

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: California Gull *Larus californicus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 adult

3. Parish: Cameron
Specific Locality: Holly Beach

4. Date(s) when observed: 12 November 2023

5. Time(s) of day when observed: Morning; 10:08-10:16 a.m.

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

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| Reporting observer: Paul E. Conover |
| City: |
| State: |

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):
Overcast and gray, but distance and lighting sufficient for good observation of colors, etc.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Vortex 12x binos, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60X, Samsung S22 Ultra phonecam, Nikon D3500 with 200 mm lens

11. Distance to bird(s): Ca. 20-30 yards

12. Duration of observation: Around 8 minutes judging from time stamps.

13. Habitat: Beach. I was driving Holly Beach and it was around the shoreline.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Bird was resting on the beach with a group of gulls and terns including adult Herrings, various aged Ring-billed, Laughing, Franklin's. Bird was not nervous at all as I was in my car. It walked around, preened a little bit, and then, as the adult Herrings took off to fly down the beach one at a time, it too got up and flew off, to the east. I drove that way a few minutes later and did not relocate it or the Herrings.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: 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, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

Adult white-headed gull in winter plumage with medium gray back, dark eye, yellow bill with black and orange markings, yellow legs.

Basic white-headed gull structure, with rounded head. Head white with diffuse, pale brownish streaking on auriculars, crown, nape, more strongly marked on hindneck, wrapping and around onto sides of neck and more lightly onto breast, but chin and throat and forecrown near bill (i.e. whole front of face) white.

Back color slightly darker gray, and perhaps a slightly different gray, from adult Herrings it was near. Broad white half-oval tip to tertials. Wingtips black, on sitting bird with white tips visible on dorsal surface of exposed section of folded primaries, large white area visible on ventral surface of primaries. Tail appeared solidly white. Underparts white.

Bill yellow with fairly pronounced downward curve to culmen at tip and slight gonydeal angle with partial black subterminal "ring" from angle of gonys almost to bill tip on lower mandible, with just a smudge on upper bill. Orange smudge on inner half of gonydeal angle. Gape yellow, extending well onto face. Facial feathering extending onto base of bill in a pointed acute angle unlike less-pointed feathering on Herrings. Legs yellow, similar to vivid yellow of bill. Eye dark brown.

Spread wing from above with black on pp10-5, all with white tips: p10 black from greater coverts with long white tip, p9 gray on ca. basal 1/3 of outer web, gray (with white tongue?) on inner web, and with small white tip and small mirror, p8 similar to p9 but with visible white tongue and without mirror, pp7-5 with decreasing amounts of black moving inward and all with white tongues. Rest of upperwing gray with trailing edge of white tips. Underwing similar with white wing linings.

16. Voice: not heard

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

Herring: Rounder-headed without blocky rear crown angle of Herring, legs yellow vs pink, eye dark vs light, wing patterns different. Mantle color different but not markedly so.

Ring-billed: Wing pattern different, eye color dark vs. pale, bill without full subterminal ring and orange on gonys vs yellow bill ringed black.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Attached. Phone cam and cam images.

19. Previous experience with this species: Pretty extensive, on regular trips out west including to their breeding range, and in Louisiana as well with a number of sightings of birds of various ages.

22. Are you positive of your identification? Yes.

23. Date: 12 November 2023







