

# Long Point Bird Observatory/ Bird Studies Canada

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## RARITY REPORT

In order that any sight record or banding of a rare species can be accepted for the historical record, it must be properly documented. LPBO cooperators are therefore asked to complete a form in every case where a rarity is being claimed. Guidance as to which species are considered rare in the Long Point area may be obtained from the Landbirds Program Manager. Each observer should prepare his/her description independently and preferably before consulting any field guides or other literature. PLEASE PRINT.

**Species claimed:** Black-tailed Gull

**No. of birds:** 1                    **Age:** Adult (definitive basic plumage)

**Sex:** Unknown

**Date(s):** Dec 9, 2009

**Place:** Bird Studies Canada Headquarters – Port Rowan

**Time(s) of Observation:** 11:05 to 11:15

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**Who first saw the bird(s):** Stu Mackenzie

**Who first identified it:** Stu Mackenzie

**Other observers (names and addresses):** Ron Ridout c/o BSC

**Any who disagree:** No

**Your previous experience with the species:** I observed presumably the same bird for about twenty minutes when it was discovered by Brandon Holden in Port Burwell on September 28, 2009.

**Your previous experience with any closely similar species:** Extensive experience with most North American and some South American and European species.

**(a) Formerly:** Extensive.

**(b) Same day:** Observed thousands of gulls (mostly Ring-billed Gulls, Bonaparte's Gull and Herring) moving west in front of the BSC headquarters.

**Species present for comparison:** Ring-billed and Herring Gull.

**Which were beside it for comparison:** Herring Gull

**Distance from observer(s):** 100m to 500m

**How measured:** Estimate

**Optical aids used:** 8.5X42 Swarovski EL and Bushnell Spacemaster telescope.

**Weather conditions (at time of observation)**

**Visibility:** 5km

**Cloud Cover:** 100%

**Lighting:** Overcast but consistent light

**Wind direction and speed:** Strong Westerlies (6+ Beaufort)

**Other relevant conditions:** period rain and snow squalls  
(eg. rain, snow cover, etc.)

**For "Waterbird " records only**

**Lake conditions:**

**Wave height:**

**Height of observer above lake:**

**Was observer's position sheltered:**

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**Weather system preceding the date of observation (if known):** Strong west winds had been blowing for about 24 hours before the observation. Waves on Lake Erie were around 4-6m with winds gusting up to and beyond 80km/hr.

*Attach weather map clipping from local or national newspaper if relevant.*

**Associated movements of other species:**

Thousands of gulls were moving west along the lakeshore crossing to the south of the BSC property from the Inner Bay toward the fields west of Hwy#59 and further west along the lakeshore.

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**Was the bird trapped:**

**Band # if banded:**

**Was it photographed:**

**If yes, by whom (name and address):**

**Specimen or parts preserved:**

**Present location:**

**Circumstances and Description:**

I was sitting at my desk which looks south toward the Inner Bay of Long Point from the BSC headquarters property on the western outskirts of Port Rowan. I was talking to a colleague on the phone when a slender, strong-flying (agile and confident), dark mantled gull caught my attention. Luckily, my binoculars were close by and when I raised them to the bird I immediately noticed a dark mantle, a shade or two lighter than a Lesser Black-backed Gull, a fairly broad white trailing edge to the wing, and dark wing tips with only the slightest amount of white on the trailing edge of the outer primaries, and a broad black sub-terminal band on the tail. Size wise, it appeared to be a perfect intermediate between the Herring and Ring-billed Gulls which were nearby. The bird was longer and more slender looking than the Ring-billed Gull, especially in the wings, neck and head. It was much more agile and slender than the Herring, but handled better than both species as it steadily flew into the wind heading west. The head appeared long and slender by comparison to the other two species. The bill was yellow with a dark tip (no colour could be distinguished). No leg colour could be determined. In the same breath I abruptly hung up the phone and called across the office to Ron Ridout who happened to be upstairs working on a co-workers computer at the time. By this time the gull had made its way to the western side of the building. Ron and I ran to the President's office on the west side of the building and observed the bird again as it worked its way west toward the ESSO station on the corner of Front Rd. and Hwy 59. Ron was able to observe the bird and confirm my identification through my binoculars as I found it in a Bushnell Spacemaster telescope before it was lost behind a taller section of the building. Searches in nearby farm fields and examination of other gulls following the lakeshore in the hours following the observation were not successful.

**Description:**

**Give separate description for (a) in the field (b) in the hand. Include full measurements and wing formula with hand descriptions.**

See circumstances.

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**Did you refer to any guides/other literature:** No

**(a) at the time:** No

**(b) afterwards:** No

**Finally, is this record 100% certain?** Yes

**Signed:**



**E-mail Address:** s\_a\_mackenzie@yahoo.ca

**Date:** December 9, 2009

**Mailing Address:**

c/o LPBO

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