

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 pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at zoiseaux@lusfiber.net .

1. English and Scientific names: California Gull, *Larus californicus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 first winter
3. Parish: Cameron

Specific Locality: Rutherford Beach ca. 3 mi W of Rec Center beach access road

4. Date(s) when observed: 26 March, 9 April, 24 April, 1 May 2022

5. Time(s) of day when observed: 8:45 a.m.-9:00 a.m. on 26 March; 7:20 a.m.-noon or so on 9 April; late afternoon on 24 April

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Paul E. Conover
City: Lafayette
State: LA

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): Mac Myers and Anette Parker on 9 April. Esme Rosen and Nick Ramsey located the bird on 24 April.

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Sunny, light was fairly decent. Bird seen with and against light.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Nikon D3500 camera with 200 mm lens, Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60x.

11. Distance to bird(s): Probably about 30 yards at closest

12. Duration of observation: 15 minutes off and on

13. Habitat: Beach and inshore

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

On 26 March: I was driving down the beach to the west and this bird flew past me also going west, perhaps 50 yards offshore. I could see from its wing pattern that it was a good CAGU candidate so I sped up to get ahead of the bird, but it was flying 30 mph with little effort while I was driving on a beach with a lot of small cuts. It drifted closer to the land and I managed to catch up and pass it and snapped photos, and soon after a flock of a few gulls and terns deked it in and it landed. I was able to get fairly close and got photos and video. It spooked and moved a couple of times during this time.

On 9 April: The bird was feeding and preening right at the access road from Willow Island when I arrived early morning, and then worked its way west. It went about 5 miles and then turned around and drifted back, patrolling as it drifted. It occasionally dropped to investigate possible food sources including fish being eaten by other gulls. Later Mac and I saw the bird in the main flock west of the cut, fighting over a long thin fish with other gulls.

15. Description:

Young “white-headed gull” a bit larger than Ring-billed Gull it was seen in the same frame with, smaller than any of the Herrings seen that day.

Underparts ground color whitish, with white throat and with necklace of dense streaking on upper breast, smudgy grayish belly band running roughly between the position of the wing bases, and white vent and undertail coverts with somewhat coarse dark barring. Underwings fairly evenly medium brownish with slightly more translucent area on inner primaries.

Upperparts: Whitish head with light streaking on crown and in a roundish area around eye. Nape densely streaked and blurred in wraparound of necklace. Mantle feathering pale to medium gray/brown with various internal markings: dark shaft streaks, anchors, and broader central smudges. Wings with pale blaze of bleached median coverts, dark but faded greater secondary coverts with worn pale fringe, worn and faded tertials, and darker brown primaries with pale fringes on tips. Rump whitish with even dark barring. Tail dark brown with pale internal markings on outer rectrix pair and slight echo of that pattern on next innermost pair.

On spread wing, greater coverts and flight feathers formed a “double dark bar” with worn paler markings near tips of greater secondary coverts forming a weak whitish dividing line between coverts and secondaries. Outer wing overall dark with dark primary coverts edged thinly paler and dark primaries. Inner primaries with dark shafts and tips on primaries 1-4 with paler blazes on outer web of primaries 3 and 4, and paler inner web on p 5 forming slightly paler inner primary panel.

Soft parts: Tarsi pale pinkish, tibia/thigh and ankle pale grayish/blue. Bill pale clear straw/pinkish with distinct black tip covering gonydeal angle below, slightly less extensive on upper mandible. Nasal feathering extending to acute point at bill base. Eye dark brown.

NOTE FROM 25 APRIL: The molt of this bird has progressed from 26 March such that from looking like a Herring mimic on the earlier date, the mantle has now assumed enough gray feathering of a darker tone than Herring that the bird stands out as a California. No wing or tail molt has been noted to this point.

NOTE FROM 1 MAY: The bird was observed on the beach, and well-documented. The bird then took off and flew directly out to sea and out of sight.

16. Voice: Not noted.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Second year Herring gulls almost identical when perched, but show different upperwing pattern. There were several young Herrings that looked almost identical to this bird when perched but with subtle differences between covert pattern and pattern of dark on bill tip.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photos and video attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: Seen extensively out west, and probably every 2 years or so in Louisiana for the past decade or more.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from: Memory (it was just yesterday) and photo and video review.

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

Yes.

23. Date: 27 March 2022











Photos below from 9 April











Photos below from 24
April













1 May:



