

**REPORT TO THE  
LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

1. Common and scientific name:  
Kelp Gull, *Larus dominicanus*
2. Number of individuals seen, sexes, ages, general plumage, etc.  
Two birds, both adults
3. Locality:  
South of Port Fourchon, LA. According to the log posted on Dan Purrington's web site, the location was 15 mi. at 155 degrees.
4. Date(s) when seen:  
April 17, 1999
5. Times of day when seen:  
In the morning, well after sunrise
6. Reporting observer and address:  
John P. Sevenair, 325 Stafford Place, New Orleans, LA 70124
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:  
Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittmann, many others; this was a Louisiana Ornithological Society pelagic trip.
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:  
none that I know of
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and amount of light):  
It was a bright and sunny day, and the birds were unshaded and in the open throughout.
10. Optical equipment:  
Nikon camera with Nikon AF Nikkor 75-300 mm zoom lens set at 300 mm
11. Distance to bird:  
About 30' at the closest, I'd estimate roughly; mostly much further.
12. Duration of observation:  
Half an hour or more (though relatively little of this time was spent getting good looks at the birds).
13. Habitat (general and specific):  
Fairly deep water in the Gulf of Mexico, behind a trawler that dumped its by-catch at least once.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):  
The birds were seen flying around the back of the trawler looking for food, along with a couple of thousand other seabirds. The majority of the other birds were Laughing Gulls, but there was also a substantial number of Herring Gulls, with somewhat fewer Royal Terns. Also seen in the flock: Brown Pelican, Northern Gannet, Magnificent Frigatebird.
15. Description (Include what was actually seen, not what should have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc.

Both birds were about the size of Herring Gulls. Both had white heads, white underparts, and white tails, with black mantles and a white trailing edge to the wing that was wider in the secondaries than the primaries. Both had yellow bills with a red spot at the gonydeal angle. Both had yellow feet that did not quite extend to the tip of the tail when the bird was in flight. The underwing patterns

were similar as well. The primaries and secondaries were dark with white trailing edges (broader in the secondaries); the rest of the underwing feathers were white.

One bird had no white mirror at the end of the outermost primary. This bird had a narrow red ring around the eye. Its bill was fairly heavy, about like a Herring Gull's bill, with a pronounced gonydeal angle.

The other bird had a single white mirror at the end of each outermost primary.

16. Voice:

Not heard, or at least not noticed. Too many other birds were screaming.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observations):

Great Black-backed Gulls have pink legs. Most Lesser Black-backed Gulls have paler backs and more white in the wingtips; they also have more slender beaks without pronounced gonydeal angles.

18. Photographs:

I took half a dozen color slides. Some of them are enclosed; others may be viewed (and downloaded by the LBRC) from this web site:

<http://www.xula.edu/~jsevenai/deepwater/kelp.html>

19. Previous experience with this species:

I've seen birds of this species on the Chandeleur Islands and in Peru, Argentina, and the Antarctic Peninsula.

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

a) At the time of observation:

Steve Cardiff called our attention to the presence of a Kelp Gull.

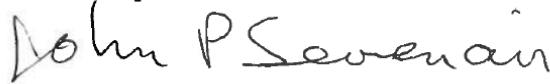
b) After observation:

Peter Harrison's *Seabirds, an Identification Guide* and *A Field Guide to Seabirds of the World*; and *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds*.

21. This description written from: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes made during observation; \_\_\_\_\_ notes made after observation; x memory; x the slides.

22. Are you positive of your identification? yes If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter:



24. Date and time of writing this account:

The evening of May 7, 1999, with a few additions (mostly the location) on June 15, 1999.

