

# LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

## REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Glaucous Gull, *Larus hyperboreus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
One adult
3. Locality: Acadia Parish  
Specific Locality: Egan
4. Date(s) when observed: 01/06/2018
5. Time(s) of day when observed: 1:47-1:59
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul Conover, Lafayette, LA
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):
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, good light.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon D3300 with 200 mm lens, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60x.
11. Distance to bird(s): Varied from so high the bird was a speck to eye level and about 50 yards away.
12. Duration of observation: 12 minutes, according to timestamps.
13. Habitat: Landfill.
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation: Soaring circles overhead for about 10 minutes, then dropped down to the trash hill. I saw a wing raised after it landed, but lost it after that.
15. Description:

Basically, what's visible in the photos is all I saw. The bird was an all-white speck when I first saw it overhead, and it was so white I considered the possibility of an albino. However, the bill color and the pattern of the upperwings visible as a silhouette through the translucent underwings convinced me otherwise. The bird was never close enough to other gulls to ascertain its relative size; I judged the size by the behavior of the bird, which was agile and reminiscent of smaller "big" gulls.

The wingtips appeared as a pure white triangle, without even a trace of a Kumlien's wing pattern. The upperparts appeared to be a pale gray, paler than Herring and Ring-billed Gull. The upperparts of the bird were the only part of the bird that was not white. The trailing edge of the upperwings was white. A shadow of the upperpart color shaded the translucence of the underwings, which were white. The bill was evenly yellow aside from a red gonydeal spot and a slightly pale tip. The culmen had a strong curve near the tip, while the gonydeal

angle was slight. The bill appeared neither delicate and petite nor large. The legs were seen through the scope as the bird landed and appeared to be pink, not the pale pink of first year Glaucous legs, but a richer pink that I tend to describe as purplish-pink, but which might better be described as rich pink. The leg color to me was reminiscent of the legs of Thayer's Gull.

The eyes were pale yellow. The orbital ring color was not seen in life or in photos.

16. Voice: Not picked out

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

I initially IDed the bird as an Iceland based on my perception of its size, influenced by what I felt was an agility that I have not noted in Glaucous. However, as soon as the observation ended I had concerns based on several points: The lack of a wingtip pattern is rare in Kumlien's Gull (somewhere around 5%), and if the bird was an Iceland Gull in the narrowest sense of the name, it should have a more delicate aspect, especially its bill. The pale eye is also uncommon among Kumlien's. Additionally, no adult Icelands have ever been noted in LA.

I solicited opinions, as did Van Remsen. Opinions came back tilted toward Iceland. However, Bruce Mactavish felt that the wings pointed toward Glaucous. His opinion:

“My impressions of the shape of the bird are good for GLGU. Broad based wings and rapidly coming to a triangular point – not long narrow pointed wings. The relatively sturdy looking head and neck look right for GLGU. The bill is OK not looking particularly thin or small in relation to the head. That is I can get from the bird. “

Given Mactavish's extensive experience with this gull pair, the other ID people involved deferred to his opinion. That opinion seems reasonable to me.

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

19. Previous experience with this species: Steady experience with young birds, none with adults.

20. This description is written from memory and photos.

21. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Given the debate described above, I can't claim to be positive. However, the ID seems reasonable.

22. Date: 01/17/2018





































