

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Mew Gull, *Larus canus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
one first winter
3. Parish: Caddo
Specific Locality: Cross Lake
4. Date(s) when observed: 10 Jan 2016
5. Time(s) of day when observed: late afternoon as birds were coming to roost
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul E. Conover, Lafayette, LA 70506
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): several (T. Davis, R.C. Dobbs, C. Lyon, R. Maum, Mac Myers, D. O'Malley, D. Patton, L. Raymond, P. Wallace)
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): This bird was initially found, identified, and reported by Charlie Lyon. It was subsequently seen and photographed by many observers.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Beautiful late afternoon winter sunlight to our backs.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon D3300 w/200 mm lens.
11. Distance to bird(s): At closest 30 feet or so.
12. Duration of observation: about a half an hour
13. Habitat: lakeshore of large lake, Cross Lake.
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Birds were coming to roost by the hundreds. We tossed popcorn to get them off the water and expose individual birds. The Mew Gull responded vigorously and joined the general feeding frenzy, taking an active and aggressive role battling for food offerings. It circled us several times, fed in the flock for about a half-hour, then drifted into the roosting area. We left at that time.

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, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

A medium-small gull, slightly smaller than at least the majority of the Ring-billed Gulls present, overall browner than the immature Ring-billeds.

Perched bird:

Mantle gray in center, possibly slightly darker than on Ring-billed. Lesser and median coverts mottled light and medium brown, with broadly bracket-shaped rather than chevron-shaped dark markings terminally. Greater secondary coverts gray with dark internal markings, more so on inner feathers of this tract. Folded secondaries mainly medium brown, with some gray edging. Exposed primary tips dark brown.

Body:

Neck mottled with dingy brown, forming a slight hind-collar, head finely streaked with medium-to-dark brown, face palest on forecrown and chin and generally around base of bill back to about the level of the eye. Darker feathering around eye, especially a dark semicircle on anterior half of eye blended with dark eyes and gave the bird an unnaturally big-eyed look. Bill pale yellowish with diffuse dark tip covering about ½ of lower mandible, angling from gonys back toward cutting edge, and about ½ of upper mandible, but curving around nares.

Breast diffusely washed with wavy pale brown markings, belly and vent coarsely marked darker (medium) brown. Contrasting whitish patch on rear of flanks. Undertail coverts mostly medium brown with irregular paler brown internal markings and narrow edging.

Tail from above with broad diffuse dark brown terminal band contrastingly minimally with base of rectrices—but demarcated by thin and diffuse whitish transverse bands emanating from shafts on all but outer 2 pairs of rectrices. Outer 2 pairs of rectrices blended gradually from dark terminal band to lighter bases. Shaft of rectrices dark on terminal band dark brown, whitish on basal portion of rects.

Uppertail coverts coarsely barred medium brown, long, reaching to tip of tail.

Tail from below showed same basic pattern as from above, but without as strong of demarcation, or with line of demarcation perhaps obscured by undertail coverts.

Basic pattern of upperwing showed darkest areas on secondary bar extending onto primaries (as narrow primary tips on the inner primaries) connecting with dark wingtip panels formed by largely dark outer webs and dark tips of inner webs of outer 6 primaries. Primary coverts also dark. Dark areas of upperwing about as dark as tail band. Lesser and median upperwing coverts pale brown marked terminally with medium brown bracket-shaped tips. Greater secondary coverts mainly pale brown, blending with pale

inner primary bases to form a contrastingly pale bar between medium brown bar of forewing and dark brown bar of hindwing.

Underwing pattern a muted pattern of upperwing, less contrasting and slightly paler, but still showing basically a three-toned pattern.

Eyes dark brown.

Legs and toes pale yellow with pinkish tones, webs pinkish. Nails dark.

16. Voice: Not noted

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Separated from Ring-billed Gull by different tail and rump pattern, generally browner plumage, thinner bill, bill markings, etc. Runt Ring-billeds can show some similar morphology and bill pattern, but this bird showed the full suite of Mew features. Common Gull would more closely resemble Ring-billed in rump and tail pattern.

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

19. Previous experience with this species: A little in California, not recently.

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:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	no, mental
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

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

23. Date: 2/5/2016