

Louisiana Ornithological Society's

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all information involving an observation is accounted for). **Attach additional pages as necessary.** Please print or type. Attach photocopy of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include complete series of photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216. (If you use this form as a computer template; please submit on archival quality = 100% cotton paper.)

1. English and Scientific names: Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*)

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage: 2 adults

3. Locality: Gulf of Mexico: X mi. S Belle Pass

4. Date(s) when observed: 17 April 1999

5. Time(s) of day when observed: 8:00-8:30 AM

6. Reporting observer and address: Donna L. Dittmann & Steven W. Cardiff

435 Pecan Drive, St. Gabriel, LA 70776

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s): David P. Muth (first called out black-backed gull), Curtis Marantz, Dan Purrington, John Sevenair, other members of the LOS Pelagic trip

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): probably most of the observers were willing to accept the identification as Kelp Gull

9. Light conditions: very good, the birds were flying behind our boat and the adjacent shrimp trawler as we were heading NW.

10. Optical equipment: 8 X 42 Leica

11. Distance to bird(s): as close as 20 feet

12.) Duration of observation: DLD saw the bird with a mirror on P 10 only briefly at the beginning of the observation (in fact, identity later confirmed by John Sevenair's photos), the adult lacking a mirror on P 10 was observed for a half an hour while we were trying to get all the trip participants good views in the pitching seas.

13.) Habitat: open gulf, we came upon a shrimp trawler with a cloud of gulls behind it and began chumming to draw birds over to our boat

14.) Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation: The bird(s) were observed in flight as they wheeled around behind our boat. It was obvious from the gulls' posture that it was calling - thick-necked - but we could not detect the vocalizations above the boat engines and calls of the other gulls.

15.) Description: We immediately recognized the birds as Kelp Gulls based on the very blackish-gray mantle, much darker than adjacent Laughing Gulls, by the large size (similar to a Herring Gull), black primaries barely contrasting with dark mantle, yellow legs, and pattern of the undersurface of the wings in flight. The black primaries graded to dark gray and formed a dark secondary bar along the entire underside of the wing. The white trailing edge to the secondaries was very broad. The bill was yellow with a red

gonydeal spot, the iris was pale. The bird(s) appeared large headed and heavy-necked in flight with proportionately large legs and feet. One bird had a prominent mirror on P 10, the other bird lacked an obvious mirror. There was also a bird believed to be a F1 Hybrid with the "pure" Kelps.

16.) Voice: not heard

17.) Similar species and how they were eliminated: No other black-backed gull has all the observed characteristics. The greatest concern would be a hybrid and the very black color to the back and the pattern of the underwing suggested pure Kelps.

18.) Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): yes (George Payne, John Sevenair, Phillip Wallace, Marty Guidry, perhaps others (not attached))

19.) Previous experience with this species: South American (Peru) and more recently have studied the birds on the Chandeleur Islands, including obtaining one specimen.

21.) Identification aids:
a. at time of observation: none
b. after observation: none

22.) This description is written from: notes made during the observation; notes made (immediately) after the observation (date: _____); or _____ memory. Please attach copy of field notes.

23.) Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: yes

24.) Signature of reporter: Donald Dahman 9/25/99
(date) (time)

Steven W. Gandy 9/25/99