

Franklin's Gull

Unanimously Accepted 7-0

Committee Member Comments:

CM1: This report was made by an experienced birder familiar with this species. It included a good written description which carefully described the bird's distinguishing field marks and also eliminated similar species. The good-quality photograph clearly shows a Franklin's Gull. And confirms the description contained in the report. Finally, the bird was seen and photographed by many other observers over a three-day period.

CM2: Gulls are one of the more complex species groups we have to evaluate. But this record was dealt with very well. The photos and description are definitive. The observer is very experienced with this and similar species. The timing of the sighting also fits nicely with expected movements. All things considered this was a straightforward record to evaluate. Furthermore, I was able to observe the bird in person and agree with the identification. Kudos to the observer on another great sighting for the state!

CM3: Description and images are consistent with Franklin's Gull.

CM4: It is fortunate that good photos were obtained of this sighting. The large white primary wing tips and nice broad eye-arcs of the Franklin's gull were visible. The observer did a great job articulating the differences between the Franklin's gull and other possible gulls. At least 5 other WV birders observed this species over the course of 3 days. The observer has seen this gull in WV before, as well as in the Western USA. The bird was observed for 2 hours on April 24, allowing adequate time to observe it feeding and seeing it from different angles. A size comparison was made between the Franklin's Gull and Ring-billed Gulls that it was feeding with, which aided in identification. I support this record for the WV State List.

CM5: I vote to include the Mason County, WV sighting of the Franklin's Gull record for the State List. The written description has good detail with research references and includes both photographic evidence. The photograph shows the eye-arcs in Franklin's Gull as broad and more prominent than they are in Laughing Gulls. Its bill is also shorter and thinner. The observer has previous experience and recognized the FRGU. He was able to differentiate the bird from similar gulls. His report on eBird and WV Bird brought many others to observe this rare visitor bird to WV. Therefore, this report meets the standard set by the by-laws for inclusion on the official State List.

CM6: Nicely documented with plenty of other observers.

CM7: The photos tell the story of the gull. The breeding plumage helps determine the species, too. The closest species would be Laughing Gull, since this bird has black legs to eliminate

Bonaparte's Gull as an option. Laughing Gulls are larger but it is hard to determine size in this photo. Franklin's Gulls have white spots at the tips of the wings, when they are folded, whereas Laughing Gulls typically show no spots. Additionally, the bill of the Franklin's Gull is typically slightly darker orange than the Laughing Gull and the bill of a Laughing Gull often has a downward curve at the tip. This bird in the photo has a dark orange bill that lacks the downward curve. Thus, the field marks support the identification as a Franklin's Gull.