

BLACK-HEADED GULL

The following is a formal report of my sighting of a **Black-headed Gull**:

Species: Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*); 1, adult winter

Locality: Off Seaside Cove, Seaside, Clatsop Co.

Dates: Nov. 17, 2013, around 11:45 AM

Reporting observer: Mike Patterson, Astoria

Light conditions: bright overcast

Optical equipment: Bushnell Spacemaster set of ~25x

Distance from bird: about a half mile

Duration of observation: about 5 minute

Habitat: near ocean just beyond breakers

Circumstances and behavior of bird: There was a large mixed feeding flock of loons, shearwaters and gulls off the point at Seaside Cove. I first saw the bird at some distance, coming from the north. It was flying into the wind and going slow. It tacked east occasionally, and got closer over time. I was struck by the bright leading edge of the wings which suggested Bonaparte's Gull, but seemed too large, with a more kittiwake-like flight style.

Description:

Overall: Medium sized gull, approximately the same size as a Black-legged Kittiwake. Body was very "gull-shaped" giving the impression of a kittiwake or Mew Gull. It flew with a steady wing beat in a straight-forward manner.

Head: White, bill appeared long, straight and dark, but distance made actual color determination impossible

Back: gray Wings: Upper wing gray with prominent white leading edge. Black at tips of wings. Black margins to visible on P7 (or thereabouts) when bird banked. This black marking at just behind the leading all white primaries was quite striking and is what got me thinking this was possibly a Black-headed Gull. The under wing showed black wing tips and black down about a third of the way down the central primaries (+/- P6 and P7).

Breast, belly and undertail coverts: White. Tail: White.
Legs: not seen

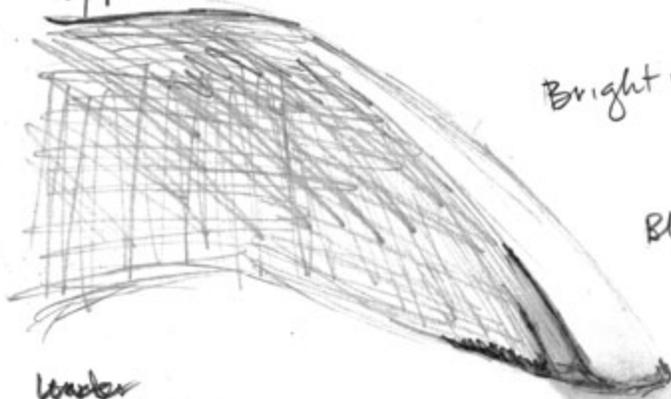
Similar Species:

The only species likely to be confused with this species is Bonaparte's Gull which also shows a white leading edge to the wings of winter adults. Bonaparte's gulls are very small (about 20% smaller than kittiwakes) have a delicate, tern-like shape and flight behavior. They also show much less black on the primaries above and below.

Previous experience: I have seen Black-headed Gull in Europe and am also very well acquainted with Bonaparte's Gulls

There are only three accepted records for this species in Oregon.

upper



Bright white leading edge

Black edging

lower



lots of black at the end of primaries