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SIBLEY COMMENTS ON VARIATION IN 1ST YEAR RING-BILLED GULL

Discussion by David A. Sibley from his website.

Variation in immature Ring-billed Gulls

All photos and comments, attributed to David A. Sibley
https://www.sibleyguides.com/2009/12/variation-in-immature-ring-billed-gulls/

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



Discussion by David A. Sibley from his website.
Variation in immature Ring-billed Gulls
All photos taken 10/9/05. All comments, by David A. Sibley
https://www.sibleyguides.com/2009/12/variation-in-immature-ring-billed-gulls/

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
BY DAVID SIBLEY



1) This is a very dark and fresh-looking juvenile, with mostly dark bill, much as one would expect in late summer.



2) A different juvenile, nearly as dark as 1.

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
BY DAVID SIBLEY

3



3) Yet another bird still in full juvenal plumage with no replaced 1st winter feathers, but this one is much paler than the first two. The bill has become pink at the base, but not yet with the sharply two-toned pattern of typical first-winter.

4



4) A very pale and orange-toned juvenile; this bird has replaced a few body feathers with 1st-winter plumage, most conspicuous on the mantle and scapulars, where the new feathers are grayish with bold dark bars.

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
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5



5) This bird is still mainly in juvenal plumage, but has replaced a few scapulars and a few wing coverts with clean gray 1st-winter feathers.

6



6) This bird is nearly identical to (7) below in molt stage, but the retained juvenal feathers are darker and less orange.

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
BY DAVID SIBLEY

7



7) Another with relatively pale and orange-toned juvenal feathers like (4) above, but this one has molted a large patch of scapulars, and the new 1st-winter feathers are relatively clean gray.

8



8) Most mantle and scapulars new and grayish, but the lowest row are brownish and faded juvenal feathers.

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
BY DAVID SIBLEY



9) An interesting mixture of new 1st-winter feathers with dark bars (on mantle, breast, and flanks), contrasting with retained juvenal feathers with pale orange-brown bars (on nape, belly, wing coverts, and some scapulars).



10) Most scapulars replaced, but some new ones show dusky centers.

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
BY DAVID SIBLEY



11) All scapulars and some wing coverts replaced, most with faint dusky bars.



12) All juvenal mantle and scapular feathers replaced with pale gray 1st-winter feathers, but all showing a "ghost" of the juvenal color pattern.

VARIATION IN IMMATURE RING-BILLED GULLS
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13



13) The most advanced-looking plumage seen, with all mantle and scapulars replaced and almost all clean gray (but almost no wing coverts replaced). Note that the bird in photo (11) above is more advanced in molt, with many replaced wing coverts, it just looks "younger" because the new feathers are not as clean gray as (13) here.