

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 or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: Mew Gull; *Larus canus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): 1, first winter bird.
3. Parish: Caddo Parish
Specific Locality: Cross Lake
4. Date(s) when observed: 13 Jan, 2016
5. Time(s) of day when observed: 3:30 to 4:00 pm.
6. Reporting observer and address: John Dillon, 183 Dance Road, Athens, 71003
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Charlie Lyon (discovered bird a few days earlier), Jean and Jeff Trahan, Rosemary Seidler, Hubert Hervey, Willie Matthews, and Rosalie Overby.
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): Charlie found the bird about a week or so earlier, and it was seen by 2 or 3 dozen birders, including LBRC members Conover, Dittmann, Cardiff, and Dobbs.

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Sunny and bright. Bird was as close as 20 feet away at times, circling with hundreds of other gulls around boat and landing on water. Seen from every direction for at least 20 minutes.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Alpen 8x42 binoculars; good condition.

11. Distance to bird(s): As close as 20 feet at times. Came in to popcorn, etc.

12. Duration of observation: About 20-30 minutes.

13. Habitat: Open water near residential shoreline. A woman there was feeding the gulls shortly after we arrived.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Initially sitting on water with hundreds of other gulls, mostly RBGU with some HEGU and LBBG. Came in to popcorn and other treats and circled, lit, etc. the entire 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*): Very similar to first winter RBGU but slightly smaller with darker, smudgy rump with almost checker-like pattern. Bill pale at basal end, sort of a fleshy, almost yellowish almond color; dark from middle to tip. Bill sort of thin, with very shallow angle from head slope to upper mandible. Feet same color as basal end of bill. Head was white in front of eye, on forehead, and throat; became smudgy light gray on rear of head and into the neck. Dark secondaries in flight with dark outer primaries and primary coverts. Lesser coverts dingy, unlike comparable RBGU; also dingy on underside. With closed wings and floating on water, lesser and median coverts were heavily patterned; greater coverts paler with almost no markings and pale gray mantle made for a noteworthy contrast: pale on mantle, heavy pattern below on lesser/median coverts, pale again below that on greater coverts. Back/mantle pale gray. Belly smudgy gray, not white. Retrices completely dark to tip. Eye all dark. Generally speaking, the dark markings on the bird appeared darker than shown in Sibley.

16. Voice: N/A

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Hundreds of RBGU there for comparison. MEGU had dark rump, smudgy dark belly, and different color bill at basal end. Photos clearly show all these markings. Smaller size was noted, but RBGU are known for being variable in size, so I don't think that in itself would be a cinch.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photos, yes. Several and many more by Charlie and Willie and other observers over about a 2-week period.

19. Previous experience with this species: None.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification): Stakeout bird, but I did refer to Nat Geo and Sibley before and after going out.

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from:

study of images

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

23. Date: 7 February, 2016

Time: 1:00 pm

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 _____