

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTATION FOR UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS

Submitted to Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (IORC)

**IORC RECORD
NUMBER:**

This form submitted as supporting documentation of (check all that apply):

2016-013

X Unusual species; ___ Unusual date; ___ Unusual number;
___ Unusual plumage; ___ Unusual breeding record; ___ Christmas Count record; ___ Spring Count record;
___ Breeding Census record; ___ Other: _____

1. **SPECIES:** Slaty-backed Gull
2. **Number of birds:** 1 **Age/sex/plumage:** Winter Adult
3. **Date(s):** 2/16/2016
4. **Location (include county):** Horseshoe Lake in Madison County
5. **Observers:** Frank Holmes

Documenter: Your name: Frank Holmes

Mailing Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Others agreeing with identification: From the photos that were sent to Dan Kassebaum, Amar Ayyash, Keith McMullen and Bill Rowe all agreed that this gull was probably a Slaty-backed Gull due to size, profile, amount of streaking on the head and nape.

Observers NOT agreeing with identification: None _____

6. **Description of bird, including size; shape; proportions; details of both color and patterns on head, back, chin, throat, breast, flanks, undertail, wings, and tail, etc.; coloration of soft parts (bill, eye, legs and feet). Include only details actually seen in the field:**

Large gull, similar in size to nearby Herring gulls, see photo #4.

Stocky appearance, see photo #1 and 5.

Mantle was dark gray (Kodak Gray scale for Slaty-backed Gull 9.5 – 11.5), similar to a Lesser Black-backed Gull (Kodak Gray scale 9.5 – 11.5), see photo #5 .

Dark smudge around eye, see photo #2.

White head and nape, both were heavily streaked, some streaking on chest, see photo #1.

Stout light colored bill with dark distal mark, see photo #6.

White scapular and tertial crescent, see photo # 3.

Legs were pink.

(over)

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Species: Slaty-backed Gull **Date seen:** 2/16/2016 **Documenter:** Frank Holmes

7. Description of behavior: Standing and walking on the ice with Ring-billed, Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Nice side by side comparison.

8. Description of vocalizations: None

9. Description of immediate and surrounding habitat(s): Horseshoe Lake is a large oxbow lake mostly surrounded by farm land. Lake was more than 90 percent frozen.

10. Viewing conditions:

Optical equipment used for observation (type, power): Pentax spotting scope with 60x zoom lens

Distance/how measured? Estimated 350 yards _____

Time(s) of observation: 4:20PM – 5:15PM **Total time of observation:** 55 minutes

Weather (including regional or national weather patterns if relevant)/ sky conditions/ relative position of the sun: Cloudy and foggy conditions. Coldest temperatures for the month were recorded on Feb 13 with a low of 12 degrees. Temperatures on Feb 16 ranged from a high of 40 to a low of 30 degrees.

11. Previous experience with this species and similar species: One seen at Carlyle Lake on Dec 17, 2007 found by Dan Kassebaum.

12. Please eliminate other similar species and/or hybrids (use additional paper, if necessary):

Lesser Black-backed Gull is smaller than a Slaty-backed Gull and has (typically) yellow legs.

Great Black-backed Gull is larger and has a darker mantle (Kodak Gray scale 13 - 15) with very little streaking on head and nape.

Western Gull has larger bill and has less streaking on the head and nape. This gull is common along the U.S. Pacific coast, but regularly found well out at sea. The Western Gull is not typically found far inland.

13. Where photos obtained? Yes **If so, by whom?** Frank Holmes **Attached?** Yes

14. Books & illustrations consulted, and advice received. How did these influence this description?

Gulls of the Americas by Howell and Dunn, used to help support documentation.

15. How long after the observation were field notes recorded? Notes were taken during observation.

16. How long after observation was this form completed? One week

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17. Additional remarks: Several Midwest sightings of Slaty-backed Gulls were reported on ebird during the winter of 2015 – 2016.

Will County, Illinois reported during the period from January 28 to February 20, 2016.

Montrose Harbor in Cook County, Illinois on January 30, 2016.

Port of Indiana in Porter County, Indiana reported on February 20, 2016.

Lakeshore in Milwaukee, Wisconsin reported from January 15 to January 31, 2016.

Johnson Creek in Jefferson County, Wisconsin from January 6 to February 6, 2016.

Lake Springfield in Sangamon County, Illinois on February 12, 2016.

Signed: Frank Holmes _____ **Date:** 2/25/2016 _____

FORM REVISED April 2015