

**LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM**

1. **Common and scientific name:** Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 individual in first basic plumage
3. **Locality: State (Louisiana) Parish:** Cameron
Exact Location: Johnson Bayou Beach about 1 mile west (1st sighting) of the road to the beach. The second sighting was one-and-a-half to two miles east of the road.
4. **Date(s) seen:** December 16, 2001
5. **Time(s) of day seen:** 8:50 and 9:25 a.m.
6. **Reporting observer and address:** Phillip Wallace
4515 S. Prieur St.
New Orleans, LA 70125-5044
7. **Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:** Mac Myers and Curt Sorrells
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird:** Mark Swan may have had a brief sighting later in the day.
9. **Light conditions:** Fog was beginning to lift. It was not an impediment at all to seeing the birds at the distance we were seeing them. The viewing conditions were actually quite good.
10. **Optical equipment:** Zeiss 10x40 bins
11. **Distance to the bird:** No more than 20 yards at the initial sighting; about 75 yards at the second sighting.
12. **Duration of observation:** The total viewing time was probably no more than 5 minutes.
13. **Habitat (general and specific):** On the beach at the cut at the edge of the Gulf and flying over the Gulf.
14. **Behavior:** Resting on the beach and flying over the Gulf.

15. Description:

Size and General Impression Very small gull having the approximate bulk of the adjacent Forster's Tern. It seemed plump. It was seen sitting within 3 feet of a Forster's Tern and was also seen in flight with a Forster's.

Head The head was small and rounded. The rounded head and small bill gave the bird a much different head shape from the nearby Bonaparte's Gulls, whose heads seemed much more elongated by comparison. The head was white with a black auricular spot and a dark cap. The cap was not as dark as is shown in some field guides, but it was clearly

present and was more conspicuous in the second viewing. The nape was the same gray color as the mantle.

Upper Parts The mantle was pale gray like that of a Bonaparte's. When the bird was at rest, the dark wing coverts that form the M pattern in flight were striking, appearing darker black than those of a Bonaparte's.

Wings In flight the wings seemed rounded. There was a bold black M pattern formed by the coverts and the dark primaries. The pattern was broader (on the secondary coverts) and darker than that shown by a Bonaparte's. As viewed from above, the primaries were mostly dark, not showing the white wedge shown by the Bonaparte's.

Underparts The underparts were pure white.

Tail The tail was white with a distinct black terminal band.

Bill The tiny black bill was the first thing that struck me about the bird when it began to dawn upon us that we had a Little Gull instead of a Bonaparte's.

16. Voice: No vocalization.

17. Similar species and how they were eliminated: The real contender is Bonaparte's Gull, many of which were seen that day, with several across the cut when the bird was first seen. The size rules out Bonaparte's, as do the dark cap and dark primaries, i.e., the absence of the white primary wedge shown in flight by Bonaparte's. Other more subtle features, such as the head shape and general dumpiness point to Little Gull.

18. Photographs? None.

19. Previous experience with this species: I've seen once in Louisiana.

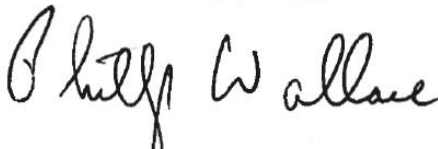
20. Aids used in identification:

After observation: Sibley and Grant.

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

22. Are you positive of your identification? yes

23. Signature of reporter:



24. Date and time of writing this account: January 5, 2002
4:30 p.m.

X, 50 20-30 yards.

Little Gull rounded head

Size of FOTE

Direct comparison

Thin black bill

Black auricular spot

Black band on tail

Rounded wings

M pattern on eyes

wings

Mostly dark upper part of primaries

Dark m. on wings broader than Boninse.

Resting on beach
Flying w/ FOTE.

9:25 - out sighting

1 1/2 - 2 mi east of road to O.B. Beach Rd.

75 gals

Dark cap more visible

About size of FOTE

(adjacent)

on beach; then flying away over hill