

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE  
REPORT FORM

89-131 A

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, etc.; include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to the Secretary of the LOS Bird Records Committee.

1. Common and scientific name: Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): 1 sub-adult
3. Locality: Louisiana: Fourchon Beach Parish: Lafourche
4. Date(s) when seen: Oct. 8, 1988
5. Times of day when seen: 10:30 am
6. Reporting observer and address: R.D. Porrington
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): David Mull  
clear sky, 90° between bird and sun
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):  
30X Binoscope
11. Distance to bird: 75 yds
12. Duration of observation: 20 mins
13. Habitat (general and specific):  
Salt beach
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):  
resting, flying
15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress field marks):  
Slightly larger than any imm. Herring gulls nearby, dark charcoal mantle, horn-colored bill with black and red spot on gonys, white tail. No mirrors or apical spots. Flesh/pink legs. Heavy build, bill.

Evidently the black spot was a remnant  
of a black top or sub-terminal band.

16. Voice:

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

~~LEBG~~ small w/ yellow legs, lighter mantle  
slaty-backed lighter necked, smaller

18. Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?):

no

19. Previous experience with this species:

Five previous LA sightings

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

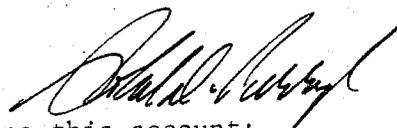
a) at time of observation;

b) after observation:

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

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

23. Signature of reporter:



24. Date and time of writing this account:

3/14/89

Louisiana Ornithological Society  
Bird Records Committee

Report Form

Name: Great Black-backed Gull                      Larus marinus

Number of Individuals:        one; third or fourth year, basic  
or moulting to basic.

Location: Fourchon Beach; Elmer's Island, ie. both sides of  
Bay Champagne cut.

Date(s): October 9 and 29, 1988.

Time(s) when seen:    2:15 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Reporting Observer and Address: David P. Muth, 1110 Robert  
St., NOLA 70115 \*RD PURRINGTON

Other Observers Accompanying Reporter: R.D. Purrington on  
10/9; Mac Myers, Al & Gwen Smalley, Cecil Kersting on 10/29.

Other Observers Who Independently Identified Bird:

Light Conditions: partly cloudy, bird was s.e. during  
observation 10/9; sunny 10/29, bird to the west and later  
along the beach just south of bird, north of bird.  
Optical Equipment Used: Zeiss Dialyt 10x40; Bushnell  
spacemaster 25x

Distance(s) from Bird: 100-200 yards- 10/9; less than 100  
feet 10/29.

Duration of Observation: 20 minutes and 5 minutes.

Habitat:    gulf beach.

Behaviour: loafing; in flight later.

Description: A relatively small Great Black-backed Gull,  
slightly larger than nearby Herring Gulls, that is to say  
slightly taller and bulkier in profile; seen from the rear

appeared much bulkier, broader; also appeared decidedly larger in flight. Much more massive than Lesser Black-backed in same flock. Lesser Black-backed 2/3 to 3/4 the size of the Great. Mantle and wings very dark slate gray, primaries darker (black); a couple of shades darker on mantle than nearby Lesser. In the middle of the upper wings (10/9), we noted white feathers; this presumably resulted from molt in the last primaries or first secondaries. There seemed to be no windows or apical spots. Head was blocky: steep sloping forehead, flat top, angled slope down to the curving nape. Head was white; there may have been a little brown streaking on nape (10/9); otherwise head, nape, rump, tail and underparts white. Bill noticeably deeper than nearby Herring Gulls, longer, but not proportionally longer. Horn colored, with a black spot in prominent gonys; the black spot was edged with red on the anterior edge of the lower mandible. Legs pink flesh. Brownish iris with a lighter pupil. Orbital ring did not stand out.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar Species: Size and mantle color eliminate all other possibilities.

Photographs: Gwen Smalley on 10/29. *attached 6/22/89*

Previous Experience: About 15 individuals.

Aids: None.

This description written from: X notes made during observation;    notes made after observation;    memory. *From a tape recording by DPM + RDP 10/9. No notes 10/29.*

Are You Positive of Your Identification? yes. If not, explain:

Signature of Reporter: *David P. Murray*

Date and Time of writing this account: 5:00 p.m. June 10, 1989.

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record No.: 89-131 Round No.: 27 SPECIES Great Black-backed Gull

Committee Member: Steven W. Cardiff Date of review: 1 December 1990

Circulation: First: XXX Second: \_\_\_\_\_ Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision:

ACCEPT: \_\_\_\_\_ (identification and origin)

Reject, identification questionable: XXX

Reject, origin questionable : \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: First of all, I want to point out that I basically ignored RDP's report because it is so incredibly superficial (he also put the wrong date on his form). I commend Gwen Smalley for getting pictures of the bird, but, unfortunately, they don't reveal much except that we are dealing with a relatively large "black-backed" gull. My main concern with this bird is that the descriptions do not discuss and eliminate hybrid possibilities such as GBB X Herring. The bird's relatively small (for GBBG) size and "pink flesh" legs/feet (vs. more typical whitish-flesh) complicate what is otherwise a relatively straightforward ID as GBBG. In slide #5 (standing bird at a distance, with mixed-flock), it almost seems as if the bird has a dark smudge through the eye, which is uncharacteristic of GBBG. None of the reports makes any effort to convince the reviewer that the birds seen on 9 Oct. and 29 Oct. were really one and the same. (Could someone explain to me how a gull can have a "brownish iris with a lighter pupil"??) It seems that a bird of this age (all-white tail) would have a yellow-white iris.

Use reverse side for additional comments, if necessary.

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 89-131 Species Great Black-backed Gull

Committee Member's Name R.D. Purrington Date of Review 10 Nov 1990

Circulation: First X; Second \_\_\_\_\_; Third \_\_\_\_\_.

Decision:

Accept X  
Reject, origin questionable \_\_\_\_\_  
Reject, Identification questionable \_\_\_\_\_

Comments (please print or type):

Acceptable descriptions including leg color, iris, mantle color, etc.  
Photos confirm size, back/mantle color.

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record No.: 89-131 A, B Round No.: 27 SPECIES Great Black-backed Gull

Committee Member: McKenzie Date of review: April 2, 1990

Circulation: First:  Second: \_\_\_\_\_ Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision:

ACCEPT:  (identification and origin)

Reject, identification questionable: \_\_\_\_\_

Reject, origin questionable : \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

Please note discrepancies in report of date + observers: in 89-131 A, Purrington indicates that he was the sole observer on Oct. 8 and that Muth identified the bird independently of Purrington's observation. In 89-131 B, however, Muth gives a date of observation of Oct. 9 and indicates that Purrington was an accompanying observer. Additionally, Purrington was added as an observer (printed in ink on Muth's typed report form) and then Purrington signed the report as a reporter! Muth also indicates that his notes were made during the observation based on a tape recording that he and Purrington made on Oct 9. Purrington indicates in his report that his notes were made after the observation. I suggest that Muth's assessment of the observation is correct.

Use reverse side for additional comments, if necessary.

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record No.: 89-131 Round No.: 27 SPECIES Great Black-backed Gull

Committee Member: D.L. Dittmann Date of review: 2 February 1990

Circulation: First: XX Second: \_\_\_\_\_ Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision:

ACCEPT: XX (identification and origin)

Reject, identification questionable: \_\_\_\_\_

Reject, origin questionable : \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

Perhaps Purrington and Muth can come up with a consensus on the first date of observation?

The photographs are very useful, especially the flight shot; I'm glad that photo was included. The molt pattern is fairly clear. The bird has the first 5 or so primaries new; a gap, and the remainder old. The secondaries are just beginning to molt (the first few are missing, the last few are new.) The coverts of the upper wing are worn or missing. The tail looks like it too may be molting (wedge-shaped appearance may be the result of new inner and growing outer rectrices.) This is the same pattern/timing that I have seen in fall Louisiana Lesser Black-backed. At least one of the observers mentioned the presence of molt, you would think that a 20 minute study would yield more information about this particular individual.

Use reverse side for additional comments, if necessary.

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 89-131 Species Great Black-backed Gull

Committee Member's Name Muth Date of Review 8-30-90

Circulation: First x; Second     ; Third     .

Decision:

Accept	<u>    x    </u>
Accept, Origin Questionable	<u>          </u>
Reject, Origin Questionable	<u>          </u>
Reject, Identification Questionable	<u>          </u>

Comments:

Obs. RDP,DM Loc. Fourchon Date 3-27-88

Note: w/1bbg

Round # 27

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Round 27

Record number: 89-131A-B Species: Great Black-backed Gull

Committee Member: A. Smalley Date of Review: 26 Nov 90

Circulation: First: X ; Second: ; Third:

Decision:

Accept: X

Reject; identification questionable:

Reject; origin questionable:

Comments: Adequate descriptions by experienced observers.

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record No.: 89-131 Round No.: 38 SPECIES Great Black-backed Gull  
Committee Member: Dittmann Date of review: 23 Sept. 1991

Circulation: First: \_\_\_\_\_ Second:  Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Decision:

ACCEPT:  (identification and origin)

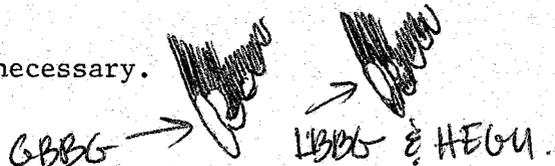
Reject, identification questionable: \_\_\_\_\_

Reject, origin questionable : \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: Cardiff's comments are well-taken and prompted me to look a little closer at the slides (because the descriptions are not very helpful when it came to fine details). Cardiff suggests that a hybrid may be a possibility based on reported small size, leg color, and apparent (from photo) dark smudge through the bird's eye.

I agree that the eye smudge appears more prominent than I would expect in a typical basic-plumaged GBBG, but I can't tell how much is real vs. photo-byproduct. What I can see, mantle color, proportions do suggest GBBG. Furthermore careful examination of primary pattern also appears to support an ID of GBBG, namely the all white tip to the outer primary & white window in #9; this pattern is not shared by Herring, LBBG, or Kelp gulls. Because the wingtip pattern supports the ID I am not going to change my vote (unless SWC can somehow change my mind with his 2nd round comments)

Use reverse side for additional comments, if necessary.



Louisiana Bird Records Committee  
Validation Form

Species: Great Black-backed Gull

LBRC No: 89-131 Round No: 38 Date of Review: 26 Sept. 1991

Member's Name: Steven W. Cardiff

Circulation: First: \_\_\_\_\_ Second:  Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept 89-131B

Reject, identification questionable 89-131A

\_\_\_\_\_ Reject, origin questionable

Comments:

OK, I'll give in on this one. But, I reject 89-131A. I am persuaded to accept based on the darkness of the mantle (too dark for a hybrid?), leg color (LBBG would have yellow legs at this age), and apparent size. I am willing to believe that the same bird is involved in both sightings, based on the wing molt pattern. I am still bothered by the eye color description and the dark eye smudge; also, it looks like the <sup>outer</sup> primaries do have white tips, contra descriptions.



observations. In fact, I can't even do as well looking at photos. DLD describes worn or missing upper wing coverts--I can't even see the upper wing coverts in the photo of the flying bird, and I can't tell much of anything from the standing bird photo.

5) Circumstances: my only notes were made on a tape-recorder. Dan and I, together in the car, contributed to the tape. When I finally got around to filling out the report months later, I asked Dan if he had sent in the record. He wasn't sure whether he had or not. I pointed out to him that since the report I'd written was based on a tape we'd both made, he should read it over and sign it if he wanted to. He did so.

Obs. dpm, rdp; etc Loc. fourchon/elmer's Date 10/9,29/88  
Note: photos qs, 10/29  

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Round # 38



LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

**Round:** 38

**Record Number:** 89-131

**Species:** Great Black-backed Gull

**Committee Member:** Smalley

**Date of Review:** 23 January 92

**Circulation:** Second

**Decision:** Accept

**Comments:** It is evident to me that this is a Great Black-backed Gull. Note that much rhetoric is spent on the details of reporting; one wonders if this influences the comments on the bird!

**Louisiana Bird Records Committee  
Validation Form**

Species: Great Black-backed Gull

LBRC No: 89-131 Round No: 38 Date of Review: 3-9-92

Member's Name: Charles E. Lyon

Circulation: First: \_\_\_\_\_ Second:  Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

\_\_\_\_\_ Reject, identification questionable

\_\_\_\_\_ Reject, origin questionable

**Comments:**

The description concerning mantle color, pink leg color, massive bill with description of bill coloration is adequate for a positive identification of a 3rd-4th year Greater-Black-backed Gull. The photos, especially the flight shot clearly documents this as a Greater Black-backed Gull, and shows an excellent size comparison versus the other gulls.

Louisiana Bird Records Committee  
Validation Form

Species: Great Black-backed Gull

LBRC No: 89-131 Round No: 38 Date of Review: 8/19/94

Member's Name: Ronald J. Stein

Circulation: First: \_\_\_\_\_ Second:  Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

\_\_\_\_\_ Reject. identification questionable

\_\_\_\_\_ Reject. origin questionable

Comments:

*adequate documentation*

(please use other side of page for additional comments)