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First Record of the Mew Gull for Oklahoma

BY JAMES W. ARTERBURN

At Hobie Point on Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma on the morning of 25 January 2002 at around 11:25, I observed an adult Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) in a large flock of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) and Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*). This gull was noticeably smaller and darker mantled than the Ring-billed Gulls and larger and darker mantled than the Bonaparte's Gulls. The head was small and rounded with large dark eyes, and the yellow bill was thin and small with a faint dark ring towards the tip and no noticeable gonydeal angle. The head and neck were mostly white with some light brown smudging on the nape. The bird had a dark gray mantle that appeared to be about the same shade of gray as on a California Gull (*Larus californicus*). The broad white tertial crescents and the large white scapular crescents on this bird contrasted noticeably with the dark gray of the mantle and scapulars. The legs were yellow. At rest the primaries were black with



Fig. 1. Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) in Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, 25 January 2002. This bird was the first record for Oklahoma. Photograph by James W. Arterburn.

white tips. These white primary tips were more pronounced than those on Ring-billed Gulls. In flight the upperparts were dark gray. The secondaries had a broad white trailing edge, as did the inner primaries. The outer two primaries were mostly black with large white subterminal mirrors with the mirror in p10 being larger. Primaries 5 through 8 had white tongues that were separated from the white primary tips by a narrow black subterminal band.

I notified several people of the bird, and then continued to take photographs (Fig. 1) and notes. At approximately 11:55 the gull left the rest of the flock and flew out towards the middle of the lake where I lost sight of it. I stayed at Lake Hefner looking for the gull until 17:15 but was unable to relocate it. Several observers looked for the gull over the next week, but it was not seen again.

Based upon the photographs I was able to obtain, the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee accepted this record on 5 April 2002 as the first Oklahoma record of the Mew Gull.

The Mew Gull breeds from central and southern Alaska to western Canada. It winters mainly along the Pacific coast south to California. It is rare inland in the Pacific states and casual east to the Great Lakes. Among the states adjacent to Oklahoma, there are no records of the Mew Gull for Missouri (W. Rowe, pers. comm.) or Arkansas (K. Nichols, pers. comm.). In Kansas there are seven accepted records through 2001 (D. Rintoul, pers. comm.). The first Kansas record was an adult at Tuttle Creek Reservoir in Riley County on 17 December 1995, and the last was an adult seen again at Tuttle Creek Reservoir in Riley County on 7 February 1999. In Texas there are eighteen accepted records through 2001 (M. Lockwood, pers. comm.). The first Texas record was at Ft. Hancock in Hudspeth County from 1 January through 13 February 1988. Starting in the mid 1990s Texas has had an average of two to three birds a year with the last record being 23–24 January 2001 at Lake Worth in Tarrant County.

For assistance in verifying the regional occurrence of the Mew Gull, I thank Mark Lockwood, Kenny Nichols, Dave Rintoul and William Rowe.

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Purple Gallinules Nesting at Red Slough, Oklahoma

BY W. DAVID ARBOUR

This paper documents the occurrence and nesting of the Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrula martinica*) at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, McCurtain County, Oklahoma. The first observation of the species at Red Slough was on 28 May 2000 when I found a single individual at unit #37.