

## Laughing Gull – Grant Co.

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

### Committee Member Comments:

CM1: The description is good for Laughing Gull and rules out any other similar species. The photographs, although taken from a distance, adequately depict the underwing pattern which is not shared by any other black-headed gull that would be expected in North America.

CM2: An excellent record. The bird was well-documented with photographs. The description/discussion could have been more thorough in eliminating confounders, especially Franklin's Gull. However, the photographs demonstrate the differences in bill morphology, eye crescents, and especially the starkly different underwing patterns between those two species. Remainder of the hooded gulls are easily eliminated. The observer is an experienced and careful birder. All of these add up to an easily evaluated record. Therefore, a vote FOR this record is warranted in my opinion.

CM3: Written description and photographs eliminate all other similar species.

CM4: Having photos with this submission was extremely helpful. Although the submitter did not explain how he distinguished this gull from the Bonaparte's and Black-headed Gulls, he articulated his experience with gulls, and being from out-of-state (Maryland), he adds a different perspective regarding what species to expect and what species not to expect outside one's home birding areas. The photos show that the black hood of the breeding plumage is more extensive than the Bonaparte's or Black-headed gull. The submitter had good optics and a good camera with telephoto lens, so was lucky to get the photos. He also stated he was familiar with Franklin's gull, and eliminated it. While not distinguished on the photos, the submitter was able to identify the beak color of the bird, so got a good visual on the bird. One photo showed a great look at the black plumage in the underside of the primaries, which supports the identification. The notion of how and why this bird found its way to Petersburg is fascinating.

CM5: I vote to include the Grant County sighting of the Laughing Gull record for the official State List. The LAGU was photographed which is acceptable by our bylaws. The written evidence provides a description of the found LAGU. The observer reports previous experience and his report differentiated from the other gulls more common in WV. Therefore, this report meets the standards set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List.

CM6: Nice shots.

CM7: The photos clearly show a gull with a dark head, dark bill and black legs and wing tips. The black legs rule out Black-headed Gull and Bonaparte's Gull. The bill is dark and the viewer said the bill had red in it, which is a distinctive mark of a Laughing Gull. However, the photo does not show any red color. It is possible that the bird is too far away to pick up the red color. Additionally, Laughing Gulls can have varying amounts of red with many adults having bills that appear black. The black legs are the distinctive characteristic that identifies the species as Laughing Gull.