

## Laughing Gull – Cabell Co.

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

### Committee Member Comments:

CM1: The written description by itself lacks enough information for members of this committee to make an informed decision on this matter. However, the photographs are excellent and clearly depict an immature Laughing Gull. That, coupled with the caliber of observers, makes it easy for me to vote “Yes” on this sighting.

CM2: Gulls are among the most difficult species group to analyze. Immature birds only add to that difficulty. However, in this case, we have an excellently documented individual that was backed up by several experienced observers. Provenance is not really an issue with gulls, especially of this species. Timing is reasonable. The photos clearly demonstrate an immature Laughing Gull. A discussion on why other hooded gulls were eliminated would have been ideal. But the bill and plumage characteristics are more than sufficiently documented. Therefore, a vote FOR this record is warranted in my opinion.

CM3: Photodocumentation eliminates the similar Franklins Gull.

CM4: Superb photos taken by experienced birder, and the report was also supported by other WV birders who agreed with the identification. The submitter consulted with other experts as well. The feeding behavior described by the submitter resembles the eating habits of *Larus* spp. (that typically seeks free food handouts.) The photos support the sighting of a 1st winter young bird (black legs, unlike the reddish adult colored legs) and plumage matches Sibley's. September 24, when the sighting occurred, is very close to Sibley's description of “1st winter” being “October-March.”

CM5: I vote to include the Cabell Count 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 some details of the found LAGU. This reviewer would like to have seen more data in the structure and plumage section. The observer does include photograph to provide evidence of the birds' identity. The observer reports no previous experience in this plumage. The observer also includes a list of other observers who witnessed the bird who had experience and they are respected birders in WV. Therefore, this report in my opinion meets the standards set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List.

CM6: Nice photo evidence.

CM7: The photos are required to positively identify this bird. It is clearly a juvenile gull, either a Laughing Gull or Franklin's Gull based on the eye ring and the combination of brown mottling transitioning to gray on the wings. However, Franklin's Gulls usually have lighter colored legs than this bird. Additionally, the bill is longer and the head broader than expected for a Franklin's Gull. Thus, I agreed with the identification of 1st winter Laughing Gull.