

YOUR NAME	Lorin Wilkerson
YOUR EMAIL	lorinwilk@gmail.com
BIRD IDENTIFICATION	Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sex unknown, winter plumage. Karthik Murali guessed third year upon reading a description of its plumage on Oregon Gull ID WhatsApp; no one argued with that assessment when a photo was posted there.
DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION	12-23-2022
TIME OF DAY	11:10 AM
LOCATION	I was just west of the boat ramp at Clackamette Park in Oregon City (Clackamas County), looking at the gravel bar just across the Clackamas River by Dahl Park, a well-known spot for mid-large gulls in-county. The bird was on the Dahl Park gravel bar.
LIGHTING AND WEATHER CONDITIONS	Snowy, very cold, heavy overcast lighting. There was an inch or more of snow accumulation.
DETAILS	I noted a smoky back, heavily-marked head with the markings seeming to coalesce around the eye. The iris was pale and the bill was mostly black, yellow at the gape with a pronounced yellow tip. Grayish-yellowish legs; only in one photo do they lean to grayish-pink. Some trick of light apparently.
DO YOU HAVE ANY PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES?	I have seen LBBG many times in Iceland in the late spring-early summer. Mostly familiar with adults in breeding plumage.
SIMILAR SPECIES	I knew immediately it was too dark (almost black) for WEGU, so it seemed that LBBG or Slaty-backed were the most likely candidates; it struck me as mostly of a size with the many surrounding GWGU and Olympics. The mostly-black wing-tips and yellowish legs seemed to rule out the Slaty (with which I have no experience), and size alone ruled out the extremely unlikely Great Black-backed (which I have seen many times).
DO YOU HAVE PHOTOS?	Yes
Thank you for submitting your sighting	Honestly, when taken out of context (i.e., Iceland), this didn't immediately strike me as LBBG; I just knew I had something

**to the Oregon Bird
Records Committee! Is
there anything else you
would like to add?**

different. Dan van den Broek came down to the park and concurred, as did all who weighed in on the photo and description on Oregon Gull ID (including Dave Irons and Nick Mrvelj), that it was LBBG. Another experienced birder, Jeff Dillon, also got it that day. The roads were slick and icy or I imagine many would have probably chased it; it was there for at least a couple of hours. One person who reported it on eBird without a photo sometime later has not had that record accepted (yet, at least) by the county reviewer. Speaking of which, I emailed county reviewer Joe Blowers, who also accepted it, which was a Clackamas County first. Joe speculated that it might be the same individual that had been at The Dalles not long before, and Dan wondered if it was the one that had been photographed in the mid-Willamette Valley earlier in the year; he thought it bore similarities upon photo comparison.







LBBG-2022-30 (Lesser Black-backed Gull)

1st round voting — May 8, 2023

Accepted: 9

Not Accepted: 0

Accepted, verified

Classic third cycle Lesser Black-backed. Structure and plumage are wrong for other dark-mantled gulls.

The photographs adequately eliminate similar species. The bird is clearly smaller than the nearby Glaucous-winged/Western hybrid gulls. This helps eliminate Slaty-backed Gull. The leg color seems yellow-gray, which is also supportive of the identification of this bird as a Lesser Black-backed Gull. The extensive black coloration on the bill suggests that this is either a 3rd cycle or possibly a 4th cycle bird. I saw this bird briefly with binoculars, but unfortunately the bird flew west when I was trying to get into position to get photographs so I wasn't able to photograph it or get close views of it.

Definitely a Lesser Black-backed Gull, in what was a banner season for them around the state (and especially in the greater Portland area). Seems to be a third winter gull, so in its 4th calendar year. Size, overall proportions, yellowish legs, and pale iris eliminate other similarly dark backed gulls. Maybe the last LBBG the committee reviews? ;-)

Diagnostic photos.

No comments

Solid-looking 3rd-winter bird.

hits many fieldmarks

No comments

No comments

This is not a typical-appearing Lesser Black-backed Gull, in that it has a black bill with a pale yellow tip. Other features are consistent with this species, however, including very dark mantle, pale yellowish legs, smudge around the eye, which appears to have a pale iris. Other dark-mantled gulls seem to be ruled out. I believe the bill color pattern is aberrant, and has apparently been documented before (see Gulls of North America by Olsen & Larsson p.374).

No comments