

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 as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, 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: *Glaucous Gull, Larus hyperboreus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): *One immature (1st or 2nd cycle)*
3. Locality: Parish: *Terrebonne*
Specific Locality: *Whiskey Island (specifically 29.0488, -90.8168)*
4. Date(s) when observed: *20 April 2016*
5. Time(s) of day when observed: *0930 CDT*
6. Reporting observer and address: *Robert C. Dobbs, Lafayette, LA*
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): *None*
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): *None*
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): *Lighting was bright, but "soft" due to an overcast sky; there was no glare.*
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): *Swarovski 8x30 binos (good condition)*
11. Distance to bird(s): *As close as 30 m*
12. Duration of observation: *20-30 sec*
13. Habitat: *Gulf-side beach of barrier island*
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): *I was walking west along the gulf beach when I noticed a large, white-headed gull flying low (only about 10 m above the beach) from west to east (toward me). Something about it struck me*

as interesting from a distance, so I put down my scope and got binos on the bird when it was still in front of me. At its nearest distance, as it passed me, it was only about 30 m away. I immediately ID'd the bird as Glaucous Gull, but by the time I was comfortable with all of the field marks and processed the info in my brain, the bird was past me, flying directly away... no photo op. The bird did not appear to slow or consider stopping when I lost it from view to the east.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species): A very large gull – it struck me at the time as obviously larger than Herring, and I had seen several Herrings, just prior, flying from west to east down the beach, in very similar fashion, distance, etc. as the bird in question. The bird had all-white plumage on the head, breast, belly, mantle, upper- and under-wings, and tail. The only non-white plumage was some inconspicuous, faint brownish mottling on the upperwing coverts. I specifically noted no contrast or dark tones or contrast in the flight feathers. The bill was notably large, both long and deep, and distinctly bicolored with a bright pink proximal half and black distal half.

I saw the bill, head, and underparts most clearly, and at close range, from the side at an angle (not from directly below) as the bird made its closest approach and flew past. I saw the upperparts the best from behind, after the bird had passed and was flying away – but note that the bird was low enough for me to see the upperparts well.

16. Voice: Not vocal

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): The combination of the bird's very large size (comparisons with Herring immediately preceding observation), all-white plumage, and very large, pink-black bicolored bill eliminates all contenders except for Glaucous Gull. Iceland Gull would be smaller with a smaller bill that would not be so clearly or brightly bicolored. Thayer's and Glaucous-winged gulls should generally be more brownish overall and, again, would not show such a clearly demarcated and bright pink-black bicolored bill.

Severely bleached immature Herring, Lesser Black-backed, or Great Black-backed gulls would show at least some dark pigments, somewhere, particularly in the flight feathers. On the bird in question, the brownish tones present on the upperwing coverts were very faint; the bird generally looked all-white.

Glaucous x Herring hybrid (or Glaucous-winged x Herring) is really the only problem for this bird's ID as Glaucous, but I specifically noted—at the time—a lack of any light-dark contrast in the primaries, which should alleviate concerns of Herring influence.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?): [No](#)

19. Previous experience with this species: [I've seen a handful over the years, but not many](#)

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation: [Nat Geo Guide to Birds of N Am, Sibley Guide to Birds](#)

21. This description is written from: [X](#) notes made during the observation
(notes attached?); notes made after the observation (date:);
 memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: [Yes, this was a straightforward Glaucous Gull. I do, however, recognize the pitfalls/problems associated with large white-headed gull ID, variation, hybridization, etc., and acknowledge that I was unable to document the bird.](#)

23. Date: [30 November 2016](#) Time: [0830 CST](#)

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or
portions of this report on its website? [Yes](#)

If yes, may we include your name with the report? [Yes](#)

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