

**LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM**

1. **Common and scientific name:** California Gull (*Larus californicus*)
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 - 1st winter plumage
3. **Locality: State (Louisiana) Parish:** Orleans

 Exact Location: Seabrook Bridge
4. **Date(s) seen:** December 7, 1997
5. **Time(s) of day seen:** 2:30-3:04 pm
6. **Reporting observer and address:** Phillip Wallace
 4515 S. Prieur St.
 New Orleans, LA 70125-5044
7. **Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:** None
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird:** None
9. **Light conditions:** Overcast. Light fair to good.
10. **Optical equipment:** Zeiss 10x40 bins; Bushnell Spacemaster 22x
11. **Distance to the bird:** 50-150 feet
12. **Duration of observation:** 34 minutes
13. **Habitat (general and specific):** On seawall and on beach at edge of Lake Pontchartrain.
14. **Behavior:** Resting on the seawall; flying; walking on beach.
15. **Description:**
 Size Significantly smaller than the adjacent Herring Gulls; only slightly larger than the adjacent Ring-billed Gulls.
 Upper Parts Mantle was more of a dirty, dark gray than brown, but not the clear gray color of an adult gull.
 Underparts The underparts were a dark gray-brown color.
 Head Head was smaller and less sloped and more rounded than a Herring Gull. Dark mottling was concentrated on the nape. Chin was white and there was white feathering around the base of the bill.

Bill The bill was bicolored with a clear line of demarcation between the black tip and the horn-colored basal 3/4. The bill was thinner than on Herring Gulls. It was relatively long, but not deep. There was no pronounced gonydial angle.

Legs The legs were pale, ivory colored with some grayish tones. They were noticeably thinner than those of the adjacent Herring Gulls.

Wings On the folded wing the wing coverts were brown mottled with white. The primaries were brown. There was more white on the tertial tips than on Herring Gulls. In flight the pale windows on the inner primaries were not very conspicuous.

Tail The tail was all brown like that of a Herring Gull.

16. Voice: None

17. Similar species and how they were eliminated:

Herring Gull is the main contender. This bird seems below the lower extreme of Herring Gull size. Herring Gull is unlikely to have such a clearly delineated bicolored bill, especially in early December. Even more significant is the long, thin shape of the bill and the absence of a significant gonydial angle. The head is smaller and more rounded than on a Herring Gull.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Bill color and tail pattern eliminate Lesser Black-backed Gull.

18. Photographs? Slides accompany the report.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've seen California Gulls in LA, CO, and CA, but I haven't had as much productive experience with this plumage as I would like.

20. Aids used in identification:

a) at time of observation: None

b) after observation: Grant's Gulls, Harrison's Seabirds and Photographic Guide to Seabirds

21. This description written from: x notes made during observation;
 notes made after observation; from memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? No Herring Gulls are so variable that I hesitate to eliminate a small Herring Gull entirely from consideration. I would like to have a slide of the bird in flight to confirm my impression that it did not have a Herring Gull upperwing pattern, especially the inner primaries (absence of good window) and the greater secondary coverts.

23. Signature of reporter:

24. Date and time of writing this account: February 23, 1998
9:00 am

P.L.

overcast
light but foggy

Possible California Gull

1st winter

10/7/87

Seabrook

2:30 - 3:04

photos

50-150 ft

scope
6x5

Smaller than HEGU, only slightly larger than RBG

bicolored bill; black tip; horn/stem basal $\frac{3}{4}$.

Small bill; weak gonysial angle.

Mantle at under parts more ^{dark} gray than brown;

wing coverts brown mottled w/ white; brown primaries

Legs pale, ivory to gray. Smaller, thinner than
HBG

All brown tail, like HEGU.

In flight pale windows not very conspicuous.

Head shape - smaller, less angular than HEGU

Dark nape; molting concentrated on nape.

White chin and white feathering at bill base.

More white on tertial tips than on RBG. } partial
Also more white at tips of secondaries

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