

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 xerox of fieldnotes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all 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.

1. English and Scientific names: California Gull (*Larus californicus*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage: one in second basic plumage
3. Locality: LOUISIANA; Cameron Par.; 5 mi. W old mouth Mermentau River
4. Date(s) when observed: 21 December 1998
5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 10:00 AM
6. Reporting observer and address: Donna L. Dittmann & Steven W. Cardiff
Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70803
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Laurence C. Binford and Bill Fontenot
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): none
9. Light conditions: not very good, it was overcast (low fog) and glarry. It was difficult to discern colors.
10. Optical equipment: both observers used 10 X 42 Leica binocular; Kowa TSN 15-60 X zoom telescope
11. Distance to bird(s): 75 ft.
12. Duration of observation: 10 minutes.
13. Habitat: beach flock that included Herring, Ring-billed, and Laughing gulls
14. Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation: The bird was resting in a gull flock on the beach. It was first spotted by SWC who picked it out by its general shape and relatively dark mantle. We put the telescope on it to better ascertain plumage details in the poor light.
15. Description: *Larus* in second basic plumage. Intermediate in size between Ring-billed and a Herring gulls, but closer in size to a Herring Gull. It was a fairly large, light-mantled California, probably of the large pale-mantled subspecies *albertainensis*. Mantle color was slightly lighter than adjacent Laughing Gulls, but slightly darker than Ring-billed or Herring gulls. In flight, in the glare, the back looked nearly as pale as a

Herring Gull in contrast to the brown mottled wing coverts. The legs were yellowish-green. The yellow tones were very difficult to pick up under the lighting conditions. Legs of Ring-billed looked approximately the same color. The legs of Herring Gulls appeared very pink in contrast. The irides were dark. Light eyes could be observed on adult Herring Gulls in the same flock. Orbital ring color not noted. The bill was bicolored, grayish-yellow with a black tip. The folded wings were mottled dark brown and gray; the primaries were black, except for slight wedge of gray in the inner primaries (observed in flight). The gray inner primaries were less extensive than in typical Herring Gulls of the same age. The secondaries were mottled brown, gray and white. The effect on the standing bird was an essentially dark brown secondaries that contrasted with the gray mantle. The underparts were white mottled with gray on the sides of the breast and flanks. The head was white except for extensive dark gray-brown smudging around the eye, and a streaked pattern on the nape. The tail appeared uniformly black. The rump was contrasting white. The bird was first picked out by its shape as compared to the other gulls in the flock. It was relatively "short-legged" compared Herring Gulls of the similar size. It was also long-winged relative to the Herrings. It also appeared more delicate with a smaller head and bill that appeared somewhat compressed in the center.

16. Voice: not heard

17. Similar species and how they were eliminated: This was a fairly classic California Gull. The combination of dark eyes, non-pink legs, and mantle color, eliminate all other species or potential hybrids.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): The light was so bad we did not even try.

19. Previous experience with this species: We are both familiar with this species from California, as well as having observed and documented several observations in Louisiana, including several specimens.

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

21. This description is written from: _____ notes made during the observation; notes made (immediately) after the observation (date: _____); or memory.

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

23. Signature of reporter: _____ (date) (time)
Signature of reporter: _____ (date) (time)