

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the LBRC Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or this format when submitting records for review (to assure that all information involving an observation is accounted for). Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to: LBRC Secretary, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. ENGLISH AND SCIENTIFIC NAMES: GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (Larus marinus)
(specimen; LSMNS # 138123)
2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS, SEXES, AGES, GENERAL PLUMAGE (e.g., 2 ad. in breeding plumage): one; first alternate
3. LOCALITY: LOUISIANA; Cameron Par.; 10 mi. W old mouth Mermentau River,
(Rutherford Beach)
4. DATE WHEN SEEN: 8 May 1989
5. TIME OF DAY WHEN SEEN: afternoon
6. REPORTING OBSERVER AND ADDRESS: Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff
LSU Museum of Natural Science
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
7. OTHER OBSERVERS ACCOMPANYING REPORTER WHO ALSO IDENTIFIED THE BIRD:
8. OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD:

Probably no other observers. There is the remote chance that this individual was the same GBBG reported at East Jetty on the LOS weekend by Muth, Myers, and McKenzie.
9. WEATHER/LIGHT CONDITIONS (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):

The lighting conditions were good.
10. OPTICAL EQUIPMENT (type, power, condition):

Leitz 8 X 40 (DLD) and Bushnell 10 X 50 binoculars (SWC) - (both in good condition)
11. DISTANCE TO BIRD: Approx. 100 ft.
12. DURATION OF OBSERVATION: Total observation period 10 minutes prior to collection of specimen.
13. HABITAT: gulf coast beach
14. BEHAVIOR OF BIRD/CIRCUMSTANCES OF OBSERVATION (flying, feeding, resting, etc. -

include and stress any habits used in identification; relate events surrounding the observation):

SWC spotted the gull resting in a large flock of Laughing Gulls and Royal Terns by its size. During the observation, it was observed standing and sitting on the beach; it was not seen in flight.

15. DESCRIPTION (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length or relative size compared to other species present or familiar species; body bulk, shape, and proportions; bill, eye, leg and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

A large Larus gull (female; 1461 g). Compared to adjacent Laughing Gulls, this gull stood head and shoulders taller. It was obviously larger and longer-legged than the summering Herring Gulls that we had already encountered that day. The gull was in worn first alternate plumage, with some indication of molt present during our field observation (apparent mixture of old and new feathers present on mantle.) During preparation, the bird was discovered to be in very heavy body molt, molting from its "summer" plumage to its second basic plumage. It was beginning its primary molt with primaries number 1, 2, and 3 sheathed and growing in. The old remaining primaries and secondaries were worn and faded brown. The head and underparts were predominantly white with some brown flecking on head and belly. Back and wing coverts, "checkered" with white and light and dark brown; the back had a generally "pale or light" appearance compared to similarly aged and worn Herring Gulls. After collection, the tail pattern was noted; it was white, becoming mottled with blackish-grey about half way from the base and with a solid black terminal band. Tail also very worn. The rump was also white. The bill was large and heavy (the tip slightly bulbous), and primarily black, lightening slightly at the base of the lower mandible. Iris dark.

Field identification was based on large size (with correspondingly long whitish-gray legs), heavy bill, very white head and underparts, bill size, and worn "checkered"-appearance of mantle feathers.

16. Voice: silent.

17. SIMILAR SPECIES (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

Combination of size, back and tail pattern (in hand examination) eliminate all "similar" species. The specimen is available for inspection at LSUMNS.

18. PHOTOGRAPHS OR TAPE RECORDINGS OBTAINED (By whom? Attached?):

YES. DLD took photographs in the field and SWC took photographs of the specimen (enclosed).

19. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES:

We have seen one other 1st year GBBG in Louisiana (collected first specimen for state) and probably hundreds in North Carolina.

20. IDENTIFICATION AIDS (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a) at time of observation: NONE

b) after observation: NONE

21. THIS DESCRIPTION WRITTEN FROM: _____ notes made during observation; _____ notes made after observation; X memory; X specimen.

22. ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? YES . If not, explain:

23. SIGNATURE OF REPORTER:

Donal Doherty
Steven W. Cardiff

24. DATE AND TIME OF WRITING THIS ACCOUNT: 7 October 1989; 5 PM.