

LBRC 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):
One bird of unknown sex in adult basic plumage
3. Parish:
Cameron
4. Specific Locality:
Rutherford Beach
5. Date(s) when observed: 21 November 2023
6. Time(s) of day when observed: ~11:30am
7. Reporting observer: Nick Ramsey
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
Garrett Rhyne
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Bird in direct overhead sunlight for duration of observation, at times backlit when flying
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Seen initially through Vortex 8x42 binoculars in rough shape (missing an eyecup), then photographed and observed with fairly new Canon EOS R5 with Ef100-500mm lens at 500m, then subsequently observed through fairly new Vortex 20-60x85mm scope.
12. Distance to bird(s): Initially about 200 yards, closed distance to within 30 yards
13. Duration of observation: About one hour
14. Habitat: Sandy beach

15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The bird was resting with a flock of other gulls (mostly associating with Ring-billed) when spotted initially. While observing, the bird occasionally took flight but would return shortly after.

16. 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):

An adult Larus gull standing a little taller than adjacent Ring-billed Gulls with a slightly darker, bluer mantle. Bill fairly long with black band near distal tip, red gonys. Gape slightly angled downward into a frown. Head heavily mottled compared to Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. Legs dull yellow. Primaries with mirrors on P9 and P10, large white apical spots. Eyes dark.

17. Voice: Not heard

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

No other North American member of the genus Larus combines the bill pattern, eye color, and leg color described above as an adult.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):

Both myself (Nick Ramsey) and Garrett Rhyne obtained photos.

20. Previous experience with this species: I have extensive experience having lived in parts of the Western US where it is usually the most abundant gull. I've also identified vagrant California Gulls in adult plumage in Texas and in younger plumages in Louisiana.

21. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

22. Identification aids used when?

None used

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

Yes

24. Date report completed:

21 November 2023

25. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

26. If yes, may we include your name with the report?

Yes

