

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM

1. **Common and scientific name:** Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)
2. **Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage:** 1 adult basic
3. **Locality: State (Louisiana) Parish:** Lafourche
Exact Location: Fourchon Beach east of the end of Hwy. 3090 toward Belle Pass
4. **Date(s) seen:** October 11, 2003
5. **Time(s) of day seen:** 10:23-10:30
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, Curt Sorrells
8. **Other observers who independently identified the bird:** Dan Purrington saw the bird on a later date, as did, I believe, David Muth.
9. **Light conditions:** Skies were overcast; light was adequate.
10. **Optical equipment:** Zeiss 10x40 binoculars
11. **Distance to the bird:** 30-75 yards
12. **Duration of observation:** 7 minutes
13. **Habitat (general and specific):** On beach at edge of Gulf
14. **Behavior:** Resting and in flight
15. **Description:**
Size and General Impression Massive bird; much larger than adjacent Herring Gull.
Head White; large and blocky in size.
Upper Parts Black mantle and upper wings

Wings Black upper wings with no noticeable contrast between color of outer primaries and the rest of the upper wing; conspicuous white apical spots on the primaries. In flight, it appeared that the inner primaries and outer secondaries were in molt.

Underparts Pure white

Tail White

Bill Large bill was yellow with a red gonydial spot.

Eye Color not noted.

Legs Legs were pinkish-gray in color.

Other

16. **Voice:** None

17. **Similar species and how they were eliminated:** The size, color of upper parts and leg color eliminate all contenders.

18. **Photographs?** Videotape by Wallace on Sorrells' camcorder. I think Myers got photos also.

19. **Previous experience with this species:** I've seen many times in Louisiana and on the East Coast.

20. **Aids used in identification:**

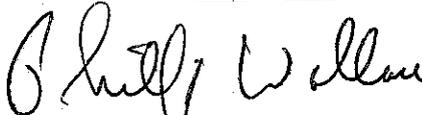
a) **at time of observation:** none

b) **after observation:** none

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

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

23. **Signature of reporter:**



24. **Date and time of writing this account:** November 16, 2003
 4:30 p.m.

PALM, BMM, CCS

Overcast
Light adequate
30-25 yds.

10/11/03

Obs.
Under cover

Great Black-backed Gull
Adult

10:23 - 10:30

Masquerade gull; direct comparison with HEGU.

Black back

White tail; White underparts; white head.

Brown yellow with red spot.

Pinkish gray legs.

Large head (bloody)

In flight; male primaries under secondaries
in molt; conspicuous white goral spots.
Upper wings same black color throughout.

10/11/03

Fourden/Grand Isle

PBGR 1 (CCS)

CAEG

AWPE

GRHE 2

BRPE

DLNH ~ 10

DCCO

YCNH 3

MAFL 1

WHIB

GBHE

GLIB 1

GR EG

MEG 2

SN EG

POSP - 25

LBHE

MODH ~ 12

TRHE

BLTE? 1

REEG 1

OSPR 1

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1. Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*
2. One adult in basic plumage
3. Locality: Lafourche Parish, LA; Fourchon Beach, a little west from the road entrance to the beach, west of Fourchon Rd.
4. Date(s): 11 October and 5 November 2003
5. Time(s): 11 October, 1023-1030 cdt; 5 November, 1150 est
6. Reporting observer: B. Mac. Myers III; 5660 Ada Pl.--rear apt., New Orleans, LA 70124
7. Accompanying observers: 11 Oct., Curt Sorrells and Phillip Wallace; 5 November, Curt Sorrells
8. Other observers: Dan Purrington found the bird on 12 October and perhaps another date; although I had left a message for him the evening of 11 October, he didn't get it until he returned from the field. So he independently identified the bird.
9. Light conditions: good
10. Optics: 10x42 Eagle, excellent; scope?
11. Distance: less than 45 yards
12. Duration: appx. 7 minutes on 11 Oct. several minutes on 5 Nov.
13. Habitat: beach of Gulf of Mexico
14. Behavior: walking, pecking at dead fish; flying away
15. Description: A very large gull, much larger-taller, longer, more massive-than nearby HERG. The mantle was charcoal gray, slight contrast with blacker wingtips. Head, underparts and tail were white. There was only very sparse and faint flecking on the head. The iris was light. The bill was long and deep and was bright yellow with a red gonydeal spot. The legs were pale, dull pink with brighter pink webs. In flight, it was clear that the bird was in wing molt; there were missing or partially grown feathers near the junction of secondaries and primaries. This was visible on both dates. Purrington also noted it. So, I feel reasonably sure that we were dealing with a single individual. Also, on both occasions (and I believe Purrington thought the same) we noted that it was an especially big individual.
16. Voice: not heard
17. Similar species: The combination of mantle coloration, head pattern (mainly unstreaked), leg coloration, iris color, bill size and shape along with the bird's massive size rule out other longshots, such Western, Slaty-backed or Kelp.
18. Photographs: Enclosed are 4 prints of photos taken 11 Oct. by me. I think Purrington obtained photos.
19. Previous experience: several in LA; many in the northeast. Also extensive experience with other regularly occurring gulls and at least some experience with Western, Slaty-backed and Kelp (and "Chandeleur") Gulls.









11 Oct. 2003

LaFourche Parish - Fourchon Beach

B. Mac. Myers III

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