

14. **Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation** (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): We were returning from a pelagic trip off Southwest Pass. We were heading upstream (north) a couple of miles or so from the mouth of the pass. Dave and I spotted the bird as it was coming towards us from the north. The bird was with a formation of 2-3 juv. Herring Gulls which passed by off the starboard (east) side of the boat and continued out of sight downstream. We were on the upper deck of a medium-sized crew boat- I'd say we were about 12-15 ft. above the water, and the gulls flew past us at eye level. We were caught a little off-guard and had to do a double take, so we only on the bird for 30 sec. or so. It happened so fast that no one else really had time to see much before it was past us, and we couldn't give chase.
15. **Description** (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possibly: 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): A large, proportionately massive gull in direct comparison to the Herring Gulls flying with it- the bird was about 1/3 bigger overall. Massive, long, bulbous-tipped, all dark bill. The head and underparts were white with scattered dark flecking on the lower nape, sides, and flanks. The rump and the basal half of the tail were white with dark flecking, the distal half of the tail was blackish. The entire mantle was distinctly checkered with dark brown/blackish and white; the pattern was more of a messy 50-50 blotching of dark and light, not the dark feathers with crisp pale edges seen in juvs. We couldn't see the legs and I couldn't discern iris color. All I remember about the wings was that the upperwing coverts were checkered like the back and that the remiges were all brownish-black with no adult-like white tips or subterminal windows.
16. **Voice:**
17. **Similar species** (include how they were eliminated by your observation): The description is consistent with a first summer or 2nd winter GBBG. After seeing this bird I was very confused because I knew that the bird wasn't a juv., but I mistakenly expected a first summer/2nd winter bird to be acquiring some adult-like blackish mantle feathering. Otherwise, size, proportions, rump/tail pattern, bill color, mantle pattern eliminate other species.
18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained?** (by whom? attached?): No
19. **Previous experience with this species:** This is only about my 6th in LA (all first/second year birds, 2 specimens, 2 photographed), but I've seen hundreds on 3 trips to North Carolina.
20. **Identification aids:** (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):
- a. at time of observation: none
 - b. after observation: Gulls, a guide to identification, 2nd Ed., by P. J. Grant

21. This description is written from: ___ notes made during the observation; ___ notes made after the observation (date: ___); X memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: YES.

23. Signature of reporter: Steven W. Cardy
17 January 1996