
350a-01-2000 (Yellow-legged Gull), 351-01-2000 (Slaty-backed Gull)

351-01-2000

Unusual Bird Report

Person submitting data Devich Farbotnik Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Observers Jason Horn Date(s) Seen 2/28/00

Devich Farbotnik How long observed 30 min

Where Observed Tullytown landfill

Conditions of observation early afternoon, clear, sunny, 100 yards away

(Time of day, weather, distance to bird, optics, etc) binoculars, telescopes

Behavior & Habitat

(what was the bird doing, what habitat was it in.) in water (Delaware River), and in flight

Species Slaty-backed gull

Number seen 1

Description

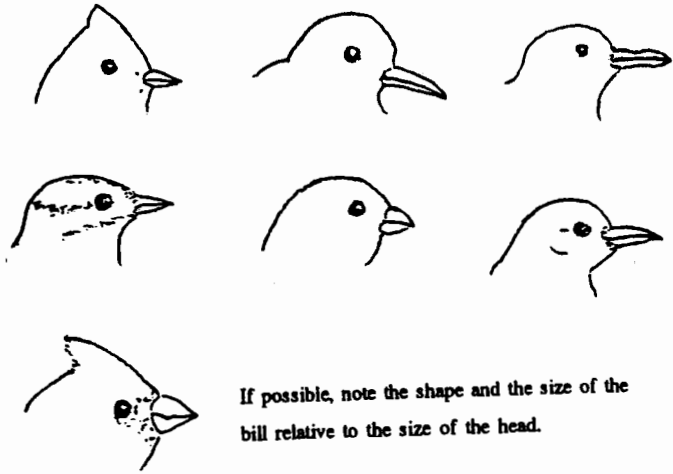
(Describe size, color & pattern above & below, head, bill, wings, tail, sex, age, etc. as needed - use drawings on reverse side if helpful.)

Size: slightly larger than Herring gull
Color: mantle dark, not as dark as Lesser black backed gull. Pink legs, yellow at base of bill with smudging on the rest. Head blocky, not rounded like Lesser black backed gulls. Light streaking formed collar around neck and continued up back of head to the bill, forming a "hood".

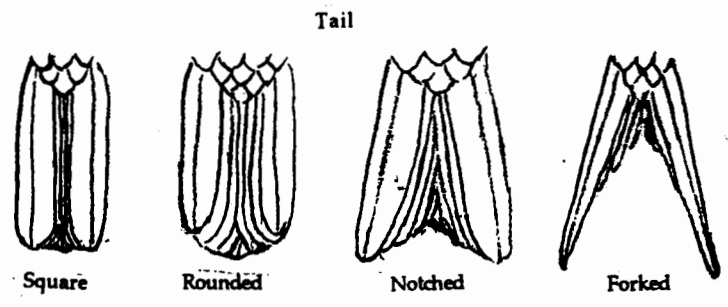
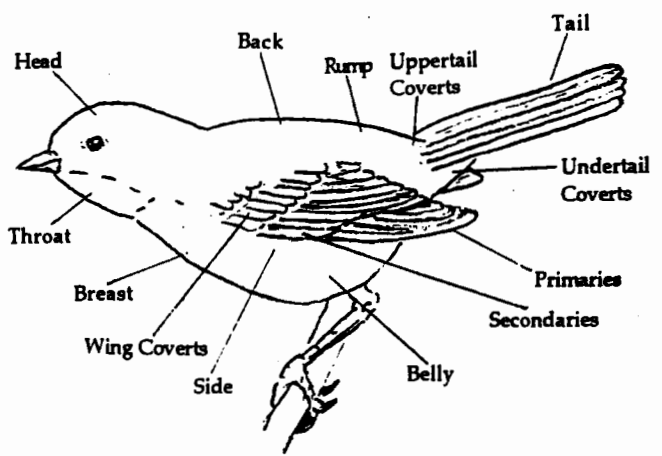
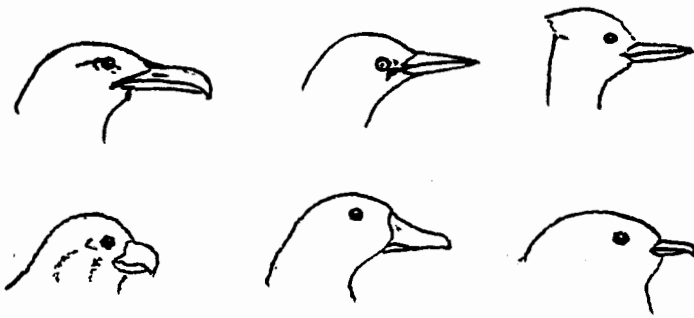
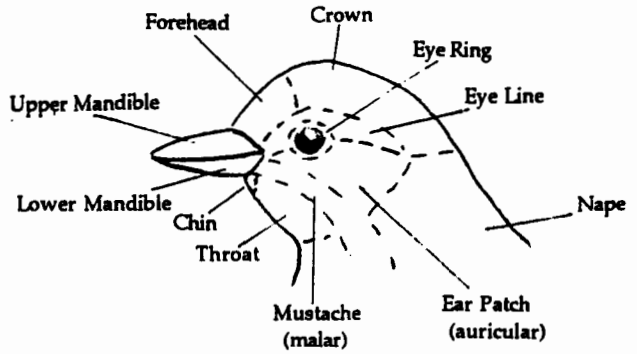
In flight wingtips ~~slightly~~ darker than mantle large white window on wingtip followed by a smaller window.

Similar Species

(what similar species might it be and how can they be eliminated from consideration.)



If possible, note the shape and the size of the bill relative to the size of the head.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)

Date of Sighting: 28 February 2000 to 28 February 2000

Location: BUCKS

County: TULLYTOWN LANDFILL

Observer(s): Devich Farbotnik, Jason Horn

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Devich Farbotnik

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

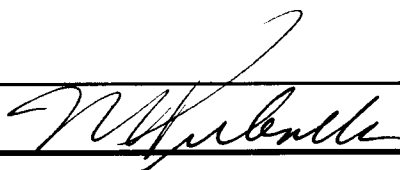
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Recording: No			Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead					X			
D. Couchman						X		
P. Hess					X			
R. Ickes					X			
B. Reid					X			
P. Rodewald					X			
M. Sharp					X			
TOTALS					6	1		
DECISION					X			

Comments: 0/7

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/27/01