

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE  
REPORT FORM

97-17 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 (*Larus marinus*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): 1 4th winter?
3. Locality: Louisiana: Lafourche Parish: Port Fourchon in  
new access canal being dredged and adjacent spoil bank
4. Date(s) when seen: 9 March 1997
5. Times of day when seen: 11:25 - 11:40 a.m.
6. Reporting observer and address:  
B. Mac. Myers III 105 Mc Clung St. Pass Christian, MS 39571-3329
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:  
R.D. Purington, Phillip Wallace, Cecil Kersting
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): varied from glary to quite good
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 10x40 ZEISS, 22x60 Bushnell
11. Distance to bird: as close as 50 yds in flight
12. Duration of observation: 15 minutes
13. Habitat (general and specific):  
canal and spoil bank
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):  
resting, bathing, 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):  
See attached field notes. Bird directly compared with Herring and Laughing Gulls and Ring-billed.

16. Voice: Not heard

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

The very dark, almost black back, <sup>mentle</sup> pink legs, yellow eyes, very large long & heavy bill, and overall size eliminate ~~other~~ other dark-backed gulls

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

3 slides enclosed

I think P. Wallace got some, too.

19. Previous experience with this species:

A fair amount including four or more this fall/winter/spring

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

a) at time of observation;

b) after observation:

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

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

23. Signature of reporter: B. Mac. Meyer III

24. Date and time of writing this account:

29 June 1997

3:30 P.M.

9 March 1997 w/ RDP, Philip Wallace, Cecil Kerstan,  
Great Black-backed Gull - <sup>N.</sup> Fourchon off Estay Rd.  
? 4th winter? Adult plumage except for a few black  
spots near end of tail

11:25 - 11:40 am



Head very white, few streaks in nape area. Back and wings  
almost black, evenly colored, no brownish. Bill large, heavy  
yellow



with blackish mark on both  
mandibles and red spot posterior  
to it on lower mandible. Iris yellow.

legs pink

Direct comparison with Herring, Ring-b., Laughing.  
Swimming, bathing, flying. Did not get detail of mirrors/wing  
tip spots

B

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REPORT FORM

1. **Common and scientific name:** Great Black-backed Gull  
(Larus marinus)
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 -  
probable 4<sup>th</sup> year bird in transition from winter to summer  
plumage.
3. **Locality: State (Louisiana) Parish:** Lafourche  
  
**Exact Location:** Between Fourchon Lake and Gulf;  
specifically at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> street off Estay Road in a  
dredged pond.
4. **Date(s) seen:** March 9, 1997
5. **Time(s) of day seen:** 11:20-11:41
6. **Reporting observer and address:** Phillip Wallace  
4515 S. Prieur St.  
New Orleans, LA 70125
7. **Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified  
the bird:** Mac Myers, Dan Purrington, Cecil Kersting
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird:**  
None that I know of.
9. **Light conditions:** Good light; Overcast.
10. **Optical equipment:** Bushnell Spacemaster (22x)
11. **Distance to bird:** 40-100 yds.
12. **Duration of observation:** 21 minutes
13. **Habitat (general and specific):** In pond and on mud  
"island" in middle of pond.
14. **Behavior:** Preening, bathing, flying
15. **Description:**

*Size* Large gull; much larger than adjacent Herring Gulls.  
*Head* Appeared pure white at time of observation. Slides seem  
to show some faint dark streaking on upper nape/lower crown.

Mantle and Back Very dark gray.

Underparts Pure white.

**Wings**

*Folded* Wings same dark gray as back; no brown in coverts. Conspicuous white primary spots.

*Spread and In Flight* Mirrors in two outer primaries are very large, indicating 4<sup>th</sup> year/adult. Broad white trailing edge to the flight feathers. Difficult to judge the extent of the black on the outer primaries, contrasting with the dark gray. Seems to be less extensive than on a 3<sup>rd</sup> year bird.

*Tail* White with 3 or 4 black, subterminal spots.

*Soft Parts* Light eye with reddish orbital ring. Large yellow bill with red gonys spot and black smudge anterior to the red. The black was on both mandibles. Legs were pinkish flesh.

16. **Voice:** None

17. **Similar species and how they were eliminated:**

Herring Gull eliminated by dark back and wings.

L.f. fuscus eliminated by size, leg color, and contrast between outer primaries and rest of upper wing.

Kelp Gull eliminated by size and leg color.

18. **Photographs?** Slides attached.

19. **Previous experience with this species:** I've seen quite a few times in LA and on the East Coast.

20. **Aids used in identification:**

a) at time of observation: None

b) after observation: Grant

21. **This description written from:** \_\_\_\_\_ notes made during observation;   x   notes made after observation (at 5:00 pm on March 9, 1997) ; \_\_\_\_\_ memory.

22. **Are you positive of your identification?**   yes  

23. **Signature of reporter:** *Philip Wallace*

24. **Date and time of writing this account:** April 1, 1997  
1:30 pm

17/97  
Gr. Black Gull Adult. 11:45 - 11:20 -  
PW man ROP, CK 40 - 100 yds

End of 17th St. off Estey Av.

Dredged Pond

breeding; nesting; flying Overcast  
Good light

Large very dark grey back

bone white head and underparts.

Tail white with 3-4 small black spots

on tips.

No brown in wings.

Light eye - reddish orbital ring.

Yellow bill - large; red gonyx spot  
w/ black smudge anterior to red.

Black on both mandibles.

Legs - pinkish.

Much larger than adf - HEGU

Conspicuous white primary spots.

In flight, broad white trailing  
edge.

Notes written at S.P.R.

on 3/9/97.

Photos.

Great Black-backed Gull

3/9/97

Notes from slides (written 3:00 p.m. - 3/22/97)

Mirrors in 2 outer primaries are very large,  
indicating 4th yr / Adult.

Legs - pinkish-flesh (sl. 5, 8)

Black spots on tail are subterminal, not  
terminal.

(over)

Head - seems to be some <sup>(sl-3)</sup> faint streaking on  
upper nape/lower crown. Not definite.

Wings - Difficult to judge extent of black  
on dark gray primaries; seems less extensive  
than 3rd year. (v. sl. 7)

Conclusion re: age

4th year (winter → summer.)