

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: California Gull, *Larus californicus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
One first spring bird, not yet in pre-basic molt
3. Parish: Cameron  
Specific Locality: Holly Beach
4. Date(s) when observed: 30 April 2023
5. Time(s) of day when observed: roughly 2:30
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): Mac Myers
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):  
Sunny, bright, overhead angle. Not perfect but adequate.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Vortex 12X binos, Nikon 20-60X Fieldscope, Nikon D3500 with 200 mm lens, Samsun S22 phone camera.
11. Distance to bird(s): 30-40 m
12. Duration of observation: about 20 minutes
13. Habitat: Gulf beach
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation: Bird was standing on beach with a Laughing Gull and a Herring Gull. We got out to try to get closer and it flew to the east and appeared to land a couple of hundred yards away, but we never relocated it.
15. Description: A small-medium first spring "white-headed gull" with darker mantle than a nearby adult Herring Gull.

Perched appearance: Somewhat plump-bodied and small-headed, gave the impression of dusky bird with whitish head and neck. Some streaking on head and neck, especially on hindneck; darker area around eye; bill fairly long but slender with culmen sloping gently to tip and gonydeal angle slight with symmetrical slope fore and aft of the angle. Bill pale, appeared pale straw, with clear-cut dark tip beginning distal to nostril on upper bill but covering entire gonydeal angle on lower bill. Nail of upper bill also pale, maybe even whitish, giving bill ringed appearance.

Large brownish mat of markings forming dark smudgy yoke on nape and mantle, contrasting with plain gray alternate scapulars. Gray of scapulars darker than adult Herring Gull seen in direct comparison.

Tertials appeared solidly dark and worn with thin blurry white margin on tip. Primaries dark, pointed, projecting far beyond tail tip. Tail appeared solidly dark. Rump largely white with a few dark spots and dark markings on uppertail coverts. Undertail and vent largely white except for some barring laterally, contrasting with densely smudged brown belly and breast.

Tibiae and ankle pale bluish-gray, tarsi and feet pale pinkish. Eye dark.

In flight: Upperwing coverts worn and somewhat faded, contrasting with darker secondaries and primaries. Some fresh gray feathering in inner median coverts. Greater secondary coverts fairly solidly dark with worn pale markings near tips, with greater coverts and secondaries forming a broad dark trailing edge. At least one gray replacement feather in center of greater secondary coverts, presumably not part of regular molt.

Secondaries blackish or dark brown, with worn pale margin extending outward to P4. Primaries 1-4 slightly paler than outer primaries, with darker shaft streaks broadening into blob tips outlined by broad whitish fringe on outer web. Outer primaries and outer wing in general grayish or blackish, somewhat pointed, and worn.

Underwings and axillaries dark brownish or grayish.

16. Voice: Not heard.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): From Ring-billed by plumage, from Herring by darker mantle, wing pattern, and overall pattern. From Thayer's by wing pattern.

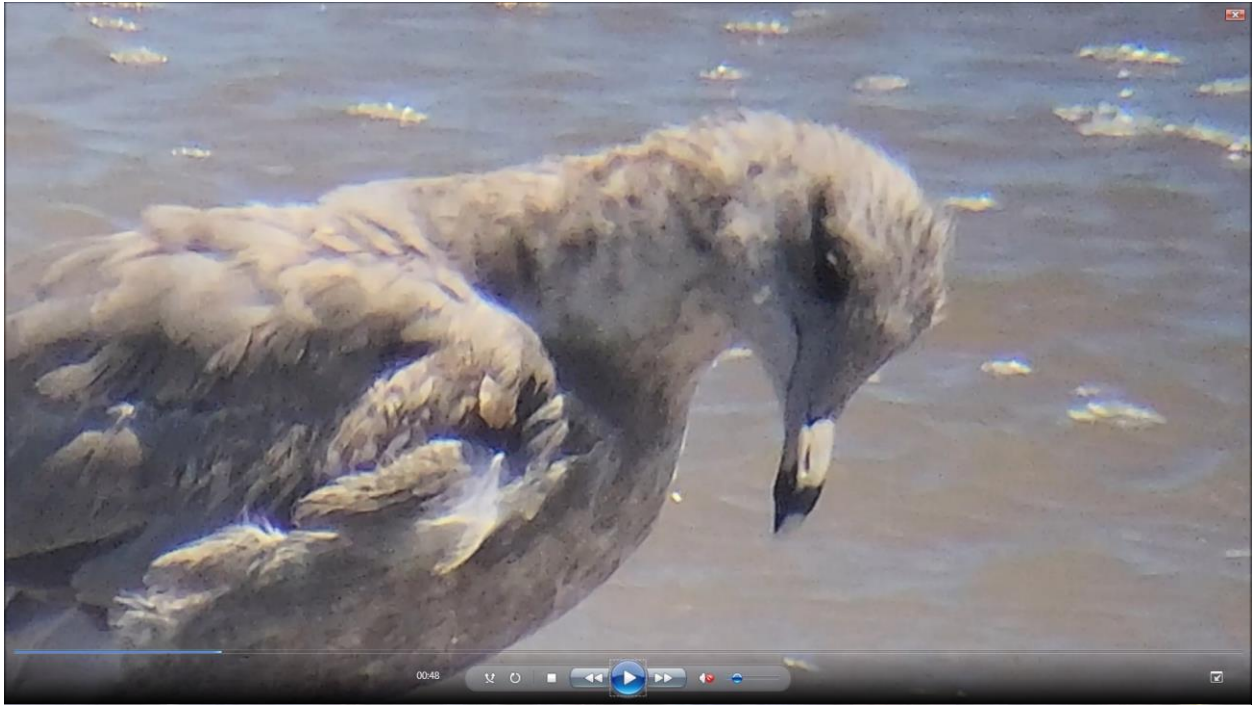
18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: Pretty extensive out west, and some experience in state with various age groups at different times of year.

21. This description is written from: image still fresh in mind from observation, and also photo study.

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

23. Date: 2 May 2023









Laughing Gull

Herring Gull

























