

4-1995

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
 VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: Sabine's Gull Scientific Name: *Xema sabini*

Date: 10 Sep. 1995 Time: 1800 Length of time observed: 20 min.

Number: 1 Age: juvenile Sex: unknown

Location: Quichapa Lake, Iron Co.

Lat/long: 19 Elevation (if known):

Distance to bird: 100 yards Light conditions: sun to observers

Optical equipment: 20x scope back.

Weather: clear, 75°, wind S 10

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

A very small gull, much smaller than nearby Ring-billed gulls. Bird was first observed sitting on water - bird appeared to be mostly warm brown with black eye & bill, & a white face. After 2-3 min., bird flew. Flight was very buoyant, somewhat tern-like. Wing pattern was very striking: black outer primaries, brown secondary coverts & inner primaries & secondaries formed a white triangle.



Back & nape were brown. Tail was white slightly forked, with a black ~~band~~<sup>terminal band?</sup>. Feet were brownish. Underwing was dirty white. Bill was black, slender, & short (1").

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: not heard.

Behavior: Bird would sit on water 2-3 min, then fly for 3-4 min. Flaw low over water & appeared to be picking something off the water. Always stayed off shore. Occasionally soared up but quickly returned to water surface.

Habitat: open shallow lake.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

No other gull has this unique wing pattern. Juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake has similar pattern but has a gray mantle rather than brown, has a black bar across inner wing & black collar. Bonaparte's, Ross, & Little Gull juveniles lack bold white triangle in wing, have black bar across inner wing, & have gray mantle.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

Have observed many Sabine's & Kittiwakes on pelagic trips on Washington coast. Observed Bonaparte's many times in Utah. No experience with Little Gull.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

none.

Significance of record in this area or the state:

first record for SW Utah, 6th state record

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting  notes made later  from memory

Observer: Steven Hedges

Signature: Steven Hedges

Address: 306 W. 970 N., Cedar City, UT 84720

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

VJ Hedges, Steve & Priscilla Summers

Date prepared: 11 Sep. 1995

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen  
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