

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species SLATY-BACKED GULL 2. Number of birds: ONE (ADULT)
MISSISSIPPI RIVER AT THE
 Location ALTON DAM (BOTH ILL. AND MO. SIDES) County: MADISON (ILL.)
4. Date: JANUARY 7, 1984 5. Time bird seen: 10:30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
 - LARGE (HERRING GULL SIZED), THICK-NECKED GULL WITH PINKISH LEGS, A YELLOW BILL (WITH ORANGISH-RED SPOT ON LOWER MANDIBLE), AND YELLOWISH EYES. WHITE HEAD, TAIL, AND UNDERPARTS, HEAD HEAVILY STREAKED WITH BROWN (WINTER PLUMAGE),
 - DARK GRAY BACK AND WINGS WITH BLACK WING TIPS AND VERY BROAD WHITE TRAILING EDGE (VISIBLE AT GREAT DISTANCE IN FLIGHT). WHITE BAND SEPARATING GRAY MANTLE FROM BLACK WING TIP VISIBLE IN ONE INSTANCE ON UNDERSIDE OF WING WHEN WINGS HELD MOMENTARILY IN (OVER)
7. Description of voice, if heard: NONE
8. Description of behavior: FLOATING, DIVING, FLYING
9. Habitat - general: LARGE INLAND WATERWAY
 specific: NEAR LOCK & DAM
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
 THE LARGE TRAILING EDGE AND WHITE BAND ON THE WING TIP CLEARLY SEPARATE THE SLATY-BACKED GULL FROM ALL OTHER GULLS. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL HAS YELLOW LEGS (ADULT). HERRING AND WESTERN GULLS (ADULT) ALSO LACK DIAGNOSTIC WING MARKINGS (HERRING HAS PALE GRAY MANTLE).
1. Distance (how measured)? 100 YARDS (VISUAL ESTIMATE) 12. Optical equipment: 20-45X SCOPE
3. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): SUNNY BRIGHT, LIGHT ON BIRD AND BEHIND OBSERVER
4. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH SLATY-BACKED OR WESTERN ONE SIGHTING OF ADULT LESSER BLACK-BACKED
5. Other observers: PEG WALSH, KOSH MONDAY
6. Did the others agree with your identification? YES
7. Other observers who independently identified this bird: MANY, CHICAGO & CENTRAL ILLINOIS RARE BIRD ALERTS
8. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY'S - FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA
AUDUBON SOCIETY'S - MASTER GUIDE TO BIRDING BOTH BOOKS
CONFIRMED SIGHTING
9. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? THE NIGHT OF JAN. 7

Joe Milosevich JOE MILOSEVICH
 Signature

Address: [REDACTED]

1/7/84 City, State: [REDACTED]

(over)

HALF-LOCKED POSITION (WING TIP MUCH LIGHTER — NOT BLACK —
ON UNDERSIDE). WHITE MARKINGS ALSO VISIBLE ON TOPSIDE
OF WING, BUT A CONVINCING "BAND" OF WHITE WAS DIFFICULT
TO SEE (THE GULL WAS USUALLY FLOATING ON WATER WITH
WINGS FOLDED).