Gull Identification in North-Central Texas

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Without question, the family of gulls will be the most taxing in terms of species identification. The reason for this is fairly straightforward – several different plumage types exist during each year of a gull's life from juvenile to adulthood. There are seasonal differences too, so the information grows exponentially. Fortunately for us in North-central Texas, the remedy for this problem is also pretty straightforward – get familiar with the area's most common gulls and their plumages first.

Our more singular mission will be rather simple. We need to become acquainted with Ring-billed Gulls during the first three years of their life. Before you go looking at gulls, at least take a peek at this section on Ring-billed Gulls. After that, I will briefly discuss the other common gulls for the area. Before discussing the field marks of the gulls, however, let's put to bed issues of area grouping and the issues of area status for all of the NCTX gulls.

Grouping

Grouping gulls is simple. We have **hooded** and **non-hooded** gulls. The hooded gulls are generally smaller. For us in North-central Texas, the hooded gulls we are likely to see every year (or nearly so in the case of Little Gull) are *Franklin's Gull, Bonaparte's Gull,* and the rare *Little Gull*.

The non-hooded gulls that generally show up somewhere in the area every year are *Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull,* and the irregular *Lesser Black-backed Gull*. We might attempt in this discussion to be just a little familiar

with two other "casual" non-hooded gulls- *California Gull* and *Mew Gull*. The reason to look at these two is that they can be frequently confused with young Ring-billed Gulls.

For the record, *Ring-billed Gulls* outnumber all other non-hooded gulls by some crazy margin like 50,000-1 or perhaps more (I completely made up that number. Since I'm writing this, I feel like I'm entitled to make up large numbers to support my pet theories). So if you can find any non-hooded gull other than *Ring-billed Gull* on any given winter day, you've just had a fairly interesting day in NCTX. As for hooded gulls, the biggest area lakes usually have *Bonaparte's Gulls*, but the smaller lakes almost never have them. The hooded *Franklin's Gull* is more widespread. It is an uncommon wintering bird and a very common migrant throughout the area even at places like Southside Water Treatment Plant. I used to make people write up a "special details form" for Franklin's Gull during the Christmas Count period. However, we are seeing many more winter sightings of Franklin's Gull in the last decade or two. This is also true state-wide. I stopped requesting details around 2006.

So for gulls occurring *almost* every winter in North-central Texas, there are….

- Hooded Gulls – **Bonaparte's, Franklin's** and **Little Gull**(LIGU is best considered "irregular")
- Non-hooded Gulls – **Ring-billed**, **Herring**, and **Lesser Black-backed Gull**(LBBG is also "irregular")

Maturity Rates

One problem that haunts birders is trying to remember immature gull plumages. Unlike many songbirds which have maybe only one season in an immature plumage state, some gulls can have as many as four distinct plumage variations as they mature.

The adult plumages in gulls usually don't present significant issues in identification for us in NCTX. The adult plumages can be compounded by the seasonal variation in some cases, but for the most part we in NCTX see all our *adult* gulls in winter plumages (the exception being the regular Franklin's Gull in migration). We are not often faced with confusing breeding plumage issues in regards to identification in this area, at least not with our regular occurring gulls. Most gulls here are more easily identified in adult plumage whether it's breeding season or not. Gulls in all states of immature plumages are a much greater source of confusion for us in NCTX.

Several terms for maturing plumage molts in gulls are currently in use. Some people will refer to a "second-year gull" to describe a complete molt of the second year. Some will use the word "second-cycle" while others still use the "life-year" system. In other words, a Ring-billed Gull in a typical second-year molt is now sometimes referred to in the literature as being in its *second cycle* . They do this because technically speaking, some plumage molts don't often happen in yearly blocks of time. I'm a little reluctant to spend much time on this because you will likely hear birders all these terms inter-changeably. For our purposes, you just need to know that smaller gulls are more likely to take two years to mature (Bonaparte's Gull), medium-sized gulls will take three years to mature (Ring-billed Gull) and some of the larger gulls will take four years (Herring Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull) regardless of molt sequence. The mission of this paper will be dealing with issues of gull identification, and not worrying too much about precise terminology. Gull plumages can become an academic exercise, especially with the larger gulls. However, we are targeting only the gulls of local interest. Let's not stray too far outside that. In this paper, we will use the more familiar "life-year" system (for example: juvenile, 1st

winter, etc.) when referring to pre-adult plumage. I refer deeper investigation to Kaufman's "Field Guide to Advanced Birding," P. 242-271, or the Dunn and Howell field guide on "Gulls of the Americas".

Fortunately for us in North-central Texas, the most common regular-occurring gull, the Ring-billed Gull, takes only three years to mature into adult plumage, and for the most part has only one or two typical immature looks with which we need to be really familiar. To highlight one issue facing us, the differences between 2nd winter and non-breeding adult Ring-billed Gulls will probably not be a source of confusion for us. You will likely just gloss over both birds as being standard-issue Ring-billed Gulls. However, the points of confusion for a first winter Ring-billed Gull can be quite different. A 1st winter Ring-billed Gull can be confused with both immature California Gull and immature Mew Gull.

Although we won't be spending an inordinate amount of time on the molt cycles of gulls, it's easy to simply list how long it takes for each of the area's gulls to reach adult plumage. I only add Mew Gull and California Gull here because they can be confused with Ring-billed Gull – not because I consider them typical NCTX gulls:

Species	***Immaturity length***
Bonaparte's Gull	2 years
Little Gull	3 years
Franklin's Gull	3 Years
Mew Gull	3 years
Ring-billed Gull	3 years
California Gull	4 years
Herring Gull	4 years
Lesser Black-backed Gull	4 years

Little Gull is a bit of an oddball because it's our smallest gull, yet it takes three years to achieve adult plumage – one more year than the larger Bonaparte's Gull.

Before we get into identification characteristics, let's review the status and distribution of our area gulls.

Status and Distribution for North-central Texas

Lets' be as specific as possible now with the status and distribution of the gulls I mentioned in the introduction. We will include the status of some of the irregular gulls. These comments are specific only to North-central Texas. Distribution varies quite a bit in other parts of Texas.

Status of Non-hooded Gulls

Ring-billed Gull – Common to abundant from about November-March. RBGUs outnumber every other gull by a huge margin.

Herring Gull – This gull is uncommon for North-central Texas in winter. Usually a few of the larger lakes or perhaps some city dumps can produce one or two Herring Gulls every year. We may get one or two on a Dallas Christmas Count at White Rock Lake, but not every year at that location. They may have a few at Lake Ray Hubbard and sometimes 25-30 at Lake Tawakoni, but birders may have to work to see one. Most of the HEGUs here will be darker juvenile birds. It's extremely rare to see an adult bird in North-central Texas. Personally, I have only seen a few adult-plumaged Herring Gulls for the area and that was on Lake Tawakoni.

The darker juvenile coloration on a HEGU is important because it helps separate HEGUs from RBGUs quickly. Non-adult Ring-billed Gulls are not homogenously brown all over like non-adult Herring Gulls. Although Herring Gulls are also larger than Ring-billed Gulls, for birders it's usually that dark color that more quickly separates the two birds from each other in this area.

In other states, particularly the northeast, Herring Gulls can be much more common than they are here.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – For the record, LBBGs were not part of the North American avifauna until 1934. They were originally a breeder in Europe, then to Iceland, and now to Greenland. It's possible they will soon be breeding in North America. At this time, however, they are uncommon-rare wintering birds, but they are increasing in winter numbers throughout North America. This is a rare bird in general for the area, but it's becoming somewhat predictable for NCTX in recent years during winter. The overall numbers of this species in the area (and everywhere really) is much, much smaller than the Herring Gull. However, one or two LBBGs have been observed on White Rock Lake every winter for the better part of a decade now. They've actually been more predictable than Herring Gulls on some lakes. The LBBG has been recorded on most the area's larger lakes, but the only place it has a pattern of returning to (to my knowledge) is on White Rock Lake. It does not appear to be the same individuals each year. Since this pattern has only been observed for about the last 10 years, it's really unknown whether or not this trend will continue to be the case in upcoming years.

California Gull – This is a species that is not generally observed in Texas, and used to be Review Species. As far as we know, California Gull is a bird that should probably be expected about 3-4 times a decade in North-central Texas - possibly more. Because of its plumage and size, CAGU is more likely to blend in with other Ring-billed Gulls than say a Herring or Lesser Black-backed Gull. There are about 10 records for the area, all of them within the last 25 years. Like the Mew Gull below, two observations have been photo-documented for the area.

Mew Gull – The Mew Gull is so rare as to be considered a Texas Review Species. There are only a total of 36 observations documented for the entire state and about 10 of those are for NCTX – all of them within the last 25 years. We have two observations that have been photo-documented for North-central Texas. For the most part, observations are of young birds are fairly easy to identify with prolonged observation.

Status of Hooded Gulls

Bonaparte's Gull – This is strictly a wintering gull on some of the larger lakes. White Rock Lake has a reasonable population during most years, but other large area lakes have them as well. Most birds lack the full hoods at that time but are not usually difficult to identify.

Franklin's Gull – Franklin's Gull is rare during most winters, but it can be very common in both spring and fall migrations. Flocks of 50 birds or more are not uncommon as fly-overs during spring and fall. They are one of the few gulls that can give us in NCTX adequate viewing in all states of plumage, and they are one of the few gulls that have two distinct molts per year.

Little Gull – Little Gull was a Review Species but was recently taken off that list in September. The last time I looked there were a total of 69 observations documented in Texas. Perhaps as many as half of those observations come from NCTX. Usually at least one Little Gull has shown up in the area every year during the last decade. It's the smallest gull and has several characteristics that will help you identify it. Nearly all the observations for Dallas are during mid-winter.

- Let's review the local gulls once again, but this time adding status

Hooded Gulls – **Bonaparte's Gull** (fairly common on the larger lakes in winter), **Franklin's Gull** (Uncommon in winter, very common in migration) and **Little Gull** (rare and irregular in winter)

Non-hooded Gulls – **Ring-billed Gull** (abundant from November-March), **Herring Gull** (uncommon-rare on larger lakes), and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (rare but becoming somewhat regular on specific lakes).

Gulls I do not expect most years but for which we have area records **– California Gull, Thayer's Gull, Mew Gull, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull** (one record), **Laughing Gull, Black-headed Gull, Sabines' Gull,** and **Black-legged Kittiwake.** These birds are largely birds of "casual" occurrence. Since Pulich's publication in 1988, I now consider both **Little Gull** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** to be elevated from casual to rare in status, and trending towards being "regular" every winter.

Although casual in status, I treat **California** and **Mew** gulls in this paper because of their potential confusion with **Ring-billed Gull**. This is an arbitrary decision on my part. We could include several other ID problems with the larger gulls, like Thayer's Gull. However, I think it's best to narrow our focus.

Some of our gull information in a general sense is a product of recent understanding. Much has been discovered in the last few decades in regards to gull plumages. For North-central Texas, all we can say about gulls is that there have been far more significant sightings in the last 25 years. It could be the birds, or it could be the birders.

Identification of the Three Most Common Gulls in North-central Texas

Ring-billed Gull - The Ring-billed Gull take three years to mature into adult plumage. In North-central Texas, we are faced with a lot of variation and there are a few species with which confusion is an issue. For the most part, however, plumage variation is at least manageable for most birders. You must remember that plumage changes are dynamic. The word "typical" is more like a sliding scale of changing plumage features, not one single look. A 1st winter RBGU in November might be slightly different than a 1st winter RBGU in March. It's not as if a molt happens overnight.

A juvenile Ring-billed Gull will look like the first bird below- **Bird A**. Such a plumage is rare around DFW or NCTX since it doesn't breed here… its mantle has almost no gray. It would have to be one that was slow to molt into its 1st winter plumage. But eventually the mantle will soon start becoming light gray and the breast grayish-white by mid-winter as in **Bird B**.

Bird B. is a 1st winter bird and can be difficult to identify from a similar 2nd winter California Gull if standing alone. I'll have more on the RBGU\CAGU comparison later.



Bird A. –RBGU. juvenile. This plumage state is usually too early for us to see in NCTX.



Bird B. - RBGU. October of the 1st year. This typical 1st winter plumage is common in NCTX.



Bird C. - RBGU. The typical 2nd winter Ring-billed Gull looks like this. The entire mantle and coverts are now a light gray, but primaries are still entirely black and the blackish bill tip has not fully formed a sub-terminal band (although **Bird D**. is working on it).



Bird D. –Another 2nd winter RBGU



Bird E. - RBGU. The adult bird looks something like this. White “windows” have formed on the black primaries and a dark sub-terminal band surrounds the bill exposing a yellow tip.



Bird F. - RBGU. Another adult bird

Physical points of reference on Ring-billed Gull:

Mantle coloration and bill pattern are two of the quickest ways to begin the identification process in most gulls, and Ring-billed Gulls are the perfect species with which to practice a quick examination. Simply put, the RBGU mantle color on winter birds is light gray, and about 1/3 of the bill color is dark towards the tip. It's either completely dark on immature birds, or is banded dark with a light yellow tip on adults. If you have gotten this far in your reading, tell me at the next meeting and I will bring you one of my wife's muffins. If I find out you told another participant, then you have to buy me lunch. This offer expires January 1. When I see a non-hooded gull that seems to stand out among Ring-billed Gulls, I immediately gravitate to the bill to examine that sub-terminal band or dark area if it has one.

When grouped together, most Ring-billed Gulls look the same size and shape. Any bird bigger or smaller can stand out. Any bird with a darker mantle color can stand out. Any bird with an unusual bill pattern compared to RBGU can stand out. But we are still faced with identification no matter what "stands out". Is it an aberrant Ring-billed Gull or is it another species?

Bonaparte's Gull – Identification of Bonaparte's Gull in winter is not terribly difficult. It's our smallest regular gull with a smallish head and beak compared to all other gulls with the exception of Little Gull. Typically our adult Bonaparte's Gull looks like this one below that Ken Nanney took.



The identification of this sitting bird (above) is straightforward. It has a light gray mantle, a small dark beak, and a significant dark gray ear patch or spot behind the eye. There may be some slight remnant of a grayish bar going across the crown to the eye, but this is variable and should not be considered significant in winter plumage.

Bonaparte's Gull in flight



The adult Bonaparte's Gull in flight has all the above features – small size, smallish black beak, pinkish legs, and dark ear patch. But it has one other diagnostic feature that is easily seen on a bird in flight. It has a white leading edge to the wing that goes rather far down on the primaries. This can be seen pretty easily in flight and should be the first thing to look for on an adult bird flying over water. No other NCTX gull has that appearance (although a Forster's Tern can sometimes be confused for a BOGU).



White leading edge of the Bonaparte's Gull wing





1st winter Bonaparte's Gull – flying and standing

Immature Bonaparte's Gull will show a brownish-black "carpal bar" (mostly along the lesser coverts) which gives this bird a distinct pattern – sometimes referred to as an "M-like" pattern. In North-central Texas, this bird could only be confused with an immature Little Gull, and as we will see in the next section on "Issues of Confusion" that won't be a likely misidentification if you know what to look for.

Franklin's Gull–Franklin's gull is a mid-sized hooded gull which is visually reminiscent of the Laughing Gull so abundant on the Texas coast. It has a fairly dark mantle relative to the Ring-billed Gull. In winter it has more than just a hint of its hood. While it remains fairly white on the forehead, the top of the crown back to the nape of the neck usually have some darkish gray coloration. It extends to an area usually around the eye, and eye can be set off by a broken eye ring (or two white crescents above and below the eye). **Bird A**.

In spring, Franklin's Gull shows a clean black hood that outlines the eye with those eye rings as stated above. However, Franklin's Gull frequently shows a light, rosy salmon color throughout the breast and extending nearly to the vent. This color change is generally a product of a breeding plumage change, but it can sometimes be seen in NCTX as early as February. **Bird B**.

Since a few birds have been known to over-winter in North-central Texas (and other parts of Texas as well), we get to see this gull in various states of plumage changes. We also get to see large groups collectively migrating in spring and fall. While other gulls (like RBGUs) will also flock in great numbers as they migrate, Franklin's Gulls make a regular habit of migrating in well-defined flocks. A few hundred can be seen one day in a Lake Ray Hubbard inlet, and the next day they could all be gone.

A bird in flight will show some of it darkish hood depending on the season, but it will never show the white leading edge of the wing that is characteristic of the Bonaparte's Gull (**Bird C**). The overall color will also be typically darker than a Bonaparte's Gull, and the overall size will be larger. Immature birds will have more brownish coloration in the wings and head, but will still be identifiable.



Bird A. - Standing Franklin's Gull in winter



Bird B. – Franklin's Gull in breeding plumage (April)



Bird C. - Franklin's Gull in flight

Issues of Confusion - Ring-billed Gull vs California Gull and Mew Gull

For non-hooded gulls, one of the first points of confusion is wondering if a possible 1st winter Ring-billed Gull is actually a 1st winter Mew Gull or a 2nd winter California Gull. See illustrations below.



1st winter Ring-billed Gull above (status: common)



1st winter Mew Gull (status: extremely rare and irregular “review species” for the state)



2nd winter California Gull (status: very rare and irregular in NCTX)

The quick and dirty are these comparison points for 1st winter RBGUs, 1st winter MEGUs, and 2nd winter CAGUs.

- Using Ring-billed Gull as the average, Mew Gulls are slightly smaller than Ring-billed Gulls and California Gulls are slightly larger than Ring-billed Gulls.

- Mew Gulls have more rounded heads and smaller beaks than RBGUs. Mantle color is very similar to RBGU.
- California Gulls have slightly thicker beaks and a darker mantle color than RBGU. They also have more bluish-gray legs than the fleshy legs of a young RBGU.

These traits can be difficult if one of these species is sitting entirely by itself,but that's generally not the case.

There are several other smaller ID points, so I only present these as your starting point. We get all of these birds in other plumages, so the example above only represents a small portion of the observation possibilities. But these examples represent the most difficult confusion for us in this area.

Issue of Confusion – Bonaparte's Gull vs Little Gull

For Hooded Gulls, there would seem to be an issue of separating Bonaparte's (below left) and Little Gull (below right). However, this is never as difficult as it might appear in photographs. While sitting, Little Gull will frequently be in the company of Bonaparte's Gulls. This makes comparing the size difference a fairly easy one. Also, the LIGU has a smaller, rounder head, and some remnant of the hood usually is visible throughout the crown. While this can sometime be true of BOGU, it is never as extensive as it is in LIGU (unless perhaps you see a BOGU in late march or April when the hood is more extensive).



While flying, both birds have distinguishing characteristic the other species doesn't have. Bonaparte's Gull has a white leading edge to the wing, and the adult Little Gull has a dark underside on the wing. Both of these things can be seen at a distance. We've seen the Bonaparte's in flight in a previous example.

Below are two Adult Little Gulls in flight. The dark under wing is diagnostic.



Immature Little Gulls in flight may present the biggest challenge. You may see very little of a dark under wing. However there are other features to look for. Below is an immature Bonaparte's Gull on the left and an immature Little Gull on the right.



The Little Gull on the right shows a much more extensive degree of dark color down the primaries. It's a complete extension of the dark carpal bar. The Bonaparte's Gull on the left shows a much lighter and more broken appearance after the dark line passes the wrist area. Only some of the primaries and secondaries are dark. Furthermore the Little Gull on the right shows more of the hood around the top of the head and neck area. Bonaparte's show an ear patch, but there's only a vague reference to any hood.

At present, a Little Gull is considered rare and irregular but it is no longer considered a Texas Review Species. That designation was taken off in September. In most instances though, it will still be worthy of documentation.

Issue of Confusion – Franklin's Gull vs Laughing Gull

This particular issue can be a difficult one in winter. Both birds are reasonably close in size (although Laughing

Gull is a little larger), and both birds have a similar medium-gray mantle color. Both birds have a similar head shape and a hood remnant in winter.

However, both birds have some slight variation in their winter hoods.





The Franklin's Gull on the left will show a more extensive winter hood than the Laughing Gull on the right. The adult Laughing Gull on the right frequently has two dark gray bars going across the head, one from the ear patch over the head and one from just above the eye over the head.

Occasionally 1st winter birds of both species can have similar head patterns – both like the Franklin's Gull pictured here (above left). The first winter Laughing Gull (not pictured), however, has much more brown coloration along the wings in the lesser and median coverts. So much so that it's conspicuously different than the Franklin's Gull at the same age. The Sibley Guide shows this particularly well in the 1st winter Laughing Gull.





As for the two species in flight, adult Franklin's Gull (above left) generally shows some white windows in the black wing tips and the Laughing Gull (above right) does not.

Other Confusing Gull Issues for Larger Gulls

There are a few other issues with the larger gulls that come to play in the area. On Lake Tawakoni and some of the larger lakes, there could be immature Herring Gull and Thayer's Gull confusion or possibly Herring Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull confusion. However, these difficulties are with mostly among very uncommon birds and are beyond the scope of this paper. None include serious confusion with our regularly occurring gulls. Perhaps Lesser Black-backed and Herring Gull come closest, but Lesser Black-backeds are frequently in a plumage that is hard to misidentify whereas most Herring Gulls are a homogenous brown color in immature plumage and look almost nothing like the Lesser Black-backed. Most of the other gulls that have been recorded for the area are too rare for a wide treatment of identifying characteristics.

Summary

The three most common NCTX gulls– Ring-billed, Bonaparte's, and Franklin's gulls – can be misidentified with other gull species. However, the gull species with which all of them might be misidentified are all quite rare in the North-central Texas.

Immature Ring-billed-Gull can be confused with immature Mew Gull and immature California Gull, both of which are very rare and irregular.

Bonaparte's Gull can be confused with the rare Little Gull.

Franklin's Gull can be confused the very rare and irregular Laughing Gull.

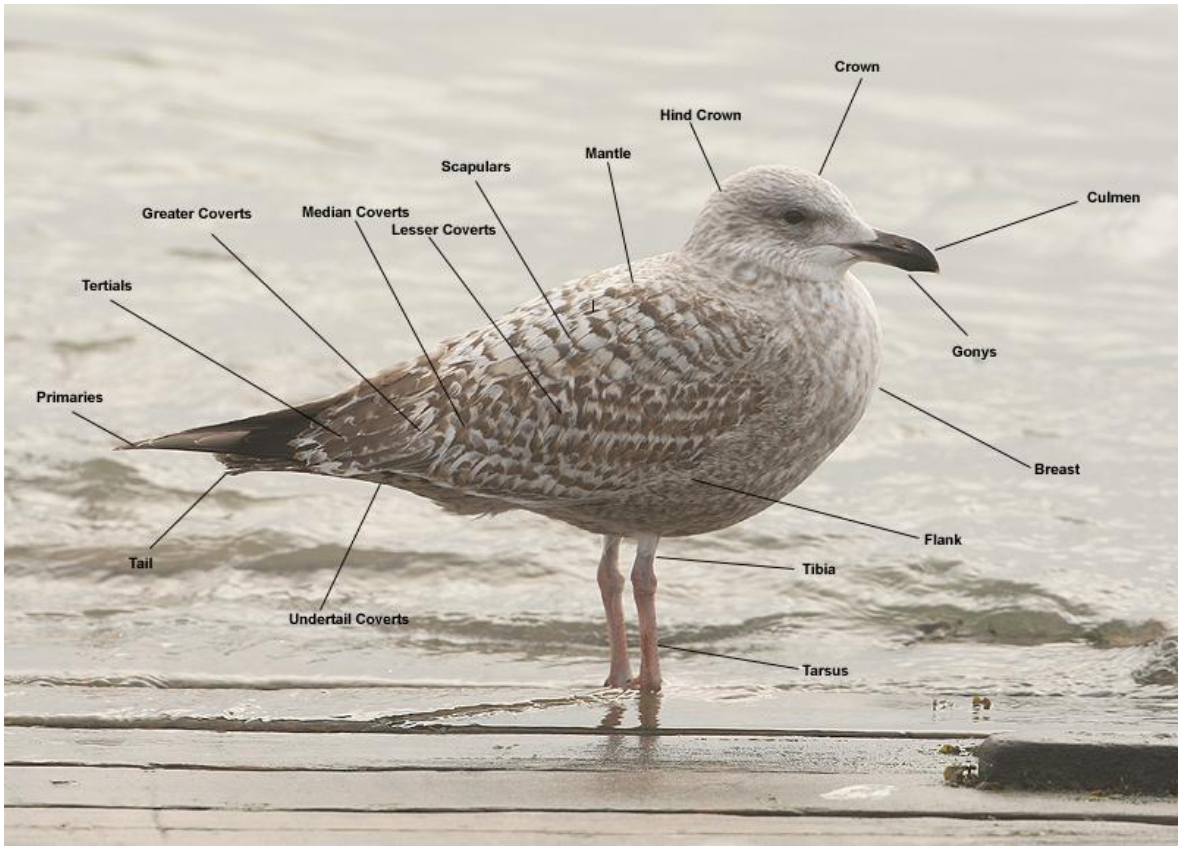
Outside of these challenges, the larger gulls can be an issue. But in almost all instances, the confusion of the larger gulls will be between two uncommon to rare birds, and probably not critical to an introductory paper. As birders, we have to break out the guides for the denser problems surrounding the largest gulls.

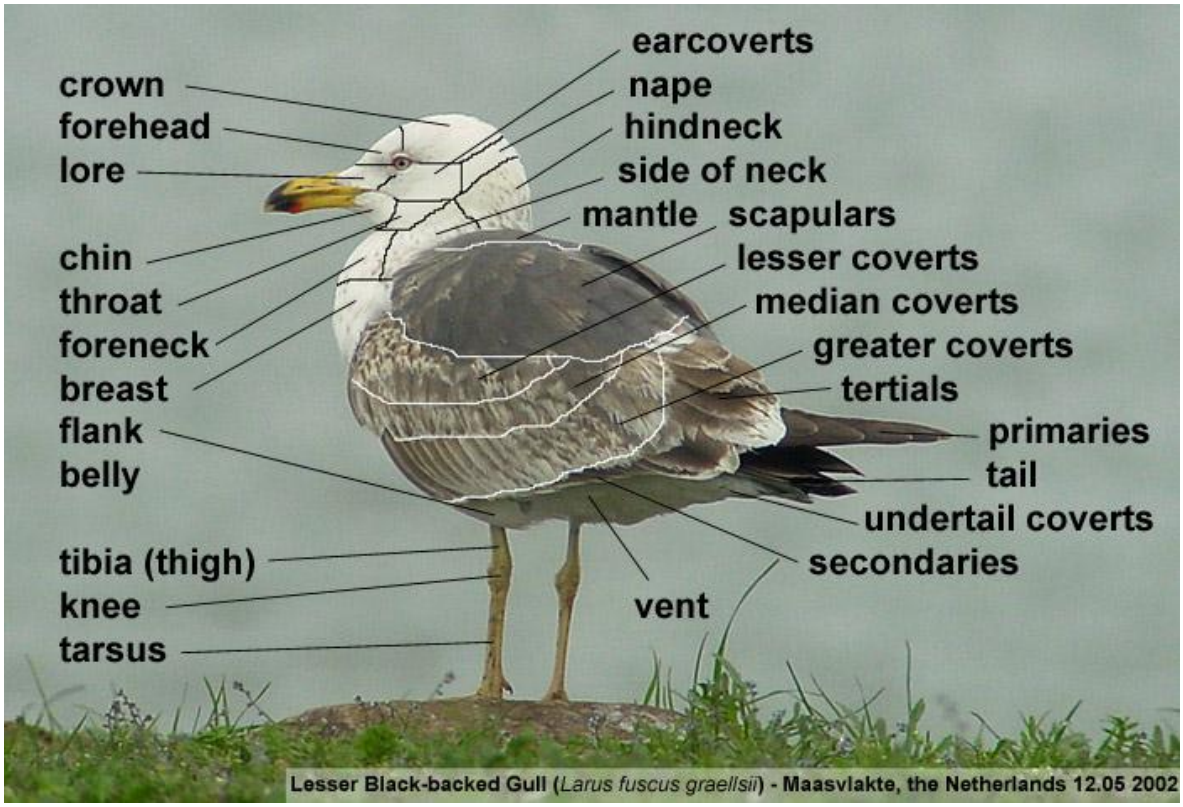
You should build your inventory of information by first understanding immature and adult plumaged Ring-billed Gulls. From that point, become acquainted with the rather easy identification of the Bonaparte's Gull. And finally, the Franklin's Gull identification may turn out to be the easiest since you will likely see it in all sorts of plumages, and you will see it in spring when you are out birding for passerines.

Once this is accomplished, you should be able to recognize gulls that are out of place in North-central Texas.

The illustrations below may help with the vocabulary of gull topography. This paper refers most commonly to four areas of gull topography: the mantle, the greater and lesser coverts, the crown, and the primaries.

JP


Crown
Hind Crown
Mantle
Scapulars
Culmen
Greater Coverts
Median Coverts
Lesser Coverts
Tertials
Gonys
Primaries
Breast
Flank
Tail
Tibia
Undertail Coverts
Tarsus


earcoverts
crown
nape
forehead
hindneck
lore
side of neck
mantle
scapulars
chin
lesser coverts
throat
median coverts
foreneck
greater coverts
breast
tertials
flank
primaries
belly
tail
undertail coverts
tibia (thigh)
secondaries
knee
vent
tarsus
Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) - Maasvlakte, the Netherlands 12.05 2002

References:

Gulls from Royse Photos web site

Bonaparte's Gulls

Little Gull

Franklin's Gull

Ring-billed Gull

Laughing Gull

California Gull

Mew Gull

Herring Gull

Texas photographer Greg Lasley's Gull Pages

Martin Reid's Gull Pages

Steve Hampton's Gull Site

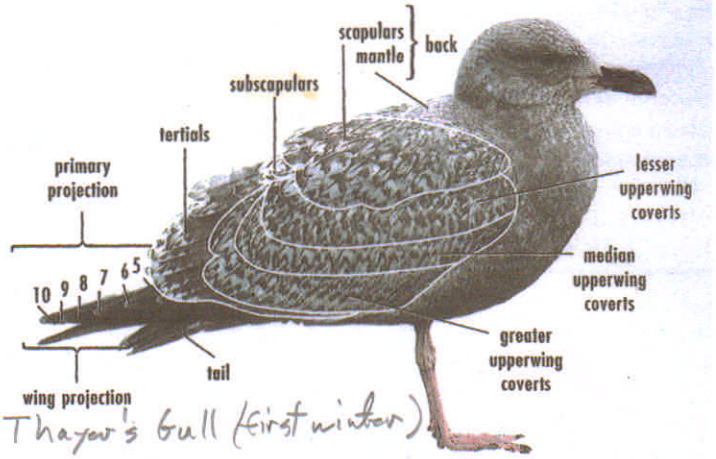
Gull Books…..

"Gulls of North America, Europe, and Asia" by Klaus Olson and Hans Larsson (This is a spectacular book. I bought a copy when it was $39. I went to Amazon recently and now see a new one will cost $250.00. I suggest you buy the book below, which sells for $24)

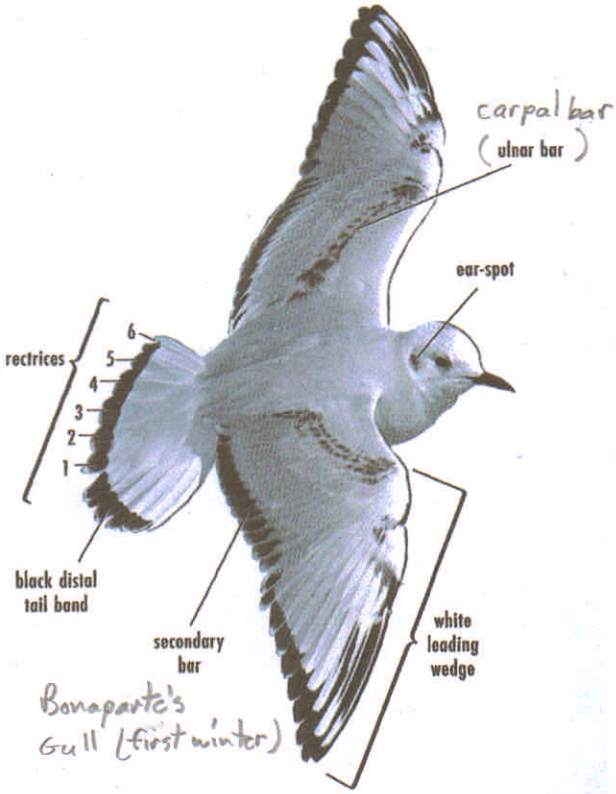
"Gulls of the Americas" by Steve Howell and Jon Dunn

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Gull Topography



Thayer's Gull (first winter)

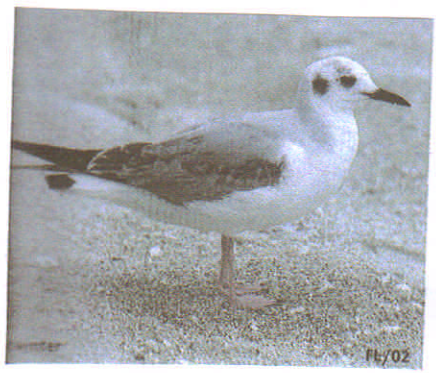


Bonaparte's Gull (first winter)

Bonaparte's Gull

2 year gull

first winter





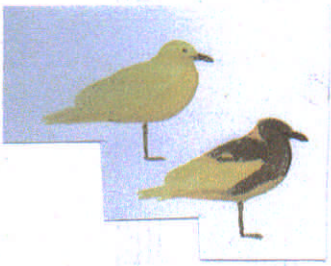
adult non-breeding



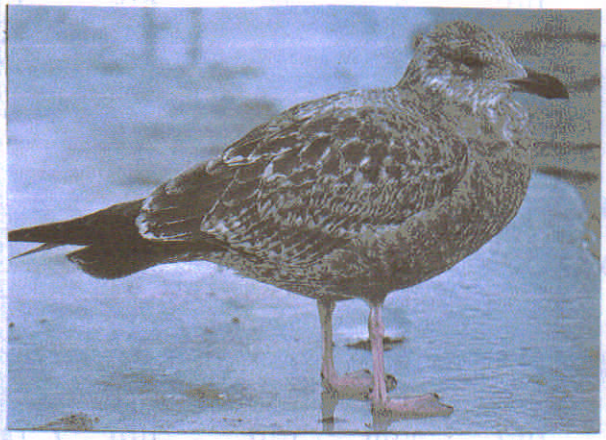


Herring Gull - 4 year gull

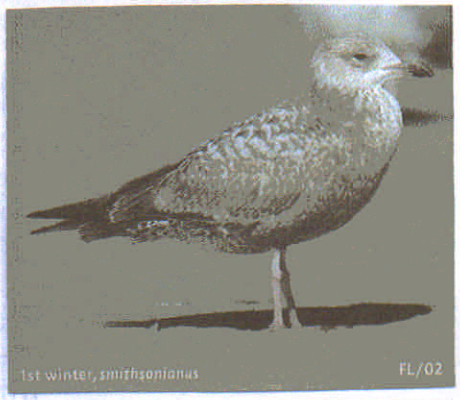
Juvenile/
1st winter



extent of 1st winter molt

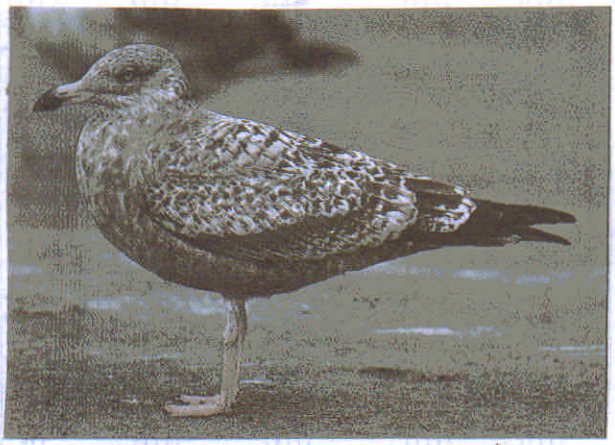


some retain juvenile plumage through February

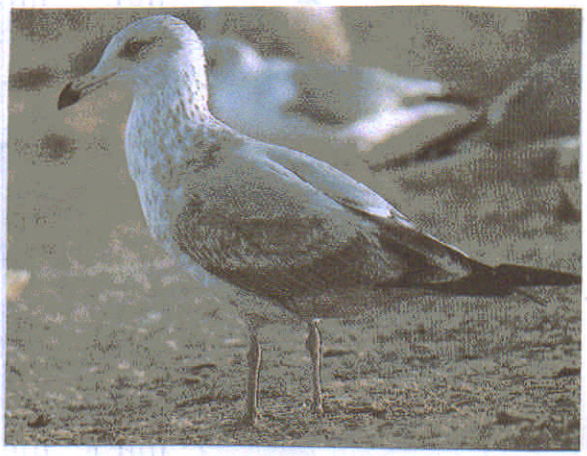




2nd winter
(eye can be dark through winter)



Oct



Feb

3rd winter

Variable!



Sep/Oct



Feb

Franklin's Gull (migrant, rare winter)

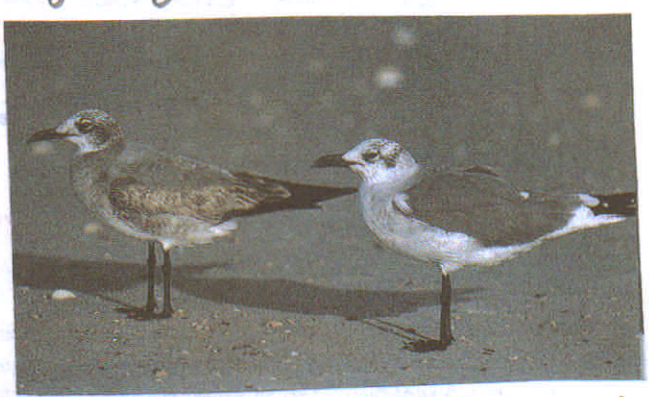


1st winter



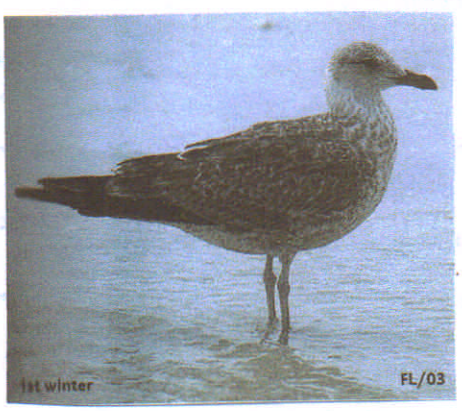
Adult non-breeding

Laughing Gull (rare)



1st winter Adult non-breeding

Lesser Black-backed Gull (rare)

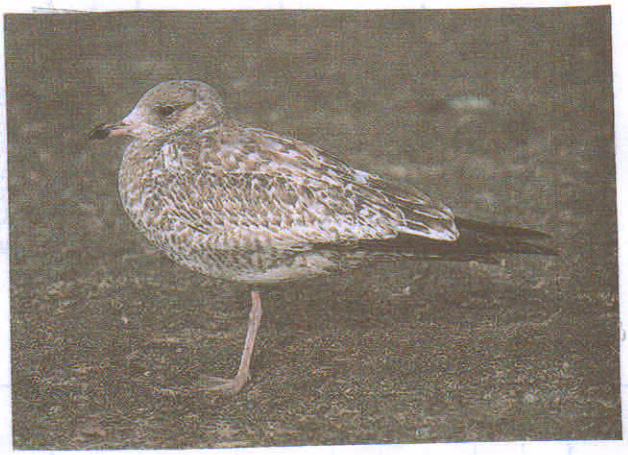


1st winter

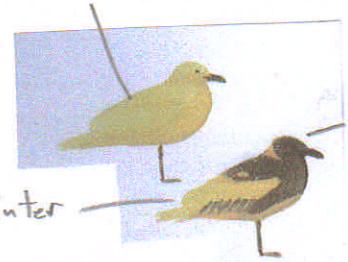


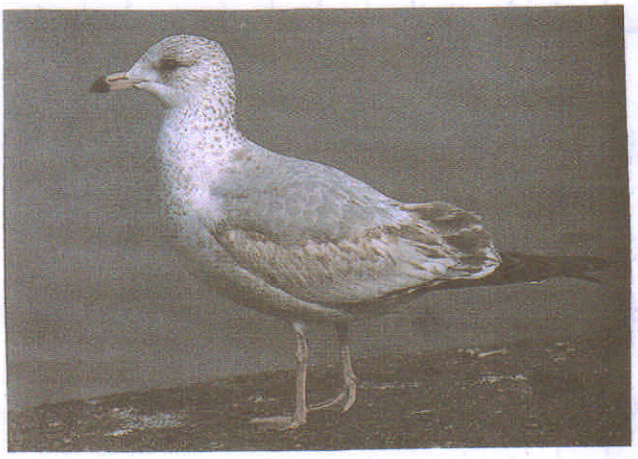
Adult non-breeding

Ring-billed Gull 3 year gull



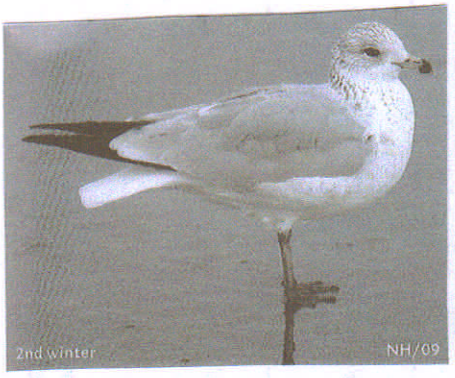
Juvenile - some retain this plumage through December





first winter





second winter





adult non-breeding

