

Sabine's Gull

ad and juv

Record Number: 91-35

13 Oct 1991

Classification: A-P

Davenport and Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA

*Peiser, *Kent, *Petersen, *Pinkston

*Fuller, *Johnson, *R. Allen; IBL 62(1),15,71, AB 46:169, Pinkston 92

DOCUMENTATIONS:

Richard H. Peiser, 13 Oct, 389 Turner Ave., Glen Ellyn, IL
60137

Thomas H. Kent, 14 Oct, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

Peter C. Petersen, 14 Oct, 235 McClellan Blvd, Davenport, IA
52803

Randall Pinkston, 14 Oct, 526 Reno St., Iowa City, IA 52245

Jim Fuller, 14 Oct, 6 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240

Ann Johnson, 14 Oct, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211

Reid Allen, 26 Oct, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA
50265

PHOTOGRAPHS

John King, 13 Oct, 2 prints, P-0306 [not reviewed]

Thomas H. Kent, 14 Oct, five prints, P-0311

Tim Schantz, 14 Oct, 2 prints, P-0303, Iowa Bird Life 62(1)
cover, 62:15

P. C. Petersen, 21 Oct, 1 print, 0310 (Meadowlark 1:32)

Reid Allen, 26 Oct, 1 slide, P-0300 [not reviewed]

J. O. Durbin, undated, 3 slides, P-0294 [not reviewed]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 62:15, Meadowlark 1:32-33

Records Committee: 62:71

Photographs: IBL 62(1) cover (P-0303), Am. Birds 46:169
(P-0303), IBL 62:115 (P-0311), Meadowlark 1:32 (P-0310)

Pinkston, R. 1992. Sabine's Gull at the Quad Cities. IBL
62:114-116.

VOTE: 7 A-P

A-P, Great pictures showing all field marks.

A-P, Excellent descriptions of both adult and juvenile
Sabine's Gull as well as some excellent photos.



Light morph adult Parasitic Jaeger at Gillson Park, Wilmette (Cook County) on 1 November 1991. Photo by Toby Brown.

Laughing Gull

EA: 8 Sep., RLCA (RC). LD: 11 Nov., Carl.L (KM). Others: 15 & 21 Sep., RLCA (LA, RP); 10 Oct., L.Decatur (MD); 2 Nov., Alton (*DBe et al.).

Franklin's Gull

EA: 9 Jul. Spfld (DB); 11 Jul., Chi (RH); 14 Jul., Rend L (TF, CWa, JD). MC: 66, Spfld, 24 Sep. (DB); 59, Evanston/Wilmette, 2-3 Nov. (EW, m.ob.); 32, L.Decatur, 2 Nov. (MD). LD: 24 Nov., Des Plaines River (Cook Co) (WS, CT); 20 Nov. (imm.), Spfld (DB).

Little Gull

EA: 19 Oct. (imm.), Wilmette (JKo); 20 Oct., Carl.L (DKa, m.ob.). LD: 4-15 Dec. Clin.L (DS); 23-29 Nov. (imm.), L.Decatur (RC, MD). Others: 28 Oct. (ad.), Wilmette (JKo); 31 Oct. (imm.), Wilmette (EW, RH); 2-3 Nov. (imm.), Saganashkee Slough (WS, m.ob.); 16 Nov. (ad.), L.Decatur (*MD); 26-27 Nov. (ad.), Spfld (DB, TT, DO--photo).

Bonaparte's Gull

EA: 6 Aug. (3 ad.), Evanston (EW); 29 Sep. (2), L.Decatur (RC, MD). MC: 1,350, Evanston & Wilmette, 2 Nov. (EW); 500, Spfld, 11, 14, 15 & 27 Nov. (DB); 500, L.Decatur, 23 Nov. (RC, MD). Others: 22 & 25 Nov. (melanistic ad.), Spfld (*DB, DO--photo).

Ring-billed Gull

EA: 19 Jul., Spfld (DB); 19 Jul. (4), Carl.L (KM); 26 Jul. (2--1st yr.), Joliet (JM). MC: 10,000+, RLCA, 8 Sep. 4,550, Carl.L, 24 Nov. (KM); 3,900, Evanston/



Adult Sabine's Gull on the Mississippi River near Moline (Rock Island County) on 14 October 1991. Photo by Peter Petersen.

Wilmette, 3 Nov. (EW, m.ob.).

Herring Gull

EA: 9 Sep., L.Charleston (RB); 11 Oct., Carl.L (KM). MC: 2,000, LCal, 5 Nov. (WM).

Thayer's Gull

EA: 26 Sep. (1st winter), LCal (*WM). MC: 3, Wauk, 3 Nov. (RP). Others: 29 Sep. (ad.), Palos (JL); 9 Nov. (1st yr.), Pekin (LA); 10 Nov., Zion (JSo); 14 & 30 Nov., Mallard L F.P. (Du Page Co) (EW, RCo & MC); 17 Nov., Mason Co (LA); 24 Nov. & 3 Dec (2), LCal (WM & EW).

Iceland Gull

EA: 5 Dec. (1st yr.), LCal (RH).

Lesser Black-backed Gull

EA: 5 Oct. (2nd winter), L.Chau (RP, MD); 5 Oct. (2nd yr.), Mallard Lake F.P. (Du Page Co) (EW). LD: 7 Dec. (1st winter), Clin.L (MD, RC). Others: 31 Oct. (ad.), LCal (SF); 1 Nov. (ad.), Wilmette (TB, EW); 9-16 Nov. (ad.), Mallard L F.P. (Du Page Co) (AS, EW, m.ob.); 9 Nov. (2nd yr.), Pekin (LA); 10 Nov., Zion (JN, JSo--video); 17 Nov. (ad.), Mason Co (LA); 26 Nov. (subad.), Spfld (DB); 28 Nov. (1st winter), Chi (JL); 28 Nov. (ad.), Chi (RH); 5 Dec. (ad.), LCal (RH); 6 Dec. (3rd yr.), Chi (RH); 8 Dec., Chi (DBr, MH)--17 different birds reported this year, a massive influx for this species.

Glaucous Gull

EA: 27 Oct., Carl.L (*DBe, m.ob.). Others: 30 Nov.

(ad.), Winthrop Harbor (ASi); 7 Dec. (ad.), LCal (DM).

Great Black-backed Gull

EA: 4 Nov. (ad.--video), Wauk (JSo). Others: 26 Nov. (3rd yr.), Winthrop Harbor (DJ).

Black-legged Kittiwake

(1st winter unless otherwise stated). EA: 20 Oct., Carl.L (BD, m.ob.); 1 Nov., LCal (*WM); 1 Nov., Wilmette (EW, TB); 8 Nov., Peoria (LA). LD: 27 Nov. (2nd winter.), Spfld (DB).

Sabine's Gull

EA: 28 Sep. (imm.), L Decatur (*MD). LD: 3 Nov., Glencoe (*RC). Other: 3-5 Oct., L.Chau (LA, RC); 12-26 Oct. (ad.) Rock Island (RPe, *PP, m.ob.--photos); 14-17 Oct. (imm.) Rock Island (PP, m.ob.); 20 Oct., Carl.L (DKa, m.ob.); 31 Oct., Wilmette (EW, JK).

Caspian Tern

EA: 27 Jun., Spfld (DB); 6 Jul. LCal (WM). MC: 65, GLNTC & Wauk, 11 Aug. (JSo); 11, Spfld, 18 Sep. (DB). LD: 11 Oct., Carl.L (KM); 5 Oct. (2), Spfld (DB); 30 Sep., GLNTC (JSo).

Common Tern

EA: 22 Aug., Chi (fide EW); 2 Sep., Clin.L (RC). MC: 50 (25 imm.), Evanston, 28 Aug. (EW); 9, Spfld, 5 Oct. (DB). L.D. 2 Nov. (imm.), Spfld (DB); 4 Oct. (4 ad.), Joliet (JM).

Forster's Tern

EA: 27 Jun., Evanston (EW); 20 Jul. Spfld (DB). MC: 44, Chi, 17 Aug. (JL); 40, Carl.L 5 Oct. (KM). LD: 5 Nov., LCal (WM); 2 Nov. (3), Spfld (DB); 2 Nov., Carl.L (KM).

Least Tern

EA: 17 Aug., RLCA (RC).

Black Tern

EA: 8 Jul. Spfld (DB); 10 Jul., MM (EW, m.ob.). MC: 80, Rend L, 17 Aug. (WM, m.ob.). LD: 16 Sep. (10), Spfld (DB).

Mourning Dove

MC: 110, Spfld, 19 Sep. (DB).

Black-billed Cuckoo

EA: 17 Aug. (2), Chi (JL, m.ob.); 31 Aug., Urbana (RC). MC: 6, Chi, 10 Sep. (RH). LD: 27 Sep., Carl.L (KM); 14 Sep., Chi (JL).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

EA: 10 Aug. (7), St. Clair Co (KM); 16 Aug., Glencoe (EW). MC: 4, Chi, 10 Sep. (RH). LD: 15 Oct., Lick Creek (Sangamon Co) (DB); 16 Sep., Wauk (JSo).

Great Horned Owl

MC: 5, Homer (Vermilion/Champaign Co's), 29 Sep. (JS).

Snowy Owl

EA: 8 Nov., Naperville (DY). Others: 9 Nov., Chi (Midway Airport) (JCz); 20-23 Nov. (ad.), Chi (Meigs Field) (RH, SF, m.ob.); 24 Nov.-1 Dec. (imm.), Chi (Meigs Field) (RH, WS, m.ob.). MC: 3, Chi, 2 Dec. (RH). At least 8 different birds reported in Chi.

Long-eared Owl

EA: 4 Dec., Clin.L (DS).

Short-eared Owl

EA: 3 Oct., IBSP (JSo). MC: 7, Evanston/Wilmette, 2-3 Nov. (EW, RC, RB). LD: 14 Nov., Evanston (EW).

Northern Saw-whet Owl

EA: 22 Oct., Skokie Lagoons (* *LB).

Common Nighthawk

MC: 311, Chi, 25 Aug. (JL); 175, Carl.L, 31 Aug. (KM); 70, Spfld, 10 Sep. (DB). LD: 20 Oct., MM (AS).

Whip-poor-will

LD: 5 Oct., Chi (fide RB).

Chimney Swift

MC: 1000, L.Decatur. 22 Sep. (MD); 600, O'Fallon (St. Clair Co), 5 Oct. (KM); 198, Evanston 4 Sep. (EW). LD: 2 Nov., Wilmette (JL et al.).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

EA: 6 Aug., Urbana (EC). MC: 10, Spfld, 14 Sep. (DB); 8, Joliet, 20 Sep. (JM). LD: 10 Oct., Woodstock (DF); 10 Oct., Crystal Lake (Lake Co) (fide EW); 8 Oct., Urbana (RC).

Belted Kingfisher

MC: 6, Carl.L, 12 Oct. (RP). LD: 8 Dec., Mahomet (Champaign Co) (RC); 5 Dec., Joliet (JM).

Red-headed Woodpecker

MC: 21, Spfld, 17 Sep. (DB). LD: (north) 31 Oct. (imm.), Glencoe (LB).

Red-bellied Woodpecker

MC: 13, Spfld, 27 Oct. (DB). LD: 20 Nov. JP (KC).

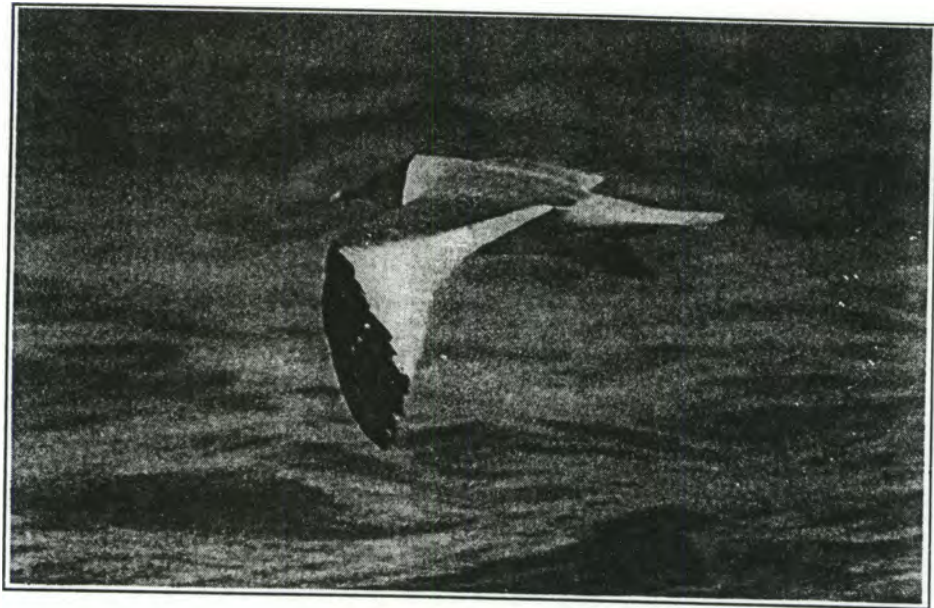
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

EA: 14 Sep., Chi (JL); 24 Sep., Urbana (RC); 27 Sep., Carl.L (KM). MC: 9, Spfld, 28 Sep. (DB); 7, JP (HR). LD: 4 Dec., Urbana (EC); 6 Nov., Mahomet (Champaign Co) (RC).

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IOWA BIRD LIFE

Winter 1992 Volume 62 Number 1



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



Most Sabine's Gulls found in the interior of the continent in fall are juveniles; but in autumn 1991, with Sabine's unusually numerous inland, several adults were found there as well. This one was in Scott County, Iowa, on October 14, 1991. Photograph/Tim Schantz.



Some inland areas had better than average numbers of jaegers this fall. This Pomarine Jaeger, apparently providing a first definite record for Utah, was on Utah Lake at Orem on November 6, 1991. Photograph/Ted Madden.



Furnishing a first state record, and only the third for the northeast, was this Vermilion Flycatcher at Jobs Corners, Tioga County, Pennsylvania, October 24-25, 1991. Photograph/Franklin C. Haas.



A subtle westerner that might be overlooked in the east at times, this Brewer's Sparrow at Hartlen's Point, Nova Scotia, on October 7, 1991, provided a first record for Atlantic Canada and one of very few for eastern North America. Photograph/Ian A. McLaren.



A Eurasian bird that had strayed as far as Alaska only three times, the Little Bunting was not on anyone's list of expected vagrants in California! But in the remarkable autumn of 1991, this individual on Point Loma in San Diego in late October barely stood out as the season's rarest bird. Photograph/B. J. Rose.



The waters far off northern California continue to turn up surprises. This Mottled Petrel was one of several found more than 70 miles to the southwest of Point Reyes on November 16, 1991. Against the white underparts, the bold black "boomerangs" by the wrists and the extensive dark gray belly are striking even at long distance. Photograph/Monte M. Taylor.

Features which separate this species from the Common Loon are size, and proportionately smaller head, neck, and bill. The sharp delineation of the light and dark on the side of the neck compares to a patterned side of the neck without a sharp delineation in Common Loon. In addition, Common Loon is lightly colored all the way around the eye and lacks a chinstrap. Red-throated Loon has a smaller bill, which often appears to be upturned, has white all the way around the eye, and the side of the neck is more patterned and not so sharply defined, all features which differed from this bird. Yellow-billed Loon is even larger than Common Loon, and has a distinctive large light-colored bill.

The bird obligingly remained for many observers to view through the following weekend, and was last reported on 19 November. An added attraction was the presence of Black-legged Kittiwake, and White-winged and Surf scoters on the lake. I had two more opportunities to study the bird, at which time excellent views of the chinstrap were gained.

Prior to 1982 there were seven Iowa records for this species, which nests in the Arctic and winters primarily along the west coast. In recent years, one or two sightings have been recorded in the state annually, most in the period October-December, with a few in April-May.

I found "Advanced Birding" (Kenn Kaufmann, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1990) to be especially useful in comparing the loons in basic plumage. And yes, I was in my Kinnick Stadium seat for kickoff.

6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

SABINE'S GULLS AT THE QUAD CITIES

RANDALL PINKSTON

At 2 p.m. on 13 October 1991 Richard Peiser of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, observed what he suspected was an immature Sabine's Gull from a Mississippi River casino boat at Davenport, Scott County, Iowa. Later that afternoon he relocated the bird with an adult and confirmed the identification. He reported the birds to the Iowa Bird Line. The following morning Jim Fuller relocated the adult downstream from the original site.

Early that afternoon I arrived where Fuller had observed the adult. Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault and Jim Scheib joined me and together we were unable to find the birds there. At 2 p.m., on the advice of Pete Petersen, we directed our search upstream past the Highway 74 bridge in Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois. There we joined others in viewing both birds for extended periods at the Moline riverfront and across the river in Bettendorf, Iowa.

The adult (Figure 1) was in worn alternate plumage with a dark gray head and black collar. White flecking was noted on the crown at close range. The small bill was black at the base with bright yellow tip. No eye ring was discerned. The underparts were entirely white as were the nape and neck, the rump, uppertail coverts, and forked tail. The back and scapulars were plain gray continuous with the gray of the tertials and wing coverts. The back appeared slightly paler ("frosted") relative to the coverts on the floating bird. The spread wing pattern was distinctive with secondaries, inner primary coverts, and inner primaries bright white, forming a white triangle between the gray coverts proximally and the black outer primary coverts and outer primaries distally. Narrow white "mirrors" were



noted on the outer primaries at close range. The underwing appeared white except for a black trailing edge distally.

The juvenile (Figure 2) displayed the same striking upperwing pattern except that the adult's gray was replaced with mottled grayish-brown; this brown extended from the crown and face to the lower back and onto the sides of the breast. The fresh outer primaries were tipped with white. The forehead, rump, uppertail coverts, and entire underparts were white. The bill was all black. The forked white tail had a bold black subterminal band beyond which the rectrices were narrowly tipped with white.

These were small gulls between one-half and two-thirds the size of nearby Ring-billed Gulls. They were high-riding on the water with head and neck held erect, the wingtips angled upward. Their flight, aptly described as tern-like, was often close to the water's surface. Richard Peiser heard both birds utter "squeaky" noises.



Figure 1. Adult Sabine's Gull at Bettendorf, 14 October 1991. Photo by Tom Kent.



Figure 2. Juvenile Sabine's Gull at Bettendorf, 14 October 1991. Photo by Tom Kent.

Apparently the juvenile departed the following day while the adult remained through 26 October. Seen well, the striking upperwing pattern of Sabine's Gull is diagnostic in all plumages. The most often cited similar species is first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake which is larger and mainly white-headed.

Sabine's Gull is a circumpolar breeder that winters at sea in the southern hemisphere. Birds nesting in Canada and Greenland migrate diagonally southeast across the north Atlantic Ocean to wintering areas off the coast of southwest Africa, while those nesting in Siberia and Alaska migrate in the eastern Pacific Ocean to areas off South America (Grant 1986). Adults arrive on their breeding grounds in May/June and depart with juveniles in July/August. Most young birds spend their first summer south of the equator and depart with other adults the following April/May (Harrison 1983).

That some birds, mostly juveniles, migrate through central North America is well known (Kent 1983). A review of *American Birds* Regional Reports demonstrates a dramatic increase in Sabine's Gull sightings in recent years. The

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majority of these are equally divided over September and October with a smaller but substantial number from 1-15 November. Fall sightings are most likely in the Great Lakes region. A small peak also occurs in May/June, most often from Ontario and the Prairie Provinces. It is uncertain whether the increased sightings represent an expanding population or greater observer effort.

Sabine's Gull is listed as accidental in Iowa (Kent and Bendorf 1991) with only four sightings prior to 1982 (Kent 1983, Dinsmore et al. 1984). Juveniles were collected near Burlington on 15 October 1891 and 12 October 1894. Another juvenile was taken in Scott County prior to 1933 (date unknown). A probable adult was seen briefly at Clear Lake on 25 September 1970. The six sightings since then, including those reported here, span the state east to west and were all seen in late September-November. A juvenile was found at Saylorville Reservoir on 10 November 1983 (Kent 1983), remaining through 20 November. Juveniles were also seen there on 5 October 1986 (Bendorf 1987) and on 20 October 1988 (Bendorf 1989). The last sightings before those described here were single juveniles observed at two unexpected locations on consecutive days. The first was found along a roadside pecking at a road-killed swallow in Fremont County on 24 September 1989, the second at Diamond Lake in Poweshiek County the next day (Bendorf 1990).

Thanks to Tom Kent, Jim Fuller, and Carl Bendorf for providing references and helpful information in the preparation of this paper.

LITERATURE CITED

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526 Reno St., Iowa City, IA 52245.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN A SNOW GOOSE AND A CANADA GOOSE

MATT C. KENNE

Upon arrival at the north pool of Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge just before 9 a.m. on 29 March 1992, I observed a blue-phase Snow Goose swimming near a Canada Goose. I saw the Snow Goose pick at the back of the Canada Goose with its bill, then at the flank, and then



at the bill of the Canada Goose. The Canada Goose then dipped its head and neck several times into the water, at which time I began to record their actions.

The birds swam slowly across the pool from east to west. The Snow Goose closely followed every move of the Canada Goose staying parallel or slightly behind it, separated by about 1-2 feet. The Canada vocalized normally, but the Snow Goose gave repeated calls toward the Canada with wings slightly raised, neck extended, and bill raised. On five occasions, the Snow Goose swam up from the side and called directly in the "face" of the Canada Goose. The Canada showed no response other than turning its head away from the Snow Goose.

The Canada Goose halted and began to preen while on the water. The Snow Goose paddled to hold position in the 10-20 mph wind, never more than about five feet away. The Snow Goose preened very little, but watched the Canada Goose closely. The Snow Goose then swam to the side of the Canada Goose, raised its wings and neck back past vertical, and called while apparently pushing the other bird with its breast.

The birds resumed swimming as before along the south shore, at times walking together through shallow water. The birds passed within ten feet of a pair of Canada Geese without response from either bird. The Snow Goose swam ahead of the Canada twice, but didn't "lead" as much as try to keep ahead by responding to the Canada's changes of direction. At 9:35 the birds stepped out onto a muskrat lodge where both began to preen.

At 9:45 the pair of Canada Geese rushed the lodge, forcing the Snow Goose and single Canada to fly back onto the water. The birds swam along the cattails as before with four more occasions of the Snow Goose calling in the face of the Canada and two instances of the Snow Goose "leading". At 10:05 the birds went ashore again to preen, at which time I left.

On 15 April, Bobbi Webber, Assistant Refuge Manager, told me that the Snow and Canada goose pair were first seen on the refuge on 23 March and were still together on 15 April. She believed that the Snow Goose was the male and the Canada Goose was the female, which agreed with my impressions. The Canada Goose had a higher-pitched female voice. The actions of these two birds are suggestive of the courtship behavior shown by these two species. Although the birds were still present on 4 May, neither the refuge personnel nor I saw any evidence of any actual nesting attempt by the pair.

I appreciate the help of Bobbi Webber in preparing this note.

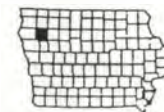
709 N. Phillips, Algona, IA 50511

SWAINSON'S HAWK FALLOUT IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

DICK BIERMAN

On 19 April 1992 at 7 a.m., I was traveling south of Cherokee on U.S. 59. About 5 miles from Cherokee I noticed several hawks on fence posts along the highway. As I pulled over to look more closely, I saw more on the ground. Using my spotting scope I realized that they were Swainson's

Hawks. I counted 53 from that location. Moving on south for another 2 miles and then west I counted about 18 more. I then crossed the Little Sioux River at Quimby and drove north. I soon encountered more Swainson's. I stopped and



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F-STOP 00929 ANAAA

Sabine's Gull
Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA
14 Oct 1991 T. H. Kent

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Sabine's Gull
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Sabine's Gull
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F-STOP 10029 ANAAA

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Sabine's Gull P-0311
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14 Oct 1991 T. H. Kent

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Sabine's Gull P-0303
Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA
14 Oct 1991 Tim Schantz

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Sabine's Gull P-0303
Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA
14 Oct 1991 Tim Schantz

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What species? SABINES GULL How many? 2 ^{1 ADULT} _{1 JUVENILE}Location? RIVERFRONT, DAVENPORT, IA 91-35.Type of habitat? STONE EMBANKMENT & RIVERWhen? date(s): SUN. OCT. 13, 1991 time: 2:00 pm to 6:00 pmWho? your name and address: RICHARD H. PEISER 389 TURNER AVE. GLEN ELLYN, IL 60137others with you: JOHN KING (Non birder - but he took the ATTACHED PHOTOS)others before or after you: apparently several,

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

The immature was seen first (See photos) at ~ 2:00 pm. At first I thought it was a Bonaparte's because it was trimmer than the Ring Billed Gulls, but as soon as it flew, I ~~knew~~ it was something else - the striking upper wing pattern was very evident, as was the black tail band. At this point I didn't have my Field Guide with me, just my 7x35 Bushnell's & my memory! I suspected Sabine's immediately because of the wing pattern, but couldn't remember the other features. At ~ 5:45 pm (after the sampling cruise) I checked again, this time with my Nat. Geog. Guide (2nd) - this time there was an adult as well. They were swimming close to the Breakwater/wall & were so close I could detect the yellow tip of the adult's bill - now I knew. The adult also flew about, but not far & seemed to land to feed near the wall. It too had the M pattern on the upper wing. Both birds made some squeaky noises (as I recall) but were not particularly vocal. Also, the picture in the Nat. Geog. Guide clinched the juvenile - it had the mottled gray upperpart & black bill. I was very sure at the time that they were Sabine's from the wing patterns, tail shape, & black bills (with yellow tip in the adult).

Similar species and how eliminated: The upper wing pattern is so striking as to eliminate other gull species, ~~even in the juvenile~~ even in the juvenile.

Black hood of adult, slight fork of tail & black band on imm. tail band helped.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Cloudy, some light rain. When birds were swimming they were very close & seen from above ~ 15' - 7x35 Bushnell Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Seen once before off

Massachusetts coast - Upper wing pattern again very striking

References and persons consulted before writing description:

cf. NAT. GEOG. GUIDE (2nd ed) p. 152, 160 - the juvenile matches the picture very well,

How long before field notes made? right away this form completed? 4 DAYSMAIL TO: ~~T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240~~

Yellow tip of bill on adult's clincher

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Sabine's Gull. **Number:** 1 adult, 1 juvenile

Location: Bettendorf, Scott Co., IA and Moline, IL.

Date: 14 October 1991. **Time:** 2:10 to 3:50 p.m.

Name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

Others before/with/after: With Dick Tetrault, Randy Pinkston, Jim Scheib, Brian Blevins, Pete Petersen, Ann Johnson, Ann Barker, Tim Schantz. Jim Fuller saw one earlier today. Many other later.

Habitat and circumstances: On Mississippi River on wide area with other gulls.

Description of bird: Both gulls were much smaller than Ring-billed Gulls. The adult had a black head (actually dark gray with black near collar), black bill with yellow tip, black legs, black outer primaries, dark gray wing coverts, white on rest on wing forming a W, white forked tail, and white body and neck. The juvenile bird had a black bill, dark mottled-brown back of head and nape forming a collar, black outer primaries, dark mottled-brown wing coverts, and forked tail with black tip. I did not see leg color of juvenile. The birds were first seen on the far side of the river (Iowa) but flew in very close to us on the Illinois side with Ring-billed Gulls that were foraging near the 'park' Mallards. The adult landed in a small cove at very close range.

Voice: Not heard.

Similar species: The combination of black head, dark W on wing, and white forked tail make the adult quite different from any other North American gull. The juvenile differs from first-winter small black-headed gulls and kittiwakes in that the wing coverts are solid mottled dark brown and the back of the head and neck are a similar color.

Any one have reservations?: No.

Light: Overcast. **Distance:** 10 to 200 yards. **Optics:** 10z binocular, 20x scope, 420 mm camera lens.

Previous experience: Iowa (juvenile), Colorado (adult).

References before/after viewing: None.

Time of notes: 3 hours. **Final typing:** 1 month (copied for readability).

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1. Species: Sabine's Gull Number seen: 3
 (If known) Age: 1 ad, 1 juv. Sex: ? Plumage: ad-breeding
2. Location (including county): Rock Island Co. Ill. Flying into + back from Foxg
3. Date(s): Oct. 14, 1991 Time of day: 1:42 to 1:45 PM (DT)
Oct. 15, 1991 - 5:10 - 5:15 PM (DT) Oct. 18, 1991 - 10-10:15 AM (DT) to 4:30 PM (DT)
4. Observers -- Your name: Peter G. Petersen Phone: (319) 355-7051
8:30-9:00 AM (DT)
 Address: 235 MC Clellan Blvd, Davenport, I.A. Zip 52803
 Others present: 10/14 2nd obs. - Brian Blevins, Tom Kent, Jim Schab, 3rd - Ann Johnson, Tim Schantz, Mary Ann Petersen
 Others before or after you: Jim Fuller before - m.o.b. after.
5. Describe the habitat the bird(s) was found in and the surrounding habitat:
Mississippi River between Moline Ill. + Be Henderson, Ill.
Foraging over channel, swimming in river, foraging near
tail of shoreline

6. Description: Describe in great detail (but only include what actually was seen in the field (the size, shape and color pattern of the bird(s)). Include a description of the bill, eye, legs, feet, tail, body and wings as well as other diagnostic characteristics.
- adult - Small gull seen with Ring-bills - hood very dark grey, nearly black, bill black except for yellow tip. Tail white, shallowly forked. upper wing pattern striking - black triangle at tip of wing except for very small white tips to feathers - not always visible. wing coverts grey, rest of wing white. legs not seen well but appeared dark. On Oct 18 black edge to hood clearly seen.
- juvenile - same size as adult, bill entirely black, face + chin white, grey-brown on back of head, darkest around eye. Tail shallowly forked, white with black terminal band. wing pattern similar to adult except grey area brown.

- Species: Sabines Gull Date seen: Oct. 14-15, 1991 Observer: P. C. Petersen 91-35
7. Similar species (explain how eliminated): Bl-legged Kittiwake - wings head pattern very different, too small.
- juv. - Bonaparte's - wing pattern very different, tail clearly notched.
- Little - wings head pattern different, tail clearly notched.
- ad. unmistakable
8. Describe the bird's behavior: Swimming in river + foraging low over water
Flight very buoyant.
9. Describe the song or call notes heard: not heard - many Ring-bills present very noisy
10. Viewing conditions:
Optical equipment used (type, power): 10x40 Zeiss binocs, Swift + Kowa scopes - 25-35x
Closest distance to bird (how measured): 6 m. est.
Lighting and weather: Full sunlight most of time, bird moving so sun position relative to bird
Was the bird photographed? yes By whom? Tom Went, Tim Schantz Attached? yes
11. Summarize previous experience with this species and similar species:
Had seen previously in low Arctic Canada - breeding plumage, Tail - juvenile.
12. Other observers who did not agree with the identification (explain): none
13. List books and illustrations consulted and advice received. How did these influence this description? Checked Geoguide & Harvison, seabirds prior to obs.
They just reminded me of key field marks, did not influence the description
14. How long after observing the bird(s) before field notes completed? 15 min.
15. How long after observing the bird(s) before this form completed? 2 hours

Mail this completed form to: Avian Ecology Program, Natural Heritage Division
Dept. of Conservation, Springfield, IL 62701

If you have observed a common bird species during a season of abundance, verification is achieved simply by returning there again in season. If, however, the observation involves a rare species, or a common species out of season or at an unusual location, and you wish to share this experience with the scientific community, special documentation is necessary.

An acceptable documentation consists of one or more of the following: a collected, diagnostic specimen; a diagnostic photograph; a diagnostic recording of the bird's voice; or, an accurate and detailed written description of the observation. It must be emphasized that a request for documentation is not an affront, but an effort to perpetuate a record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for all to examine. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation irrespective of the observer.

Note - Oct. 14 & 15 obs. from IL, Oct. 18. From IL juv, from Ia. - Adult.
Oct 21 & 22 - adult - from Iowa.

DOCUMENTATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

SPECIES: SABINE'S GULL (Adult)

LOCATION: Mississippi River just below Centennial Bridge in Davenport.

DATE: 14 October, 1991. (8:12-8:18AM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, Iowa, 52240.

OTHERS BEFORE: Reported 13 October by Richard Peiser, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

OTHERS AFTER: MOB

BACKGROUND: Richard Peiser of Glen Ellyn, Illinois called the Iowa Birdline after 10PM on 13 October with a report of two Sabine's Gulls along the seawall just downstream from where the President floating casino docks. He had been on the gambling boat with a friend when he first saw the birds, and fortunately had brought along his binoculars. I was there early the next morning, but did not find either bird at that location. As I followed the river downstream, a few minutes later, I watched an adult Sabine's Gull flying over the Mississippi for several minutes, sometimes within 40-50 yards, and then it came in and sat down on mud between the seawall and the water for a little less than a minute. It then flew around again, sometimes only 10-15 yards away, and finally flew upriver toward L&D #15 until I lost sight of it. The whole time frame was a little over 5 minutes. I never did see the juvenile bird that reportedly was also there.

DESCRIPTION: The only general size comparison was with Ring-billed gulls which were about 20 yards away when it sat down. This bird was noticeably smaller than those birds. I would describe it in general terms as a gull which was small headed and small billed. The small head had a dark hood which extended up to the back of the head at an angle (not straight across the neck like a laughing gull). It also had an unusual, but noticeable at close range, darker (black) border to the hood. This contrasted to the white of the lower neck and breast. The eye was dark. The bill was small and black, except for the end one-third which was yellow. The neck, breast and belly were white. On the standing bird, the wings and mantle were a darker gray than that of the ring-billed gulls. The folded primaries were black with white spots. The legs were dark. The rump was all white, and so was the tail, which sometimes appeared to be forked, but on one occasion appeared to be almost straight across. The pattern in the wing of the bird in flight was striking,

consisting of black, then white, then dark gray triangular areas, from the wing tip in to the body. See the diagram, as taken from field notes made at the time.

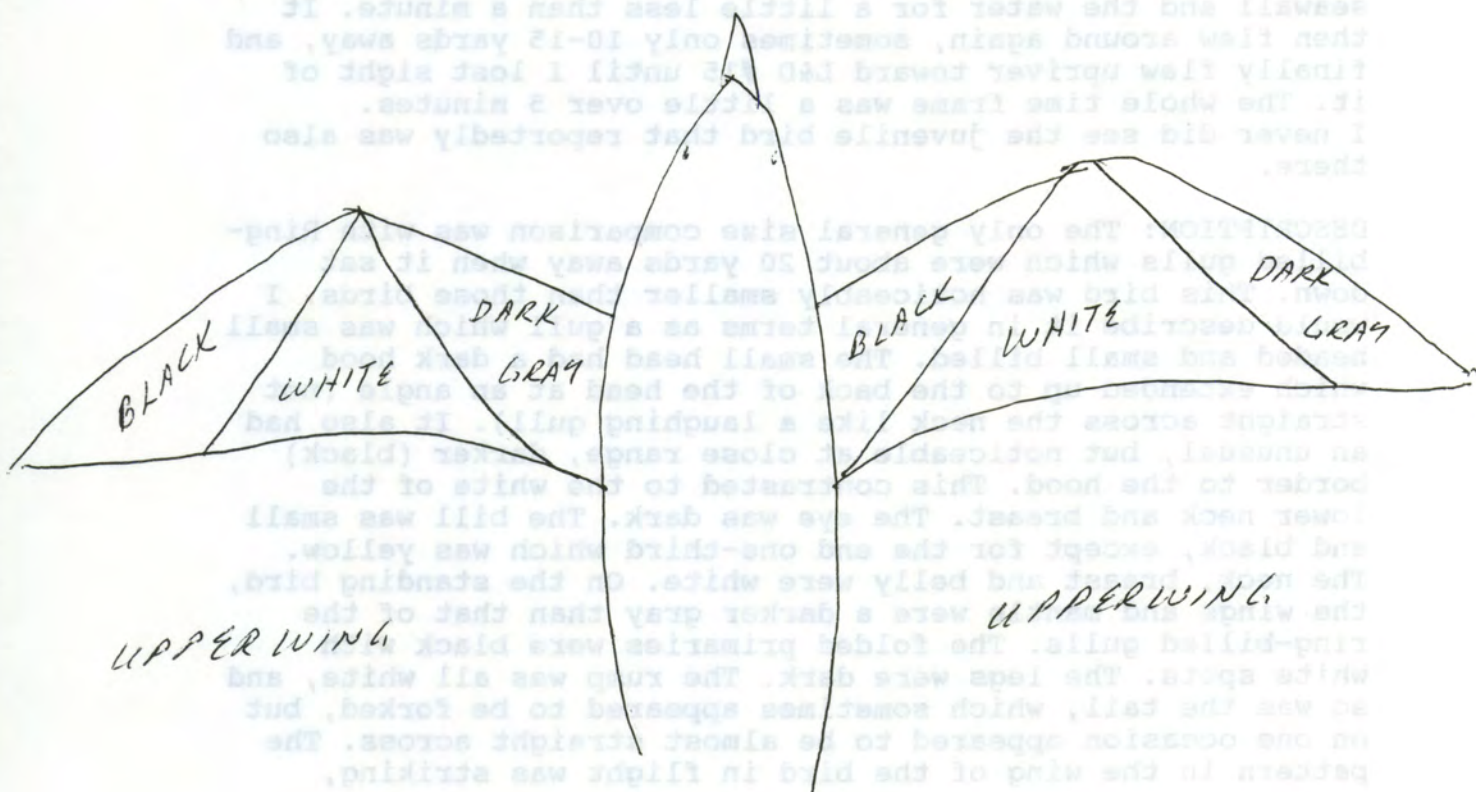
SIMILAR SPECIES: First winter Black-legged kittiwake has an unusual wing pattern in flight which has some resemblance to this bird, but it is larger, has an all dark bill, a black tail band, and lighter gray mantle. Immature Bonaparte's and Little gulls also have a similar wing pattern and are closer to the correct size. However, they both have an all dark bill and black tail band, as well as a black spot behind the eye.

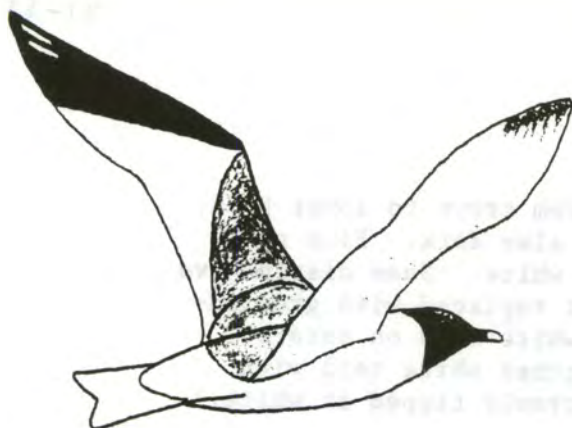
VIEWING CONDITIONS and OPTICS: The bird was viewed the entire time with 8.5 X 44 Swift Audubon binoculars. It was quite close (10-50 yards) most of the time, and all features could be seen well. It was early morning on an overcast day. The direction of viewing was from southwest through south to southeast.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I saw the immature bird that was present at Saylorville in November, 1983.

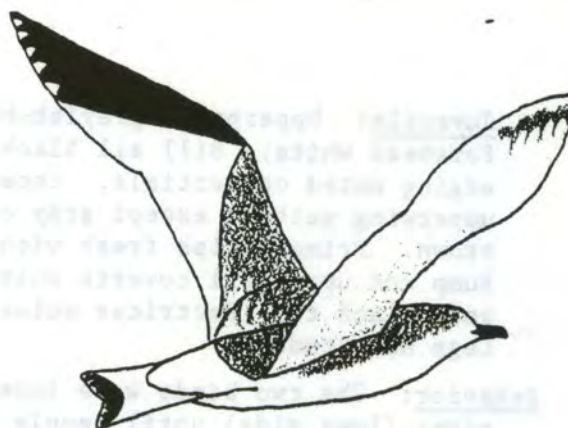
REFERENCES and FIELD NOTES: Field notes were written, and the diagram drawn, immediately after viewing as I sat in my car.

No field guides were looked at until later that day. This form was typed on 24 October.





adult



juvenile



SABINE'S GULL

Xema sabiniDate: 14 October 1991Time: 14:30 - 15:05Location: Mississippi River, Bettendorf, Scott County, Iowa
(viewed from Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois)Description(see illustrations): Two individuals; an adult in worn alternate plumage and a juvenile. Small gulls, between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ the size of nearby Ring-billed Gulls (Larus delawarensis). High-riding on water. Head and neck erect, wingtips angled upward. Flight often close to water surface.Adult: Complete hood of very dark gray (appeared black at a distance) with basal collar of black. Small amount of white flecking noted on crown only at close range. Bill proportionate, distal $\frac{1}{3}$ bright yellow sharply demarcated from black on basal $\frac{2}{3}$. Eye dark. No eye-ring noted. Underparts entirely white. Nape and upper back also white. Back and scapulars unmarked medium gray, continuous with gray of tertials and wing coverts. Back appeared slightly paler ("frosted") relative to coverts on floating bird. Secondaries, inner primary coverts, and inner primaries bright white, forming a white triangle between the gray coverts proximally and the black outer primary coverts and outer primaries distally. Outer two primaries with narrow "mirrors" noted at close range. Underwing white except for black trailing edge of outer primaries. Rump, uppertail coverts, and notched tail bright white. Legs not studied.

(over)

Juvenile: Upperparts grayish-brown from crown to lower back. Forehead white. Bill all black. Eye also dark. Fine pale edging noted on tertials. Underparts white. Same distinctive upperwing pattern except gray of adult replaced with grayish-brown. Primary tips fresh with bold white tips on outers. Rump and uppertail coverts white. Notched white tail with bold black tip (Rectrices actually narrowly tipped in white.) Legs not studied.

Behavior: The two birds were loosely associated, floating on the river (Iowa side) until people began feeding ducks at the Illinois shore, at which time they joined the many Ring-billed Gulls attempting to compete with the ducks for a morsel.

Voice: None heard.

Conditions: Cloudy, cold, strong west wind. Observed about 35 minutes from 5-250 meters with Zeiss 10x40 binoculars and various telescopes.

Similar Species: Diagnostic upperwing pattern seen well on both birds.

Previous Experience: None. My lifer Sabine's Gull.

--Randall Pinkston
526 Reno Street
Iowa City, IA 52245-3039
Ph. (319) 351-0592

91-35
SAOJ: Page 3
14 October 1991; 11

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Sabine's Gull - One adult & one juvenile

Location: Near the I74 Bridge over Mississippi River, Scott Co., IA and
Rock Island Co., IL

Habitat: Open river

Date: 14 October 1991

Time: 15:30 to 16:30

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Tim Schantz, Ann Barker, Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault, Peter &
Mary Lou Petersen

Description of bird: These gulls were considerably smaller than the more numerous Ring-billed Gulls and had somewhat swallow-like flights as they cruised gracefully along the river. Although coloration was some different, the striking back and wing pattern was similar in both birds. On the adult the mantle, scapulars and wing coverts were gray, the outer primaries were black, and the inner primaries and secondaries were white. The gray on the adult was replaced by dark brown on the juvenile, but the resultant dark "M" or white inner wing wedge was the same. The juvenile's nape and crown were of a similar brown to the saddle, but the forehead and face were white. The adult had a complete hood of very dark gray which was surrounded by a collar of black. Both had white, forked tails with the juvenile's showing a distinct black tail band. All of the underparts were white with the exception of an ashy colored band along the underwing coverts. This was darker and more noticeable on the juvenile. Bare parts included black legs and feet, black eye, and thin, black bill. The adult showed a yellow tip to the black bill.

Similar species and how eliminated: Although a number of juvenile hooded gulls show a strong "M" pattern in flight, these are created by successive rows of wing coverts which strongly contrast to the mantle color. In these birds the coloration was the same as the mantle (gray on the adult and brown on the juvenile), thus creating more of a white wedge on the inner wing as opposed to a dark bar on a white wing. This effect alone is diagnostic for Sabine's Gull. Adding support to this wing pattern is the strongly forked tail, shared superficially by Black-legged Kittiwake. A kittiwake with a discernible forked tail can be eliminated by wing pattern and complete hood on the adult or brown nape and crown on the juvenile.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

Viewing conditions (lighting, distance, optics): The sky was mostly cloudy to overcast. When the sun briefly appeared, it was to our left. The birds were observed at various distances as close as 30 feet. Some viewing was done with the naked eye when the birds approached closely. Optics included 7x26 binocs and scope at 25x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Life bird.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NGS Field Guide, Harrison's Seabirds, and Grant's Gulls were studied on the way to Davenport

How long before field notes made? Notes were made at various times during the hour of observation How long before this form completed? Upon return home

DOCUMENTATION

SPECIES: Sabine's Gull (*Larus sabini*)

HOW MANY: One (1)

LOCATION: In the Mississippi River at the foot of 12th Street, Bettendorf, Iowa

HABITAT: River channel with open water

DATE: October 26, 1991

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 11:30 A. M. for about 30 minutes

FIRST OBSERVATION MADE BY: Babs and Loren Paddelford

DOCUMENTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Reid Allen, 1601 Pleasant Street,
West Des Moines, IA 50265

OTHERS WHO SAW BIRD: Pam Allen (West Des Moines, Ia)

DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: A small gull, smaller than a ring-billed gull, with a black head just starting to moult. There was a darker black ring at the base of the black hood. The body was gray above and white underneath. The top of the wing was a very conspicuous three color design with the last 4-6 primaries black, the secondaries white, and the coverts were gray. The tail was white and slightly forked. The bill-tip appeared to be light. The bird flew up-river past us at a distance of 30 yards and then back down-river and settled in the water at a distance of approximately 200 yards.
Photograph/slide enclosed. Cibachrome enlargement available if needed.

SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW ELIMINATED: Nothing else like it (in adult plumage). First-winter Black-legged Kittiwake, first-winter Ross's Gull, and first-winter Little Gull all have basically the same upper wing pattern, but do not have the black hood.

VIEWING CONDITIONS: Cloudy, with a very light mist.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: None

EQUIPMENT: Kowa TSN-4 scope, Bushnell 8x36 Custom Binoculars, Minolta x-700 camera with 300 mm. lens and Vivitar 2x Doubler. Film was Kodak Kodachrome 200 ASA.

REFERENCES CONSULTED: Gulls. A Guide to Identification: P. J. Grant, 1986. Seabirds. An Identification Guide: Peter Harrison, 1983.

HOW LONG BEFORE FIELD NOTES MADE: Same day

HOW LONG BEFORE THIS FORM COMPLETED: December 1, 1991