

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Number: (leave blank)
Location: Date: Time:
Bird Seen: To: Age/Sex:

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

Stocky, similar in shape to Herring Gulls, thick-necked and full-chested. Shorter primaries than observed Great Black-backed Gulls. Larger than Ring-billed Gulls. Legs pale yellow-green, not bright yellow, not appearing pink or pinkish from 700 yds. Heavier bill with orange-red patch on the bottom bill. Eyes appeared yellow, not dark. In re-sighting the bird on 2/12, verified off-yellow color to the eyes.

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt)

Head and neck snow-white, as was the rest of the plumage, minus a bit of dusky gray on the underside of the wings along the front edge. Mantle and tops of wings stark black with no variance from the body to the wing tip. Wings had thick white trailing edge.

On 2/11, we did not observe the small white windows on P10, but we also were not looking for it, and were 700 yds. away.

On 2/12, when I was observing the bird from under 100 yds., twice when the bird took flight, I saw the small P10 windows. I attempted to photograph the P10s in flight, but was unsuccessful.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

Not heard. Distance was prohibitive on 2/11, and on 2/12, no vocalizations heard or else not noticed.

Description of behavior:

On 2/11, seen on concrete ledge just above water level of the Ohio River on the Pike Island Locks. Flew twice over the water and came back.

On 2/12, seen exclusively at rest on the Ohio River, 500-700 yards upstream of Pike Island Dam. It flew 3 times upstream 50-75 yards as the current was taking it downstream.

Both times, the river was 100% free of ice.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

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Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

On 2/11, approximately 700 yards from the bird (distance determined by digital satellite application on computer), viewed with my Swarovski 80 HD spotting scope with a 60x zoom. Terrific lighting, as we viewed the bird from northwest of its position in partial sunlight from 5:15-5:45 PM.

On 2/12, approximately 150-200 yards from the bird (eyeball estimate), same scope. Directly west of the bird, with some sunlight and diffused light, until sun set behind the hills and only had reflected light. Still very clear.

Previous experience with this species:

None. Only images and video of the same species seen in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, two weeks earlier. I did not see the Pittsburgh bird, which was verified.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

I had no real experience with the Lesser Black-backed Gull, which we first thought it was. The bird was no far in size from nearby Herring Gulls, but our bird had a crisp black mantle and was otherwise pure white.

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

Albert R. "Jay" Buckelew, Jr.



Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:

The Sibley Guide To Birds. This book happened to be on hand, and due to the Kelp Gull being in Pittsburgh in January, I thought it would be interesting to compare what we'd originally thought was a Lesser Black-backed Gull with the Kelp, which I was told was very similar in size in earlier communique with Pittsburgh birders. Upon comparing to the book, the bird we were viewing showed none of the plumage of any cycle of LBBG. Jay Buckelew, with whom I was birding, worked with me to compare and contrast the Kelp and LBBGulls from what we were seeing and what the book was describing.

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

Immediately.

Name:

Ryan Tomazin

Address:

[REDACTED]

Date:

3/5/15

Signature:

[REDACTED]

Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wendell Argabrite
111 Jefferson Park Dr.
Huntington, WV 25705
Or E-mail to: wargabrite@aol.com

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:

No substantiating photos were collected of this bird. A couple of photos exist, but are hardly definitive.

I am fully aware that without photos or additional observers, this sighting deserves nothing higher than a "Hypothetical" rating, and maybe not even that. Just thought it was better to include this possible observation for the state records.

Jay Buckelew wished to add: "I saw three different Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Port Aransas, Texas, and near the bridge to the mainland in February 1990. I was with a group, most of whom were experienced with the species. We spent a lot of time on these birds since they were new on the coast, and had been breeding there for only a short time. I saw them again years later off on Emerald Isle in NC. I have no notes from that occasion.

I have a lot of experience with Great Black-backed Gulls. I first saw them on the Great Bay near Portsmouth, NH in the 1960s. I lived in Dover NH for five years and birded there with friends. I have seen the species on many occasions since then.

I would emphasize that by comparing the size of the Kelp Gull with nearby Ring-billed Gulls, it was clear to me that it could not be a Great Black-backed Gull, not even a smaller female. The bird did not look like a Lesser Black-backed Gull. The wing tips did not contrast with the wing surfaces either above or below. The legs were the wrong color. The head had no dark streaks."











