

**REPORT TO THE
LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

1. Common and scientific name:
Great Black-backed Gull, *Larus marinus*
2. Number of individuals seen, sexes, ages, general plumage, etc.
One adult bird
3. Locality:
At the tip of the sandspit at the eastern end of Grand Isle State Park, LA
4. Date(s) when seen:
February 4, 2001
5. Times of day when seen:
At about 10:15 AM
6. Reporting observer and address:
John P. Sevenair, 325 Stafford Place, New Orleans, LA 70124
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
None
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
None
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and amount of light):
It was a clear, sunny day, and the bird was in the open.
10. Optical equipment:
Zeiss 7x42 binoculars.
11. Distance to bird:
From about 250' down to a minimum about 75'
12. Duration of observation:
About five minutes
13. Habitat (general and specific):
A sandspit at the edge of Barataria Pass, not far from the Gulf of Mexico.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):
The bird was standing next to the water's edge in a group of about two dozen gulls (including Herring, Ring-billed, and Laughing). As I approached the bird edged into deeper water and finally flew away.
15. Description (Include 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.

The bird had a typical gull shape, as was clear from comparison with the other gulls in the same flock. It was larger than any of them, noticeably larger than the immature Herring Gulls that were standing nearby.

The head, neck, breast, belly, and tail were white. The back was black; as the bird flew away I could see that it was a uniform dark black color almost from wingtip to wingtip. The wings had white trailing edges and white mirrors on the two outermost primaries when seen from above. The mirror on the outermost primary was extensive. The beak was yellow, with a red spot at the gonydeal angle. This angle was prominent, and the beak was noticeably larger and heavier than those of the Herring Gulls. The legs were pink.

The feet were hidden, either behind the sand bar or in the water, during the entire sighting. I didn't see the underwings either.

16. Voice:
Not heard.
17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observations):
Kelp, Lesser Black-backed, and Yellow-footed gulls have yellow legs. Western Gulls of the northern form are not so dark on the back; southern birds don't have two mirrors on the outermost primaries as this bird did. I think I would have noticed the pattern on the wingtips of Slaty-backed Gulls.
18. Photographs:
I left the camera in the car.
19. Previous experience with this species:
I've seen several in Louisiana and many in the northeastern USA.
20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification
a) At the time of observation:
None
b) After observation:
The National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, third edition.
21. This description written from: x Notes made during observation; notes made after observation; ✓ memory.
A copy of the notes is enclosed.
22. Are you positive of your identification? yes If not, explain:
23. Signature of reporter:

24. Date and time of writing this account:
First draft finished at 5:15 PM on February 4, 2001. Minor wording changes were completed at about 9 PM the same day.

2/4/01 GBB Gull
Point, GI beach
10:13 AM

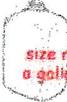
Bigger than Herring
white except for
black back

pink legs
yellow bill, red spot,
large in proportion
prominent gonydeal
angle
white trailing edge
of wing; white
mirrors on 2 primaries

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

Videotaped 10 February 2001 at Grand Isle (dock on north shore) by Charlie Lyon and Mark Swan



size relative to a gallon milk jug

