

## RARE BIRD REPORT

Submitted by Tim Rodenkirk

Species: **Little Gull**

Date of Sighting: 12 August 2012

Time Found: 0900

Length of Time Observed: about a minute

Distance to Bird: I watched it flying toward me and it flew right over my head and then disappeared behind some tall reeds that were growing along the road.

Number, Age, Sex: one basic-plumaged adult

Observer: Tim Rodenkirk

Other Observers: None

Location: Summer Lake NWR in Lake County, Oregon. The bird was seen at the NW end of Schoolhouse Lake.

Habitat: marsh and pools north of Summer Lake on the refuge.

Description: I was changing shoes and getting ready to go jogging after spending much of the early morning birding the refuge. I was at the northwest end of Schoolhouse Lake parked off the road. As I was changing shoes I noticed a gull flying toward me. It seemed quite small, and I assumed it was one of the three Bonaparte's Gulls I had seen earlier in the AM sitting on the water in a couple locations on the earlier portion of the loop drive. As soon as I lifted my bins I noticed several things:

- The gull did have a dark spot behind a white face as on an adult Bonie.
- The gull had a dark cap, unlike a Bonie.
- The underwings were entirely dark (black in color).
- It had a small, thin (for a gull), dark bill.

I immediately thought Little Gull, which I have actually seen at Summer Lake before (been a while though). The upper wings were all gray with a thin white trailing edge. The belly, breast and undertail were all white. The top of the tail was entirely white also. The tail was rounded or squared off, not forked like in the Forster's and Black Terns that were also in the area. The flight of the bird was more gull-like than tern-like too, very direct, rapid wing beats, not the less direct, more delicate and slightly bat-like flight of a tern.

I had good enough looks at the bird that I did not pursue it immediately after it disappeared behind the reeds. I only had my socks on and was not about to run down the gravel road in

them to a spot where I could see north. After I put my shoes on I went down to where I could view the direction the bird was flying but did not see it although it could have landed across the pond there on the far shore. Instead I went jogging figuring that I had a pretty darn good look at a Little Gull.

Similar Species: I think I ruled out Bonaparte's Gulls and Black and Forster's Tern with my description.

References/Experience: I have seen this bird before in Oregon and almost immediately knew what it was.

Light/Weather: great light, mid-morning, sun was off to my side so I had good looks at the bird.

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