TEXAS GULLS OVERVIEW 2026



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

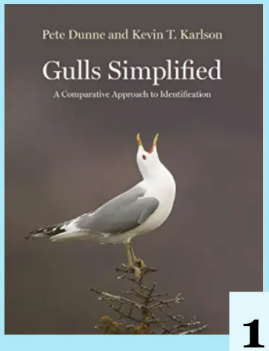
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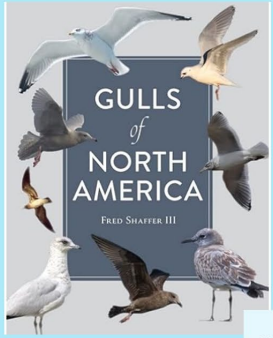
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REFERENCES

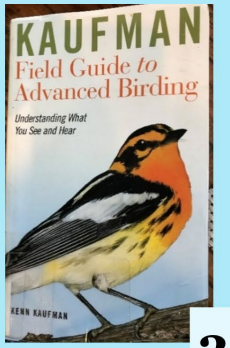
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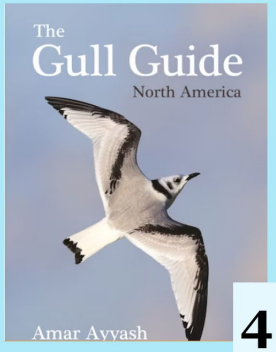
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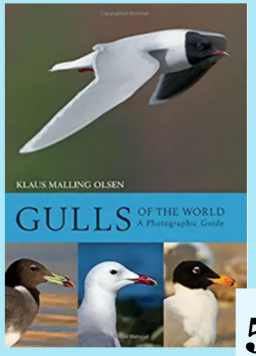
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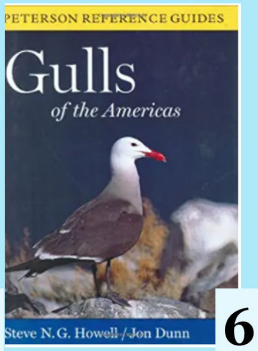
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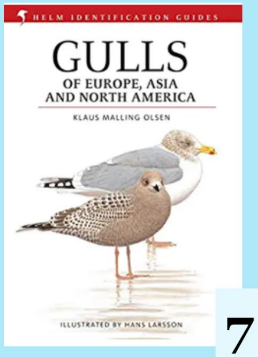
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6



7

- 1– a very good book and a very good place to start. Well organized, slightly simplified approach with excellent self-tests.
- 2– A good beginner's look at gulls.
- 3—Contains a great chapter on how to approach gull study.
- 4—A high level, well-organized approach to gulls.
- 5,6,7—Wealth of information, but not necessarily organized for quick assimilation.

GULL LINKS

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Birds of the World

Anything Laurus Website (Amar Ayyash)
http://www.anythinglarus.com/

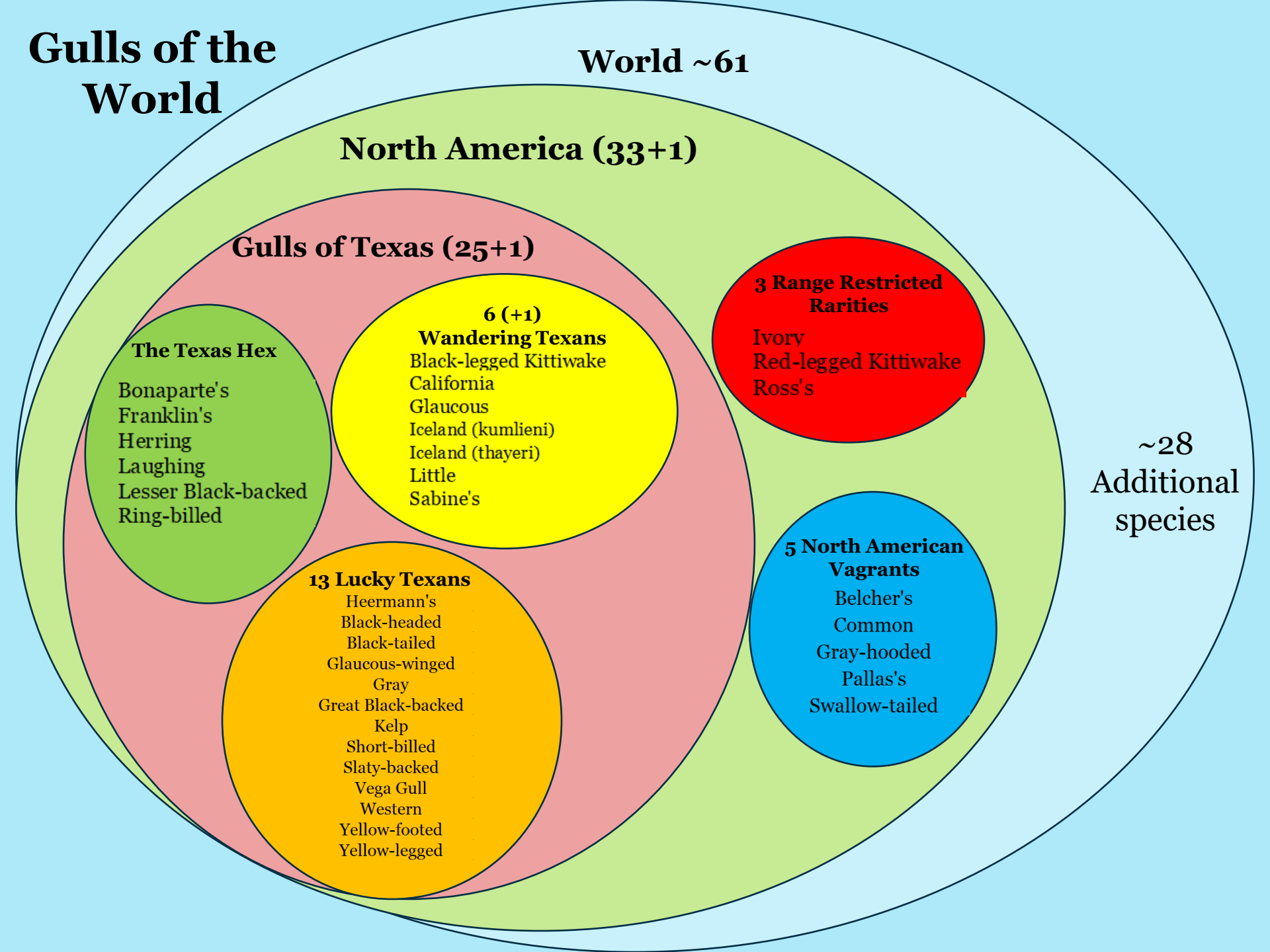
Gull Identification Website (Steve Hampton)
http://www.tertial.us/gulls/gulls.htm

http://gull-research.org

Facebook Group: North American Gulls

DISTRIBUTION

- The overwhelming majority of gulls in Texas will be from the Texas Hex group.
- Gulls wander widely, so the the 6 (+1) Wandering Texans show up regularly, but sparsely in Texas.
- Rare gulls also do show up in Texas, but first think horses, not unicorns!!
- The distribution of over 99% of Texas gulls is summarized in “Jeff’s Texas Gule Rule” – so commit it to memory!!!!


Gulls of the World
World ~61
North America (33+1)
Gulls of Texas (25+1)
The Texas Hex
Bonaparte's
Franklin's
Herring
Laughing
Lesser Black-backed
Ring-billed
6 (+1) Wandering Texans
Black-legged Kittiwake
California
Glaucous
Iceland (kumlieni)
Iceland (thayeri)
Little
Sabine's
13 Lucky Texans
Heermann's
Black-headed
Black-tailed
Glaucous-winged
Gray
Great Black-backed
Kelp
Short-billed
Slaty-backed
Vega Gull
Western
Yellow-footed
Yellow-legged
3 Range Restricted Rarities
Ivory
Red-legged Kittiwake
Ross's
5 North American Vagrants
Belcher's
Common
Gray-hooded
Pallas's
Swallow-tailed
~28 Additional species

28 (+1) NORTH AMERICAN GULLS

FOCUS ON
The Texas Hex

BE READY FOR
6 (+1) Wandering Texans

BE AWARE OF
The Lucky 13

FURGIT ABOUT IT
3 Range Restricted Rarities
(far north)

#	Species
1	Ring-billed
2	Laughing
3	Franklin's
4	Bonaparte's
5	Herring
6	Lesser Black-backed
7	Black-legged Kittiwake
8	California
9	Glaucous
10 (+1)	Iceland (thayeri) Iceland (kumlieni)
11	Little
12	Sabine's
13	Heermann's
14	Short-billed
15	Western
16	Yellow-footed
17	Glaucous-winged
18	Great Black-backed
19	Black-headed
20	Yellow-legged
21	Slaty-backed
22	Black-tailed
23	Vega Gull
24	Kelp
25	Gray
26	Ivory
27	Red-legged Kittiwake
28	Ross's

SUGGESTED APPROACH TO GULLS: DIVE – IN!!!!

- **Distribution** – See Jeff's Texas Gulls Rule
- **Structure** – the size, body shape, bill & head shape, and wing length & shape are the place to start.
- **Plumage Details**–should not be ignored, but an identification should not be based on them alone.



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

THE TEXAS HEX DISTRIBUTION (JEFF'S TEXAS GULLS RULE)

TEXAS LOCATION			TEXAS SEASON		
			SUMMER	WINTER	MIGRATION
COAST	Ring-billed		Rare	Common	
	Herring		Rare	Common	
	Laughing		Abundant	Abundant	Abundant
	Bonaparte's			Uncommon	
	Franklin's		Rare	Uncommon	Frequent
	LBBG			Common	
INLAND	Ring-billed		Rare	Abundant	
	Herring		Rare	Uncommon	
	Laughing		Rare	Rare	Rare
	Bonaparte's			Common	
	Franklin's		Rare	Uncommon	Frequent
	LBBG			Uncommon	Rare

Place this carefully in your head and **LEAVE IT THERE !!!**

Jeff's Texas-Gull Rule

1) Coast year-round – think **Laughing** first
2) Inland in winter – think **Ring-billed** first
3) Migrating overhead – think **Franklin's** first
4) If it's a bigg-un – think **Herring** first
5) Black back – think LBBG first

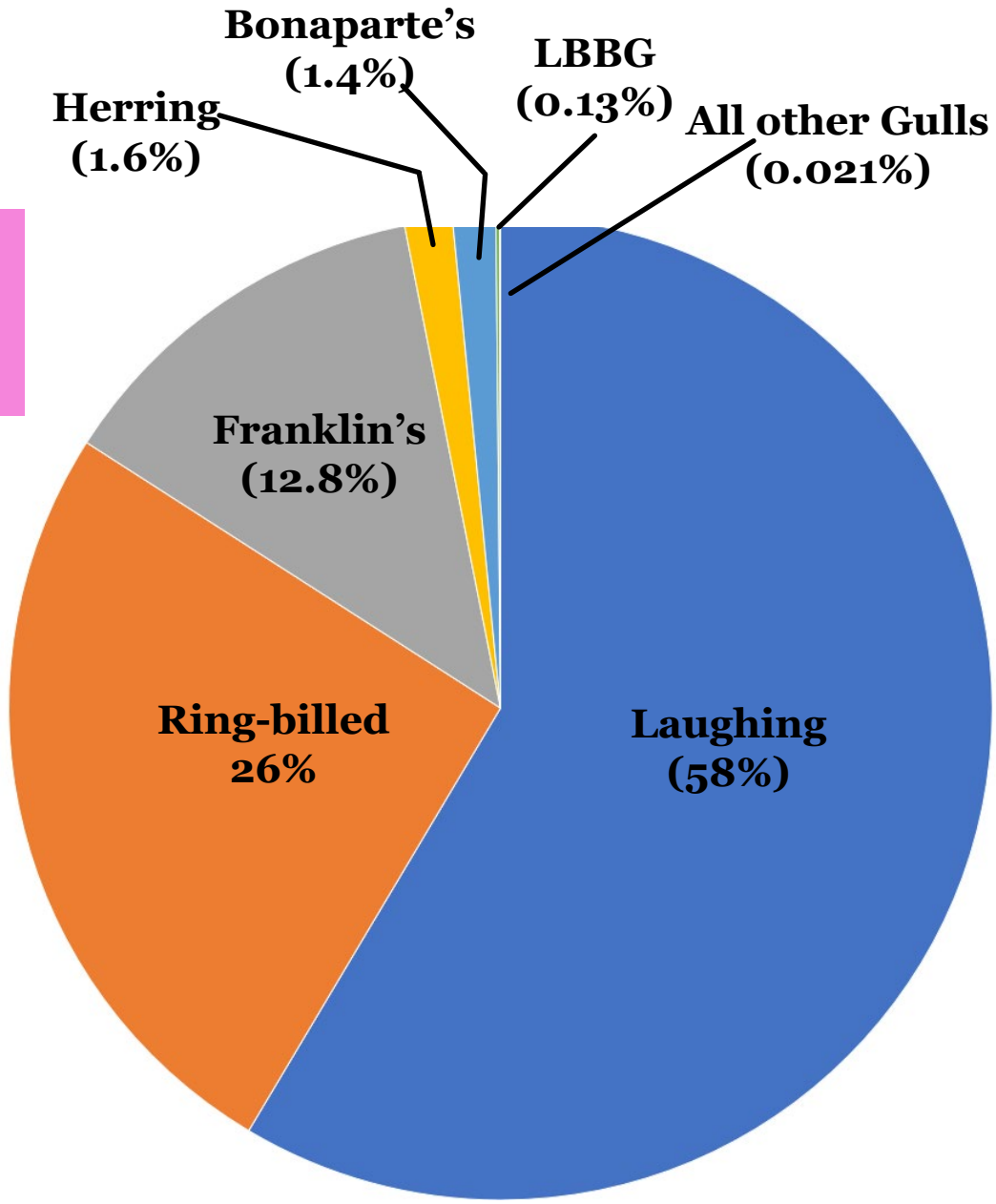
THE TEXAS HEX DISTRIBUTION
(JEFF'S TEXAS GULLS RULE)

Jeff's Texas-Gulls Rule

1) Coast Year-round – think **Laughing** first
2) In-land in winter – think **Ring-billed** first
3) Migration overhead – think **Franklin's** first
4) If it's a bigg-un! – think **Herring** First
5) Black back ? – think **LBBG** first

Place this carefully in your head and **LEAVE IT THERE !!!**

EBIRD DATA SUPPORTING JEFF'S TEXAS GULLS RULE

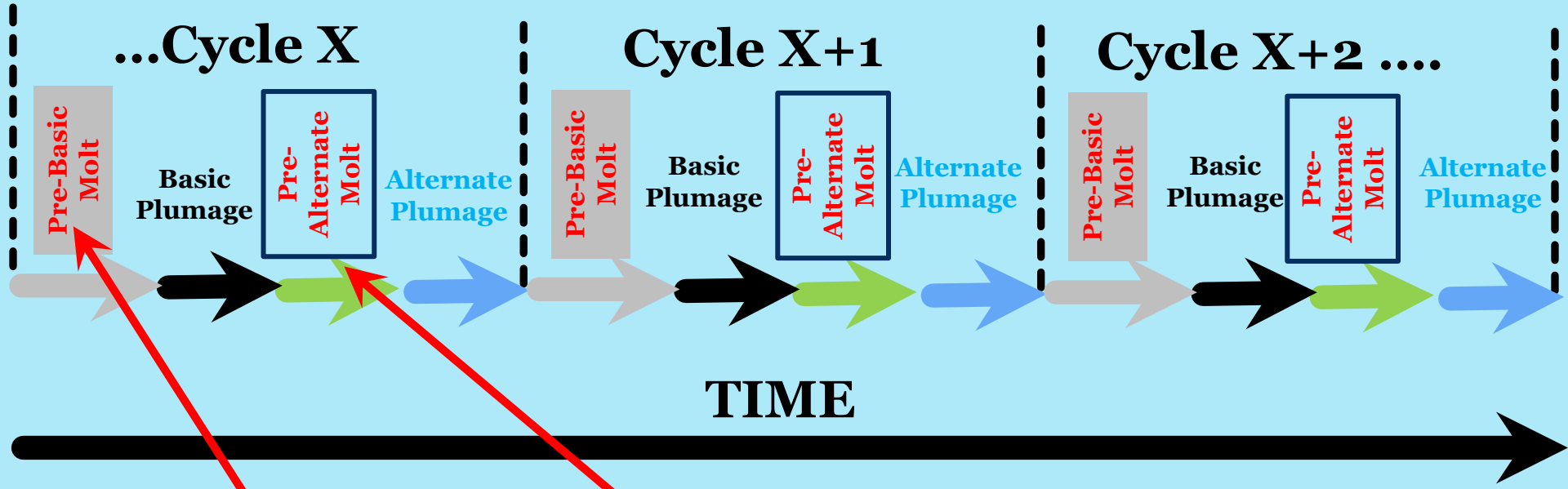


AGING GULLS

- After distribution & size, determining the age of a gull is the next most important step.
- Small gulls take 2 or 3 years to reach maturity (including plumage). Large gulls (which is most species) take 4 years. So gulls are described as: 2-year, 3-year or 4-year.
- Gulls are traditionally aged as juvenile, 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year & adult.
- The Gulls Simplified approach, which I recommend, uses 3 age classes – **Juvenile, Sub-adult, and Adult**.
- **Juvenile** plumage is characterized by brown feathers, and often white edged feathers, forming a scaley look. **Adult** plumage is the typical gull pattern of dark back and white underside. **Sub-adult** plumage is a mixture of these two.
- In addition to the overall plumage changes, typical aging characteristics include:
  - **Eye color** – dark changing to light (in most species).
  - **Bill color** – dark changing to adult shades. The change in color starts at the base of the bill and proceeds over time to the tip.
  - **Leg color** – yellow, blueish, grayish, blackish changing to adult colors often of pink or yellow.
  - **Mantle & scapular feathers** – the change to adult back color starts with these feathers, so look here on a juvenile bird for any hint of adult color.
  - **Wing coverts** – all feathers are replaced in the fall (**pre-basic molt**). Flight feathers are not replaced in the spring molt (**pre-alternate molt**). So the wear of the wing coverts is an important feature to note. Worn, slightly worn or any hint of brown can indicate a less-than fully adult bird.
  - **Pointed primary tips** – adults have more rounded primary tips. Juveniles are more pointy. Many species have “apical spots” or other white markings on the primaries, which are often absent in young gulls.

GENERIC GULL
MOLT CYCLES OF ADULT GULLS

2 molts/year
(1 complete, 1 partial)



Pre-basic molt–
A complete molt.
Leads to **basic plumage**.
Complete – replace every feather

Pre-alternate molt–
A partial molt.
Leads to **alternate plumage**
Partial – replace only body feathers
(sometimes coverts)

Molt timing varies by
species, age, population, individual

Molts can go on for 5-6 months

Note: Cycle 1 is not depicted here because it is slightly more complex.

GULLS SIMPLIFIED APPROACH

(KARLSON & DUNNE)

3 AGE GROUPS

- **Juvenile**
  - Mostly brown or grayish brown
  - Often a tail band
  - Dark eye
  - Dusky or dark bill
- **Sub-adult**
  - Mix of immature & adult plumages
  - Upper back –adult feathers begin
  - Tail & wing – worn immature plumage
  - Bill often transitioning in color
- **Adult**
  - Upperparts – fully adult-gray, white, or black
  - Underparts – white
  - Leg, bill, eye – consistent with adult colors







Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

JUVENILE



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

SUB-ADULT

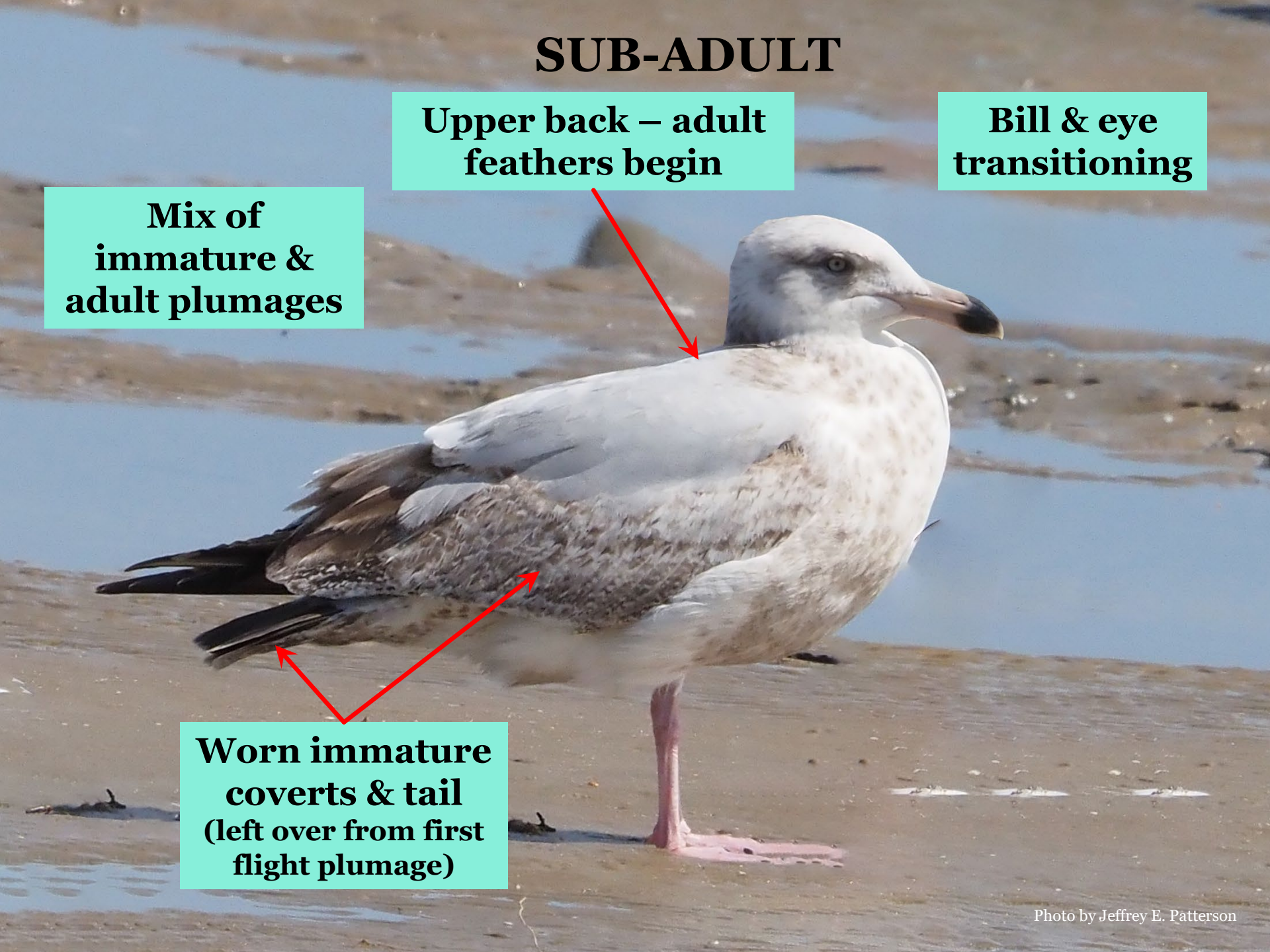


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

ADULT

Legs, bill, eyes – adult colors

Upperparts – fully adult gray, white, black

Primary tips rounder

White spots on primaries

Underparts – white

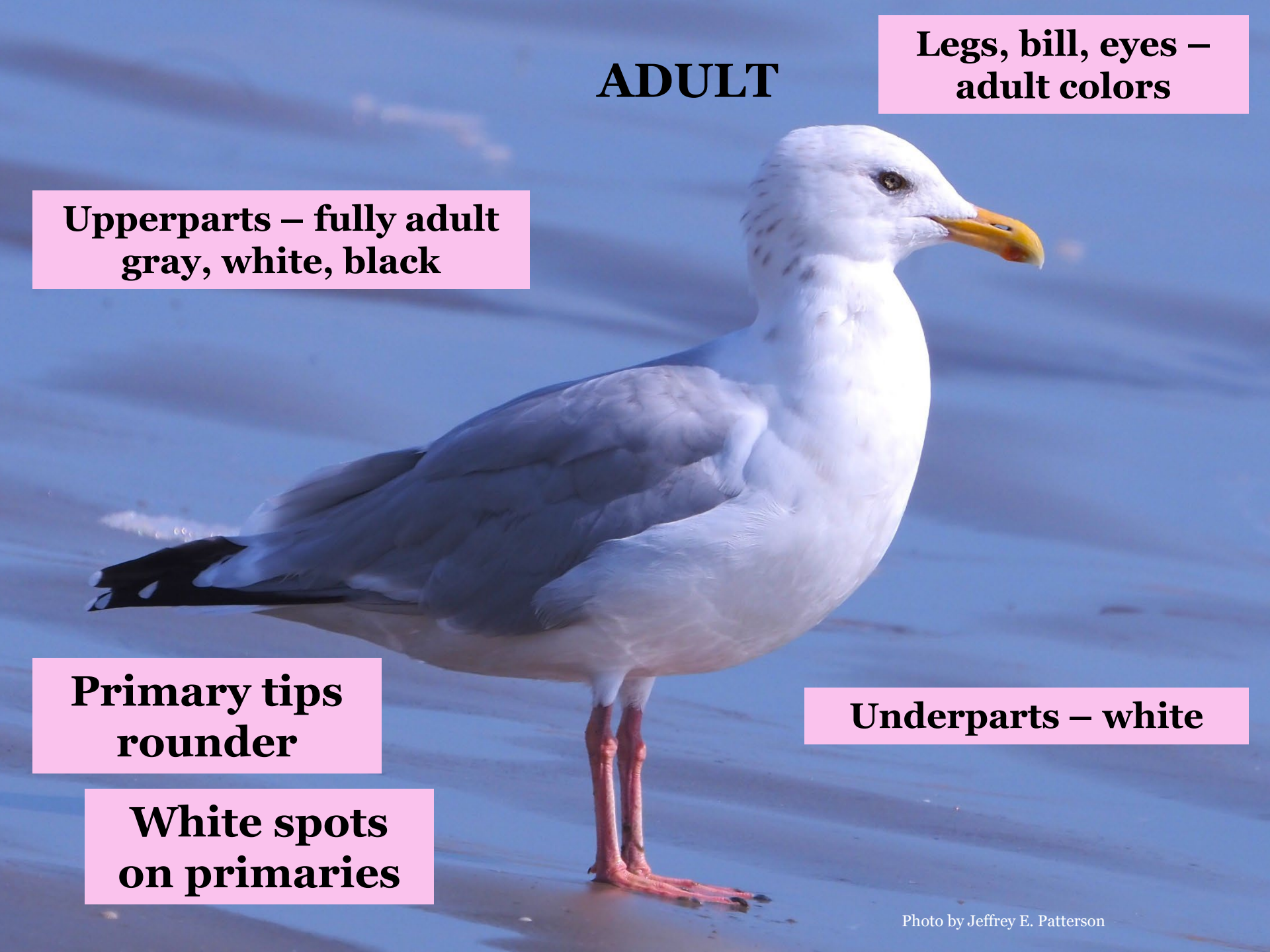


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Mantle & scapulars
(Herring)











Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Primary Tips (Herring)



Juvenile



1st cycle

Adult



3rd cycle



2nd cycle

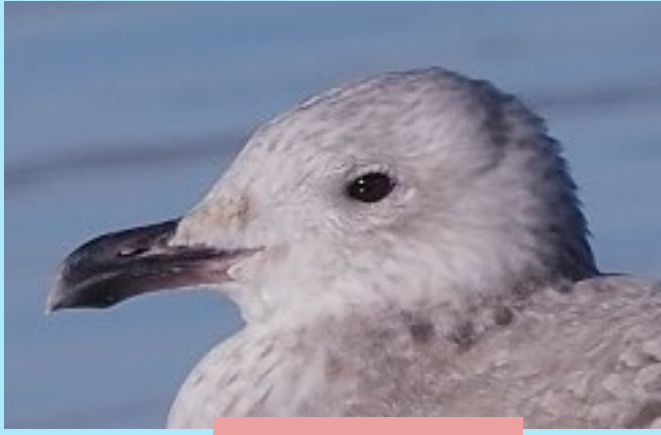


Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Bill & Eye (Herring)



Juvenile



1st cycle

Adult



3rd cycle



2nd cycle

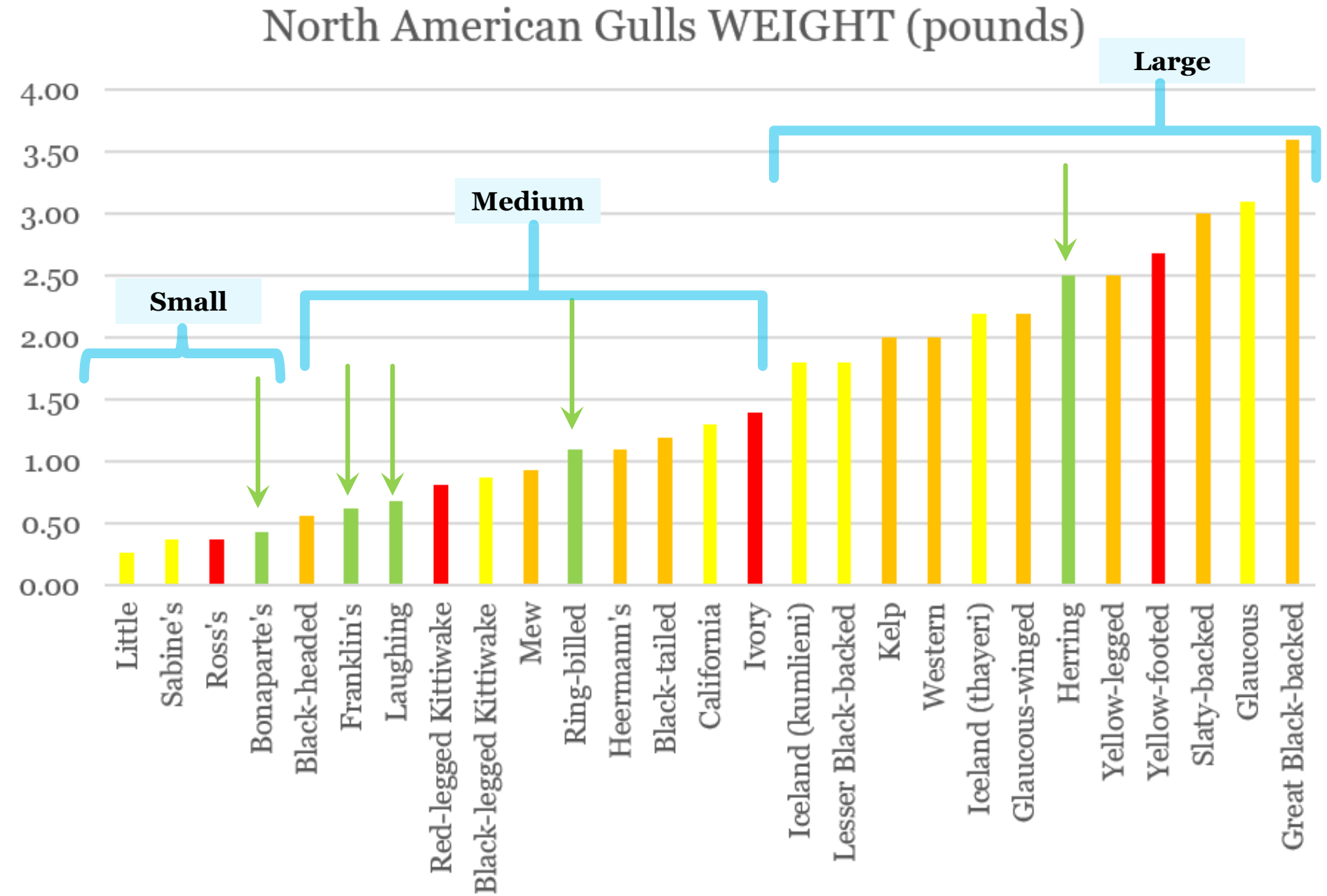


Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

RELATIVE SIZE

- As can be seen on the graph on the next page, the size of the ~28 gull species regularly found in North America gradually increases from the smallest (**Little Gull**) to the largest (**Great-black-backed Gull**).
- Gauging the size of a lone bird can be tricky. It is best to compare relative size to a known species.
- Therefore, knowing the size of the Texas Hex, especially **Herring**, **Ring-billed** & **Laughing**, makes identifying less common species easier.
- One should initially scan a flock of gulls for known species, then try to pick out gulls of different sizes for further study.
- In gulls, females are typically smaller, have more rounded heads and are slightly longer- and pointier-winged. Plumage differences are negligible. However, it's usually considered safe to sex gulls only when they are in matched-up pairs which can be compared side-by-side.

These are informal size groupings.



DIFFERENCES IN THE SEXES (HERRING)

Males (of larger gull species) – larger, broader, more rectangular heads, stouter bills.





Females – smaller, rounder heads, and often longer wings.





Experts usually say “probably”. Best determined with mated pair.

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

PLUMAGE

- Structure is the first place to begin an identification, but plumage cannot be ignored.
- However, the details of various plumages can be overwhelming for a novice gull watcher.
- So first use structure and relative size, then explore plumage aspects.

PLUMAGE – COLOR & PATTERN
WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Shade of Adult Gray

Precise shade of gray. Consider lighting conditions & effects.

Condition of Feathers

Examine feathers for wear & molt, especially wing coverts

Bill color & pattern

Always worth noting, never diagnostic on its own, age & season dependent

Orbital ring color

Exact color sometimes useful

Eye color

Variable – never diagnostic, but always worth noting
Iris dark in juveniles, paler with age (usually)

Leg color

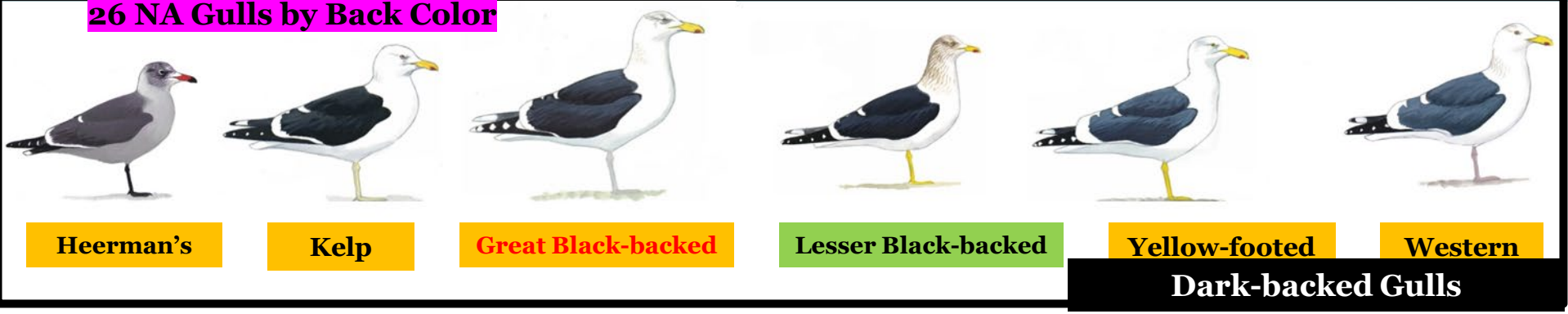
Varies with age & season
Often significant in adults
Never infallible
Frequent cases of the "wrong leg color"
Use to sort through flocks


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Wings

Adults – examine wing-tip colors, patterns and demarcation (sharp or gradual transition of colors)

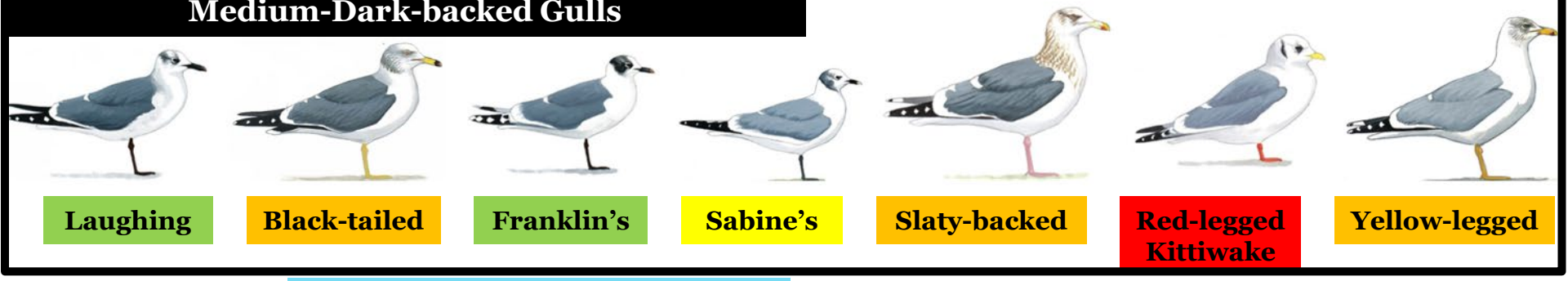
26 NA Gulls by Back Color



Heerman's | Kelp | Great Black-backed | Lesser Black-backed | Yellow-footed | Western

Dark-backed Gulls

Medium-Dark-backed Gulls



Laughing | Black-tailed | Franklin's | Sabine's | Slaty-backed | Red-legged Kittiwake | Yellow-legged

Medium-backed Gulls



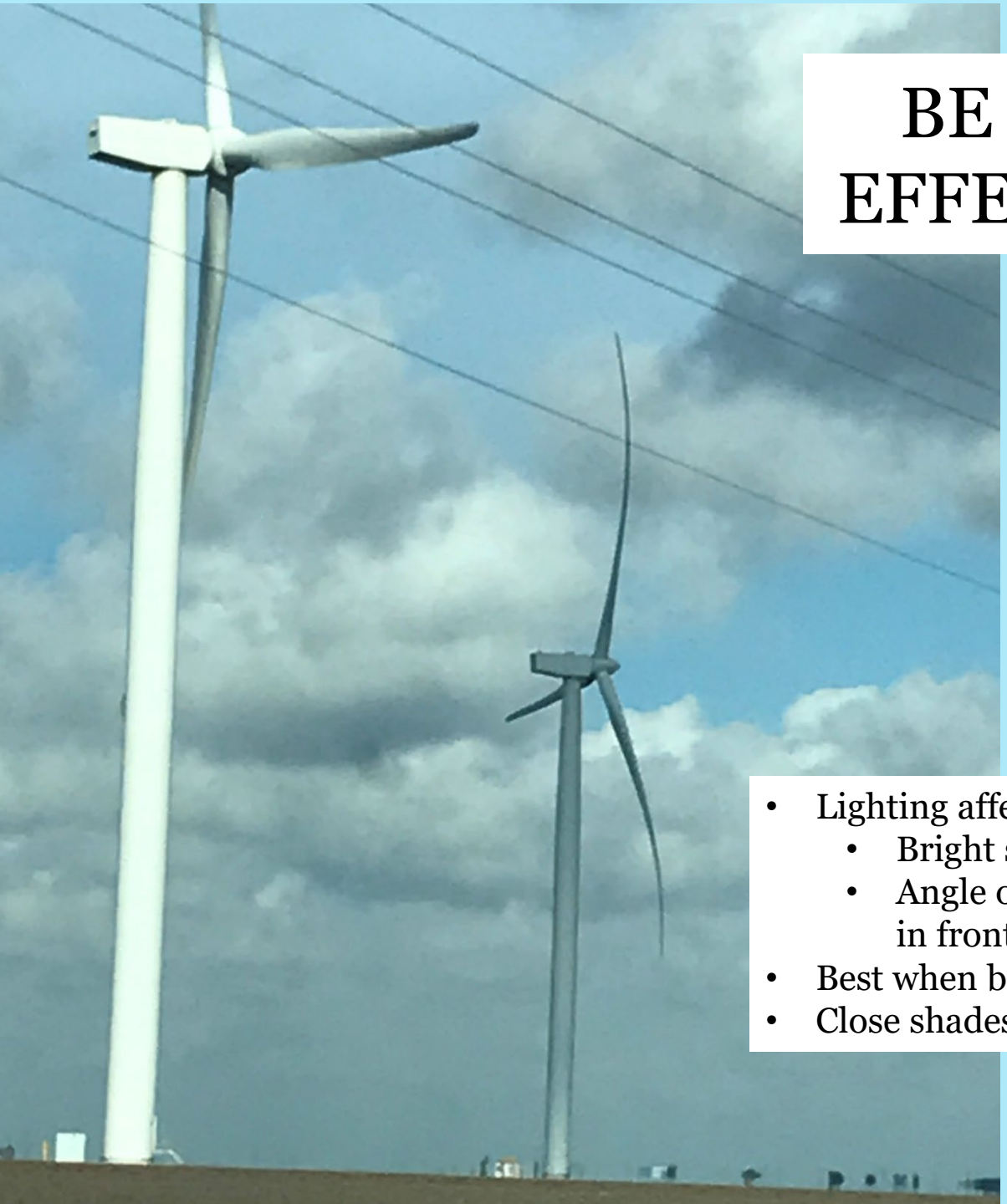
Black-legged Kittiwake | Short-billed | Little | California | Bonaparte's | Iceland | Glaucous-winged

Paintings by David A. Sibley

Pale-backed Gulls



Ring-billed | Herring | Black-headed | Ross's | Glaucous | Ivory



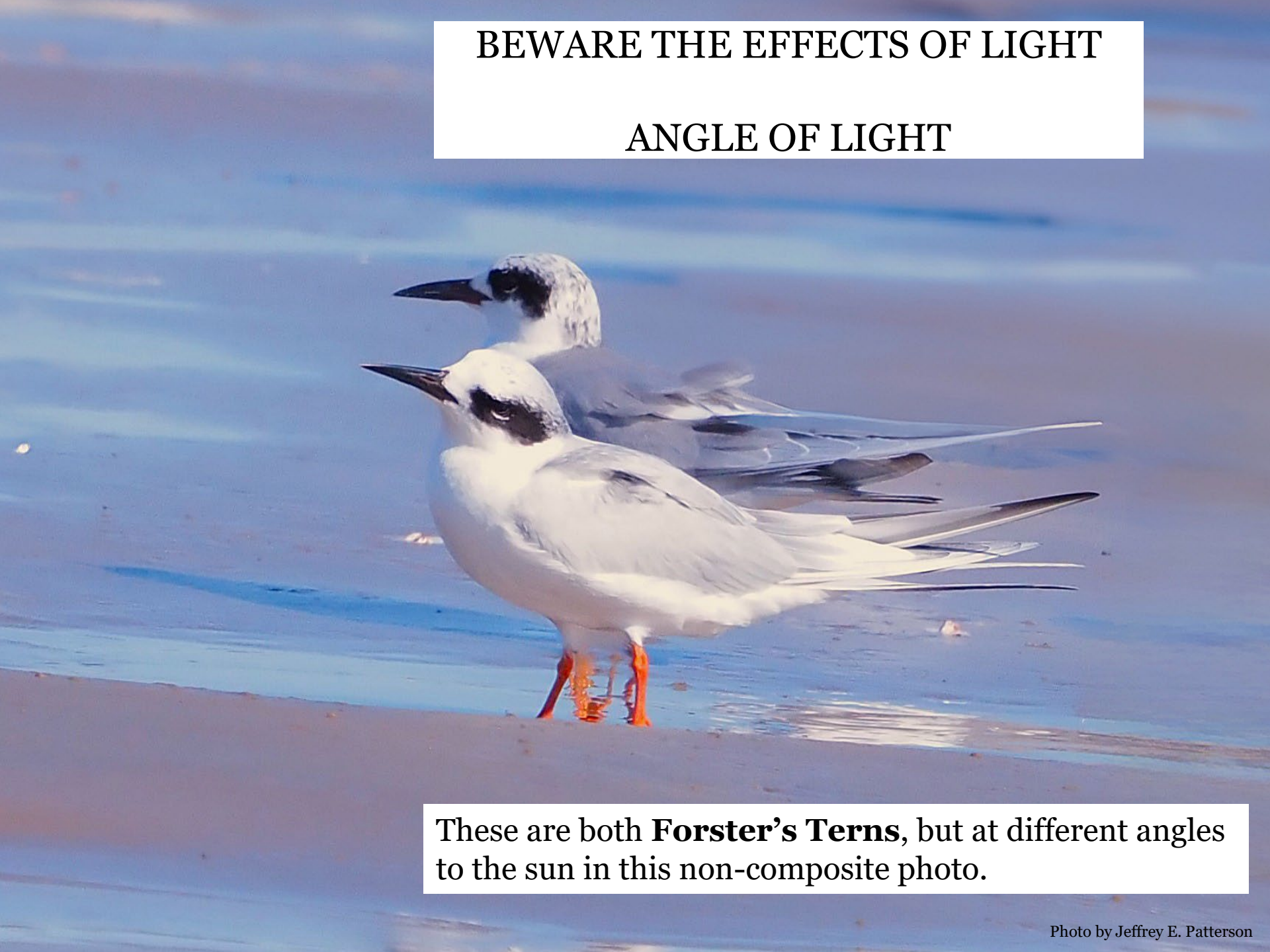
BE AWARE THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT

- Lighting affects.
  - Bright sun or shade (as in photo)
  - Angle of bird (darker from behind, lighter in front).
- Best when birds side by side.
- Close shades of gray can be indistinguishable.

Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

BEWARE THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT

ANGLE OF LIGHT



These are both **Forster's Terns**, but at different angles to the sun in this non-composite photo.

Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

THE TEXAS HEX

#	Species
1	Ring-billed
2	Laughing
3	Franklin's
4	Bonaparte's
5	Herring
6	Lesser Black-backed

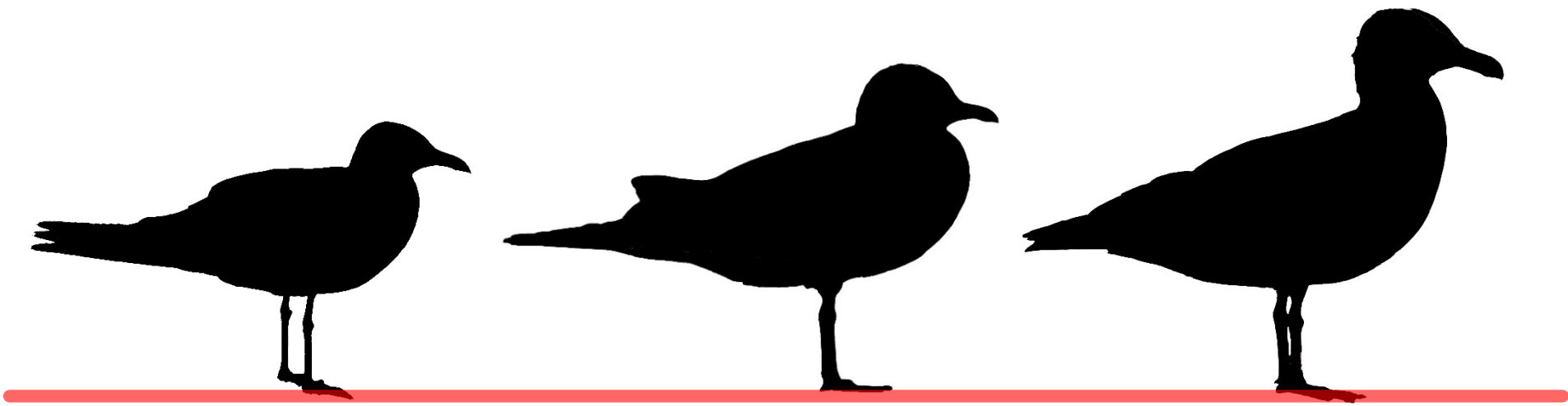
RING-BILLED

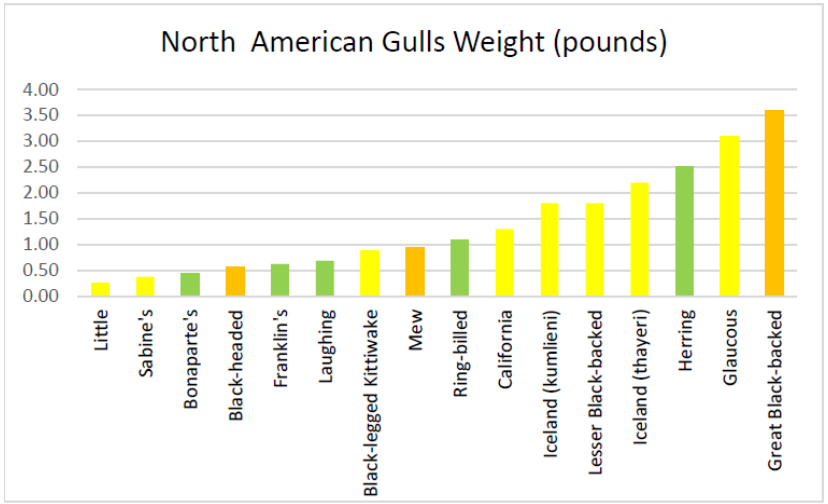
REFERENCE BIRD

- Get to know the structure and plumages of **Ring-billed**.
- In Texas, it is the most common gull inland during the winter gulling season and is also present on the coast in lower numbers.
- The **Ring-bill** represents the "standard gull" for many of the structural characteristics: size, build, leg position, bill length, etc. Therefore, think of the **Ring-billed** when comparing the structural characteristics of other gulls. Also use the **Ring-billed** (& **Laughing** on the coast) to directly compare characteristics of unknown species.
- Length of wings is one exception to this rule: the **Ring-billed's** wings project slightly longer than average beyond the tail.
- Since gulls generally arrive in Texas in early November, and **Ring-billed** Juveniles have already transitioned to Sub-adults by this time, only 2 plumages of **Ring-billed** are expected in Texas during the gulling season. Though the Sub-adults are quite varied.
- Don't mistake the wings for the tail. As in shorebirds, be careful to note that the wings sit atop the tail in repose, and that they are generally longer than the tail in gulls.

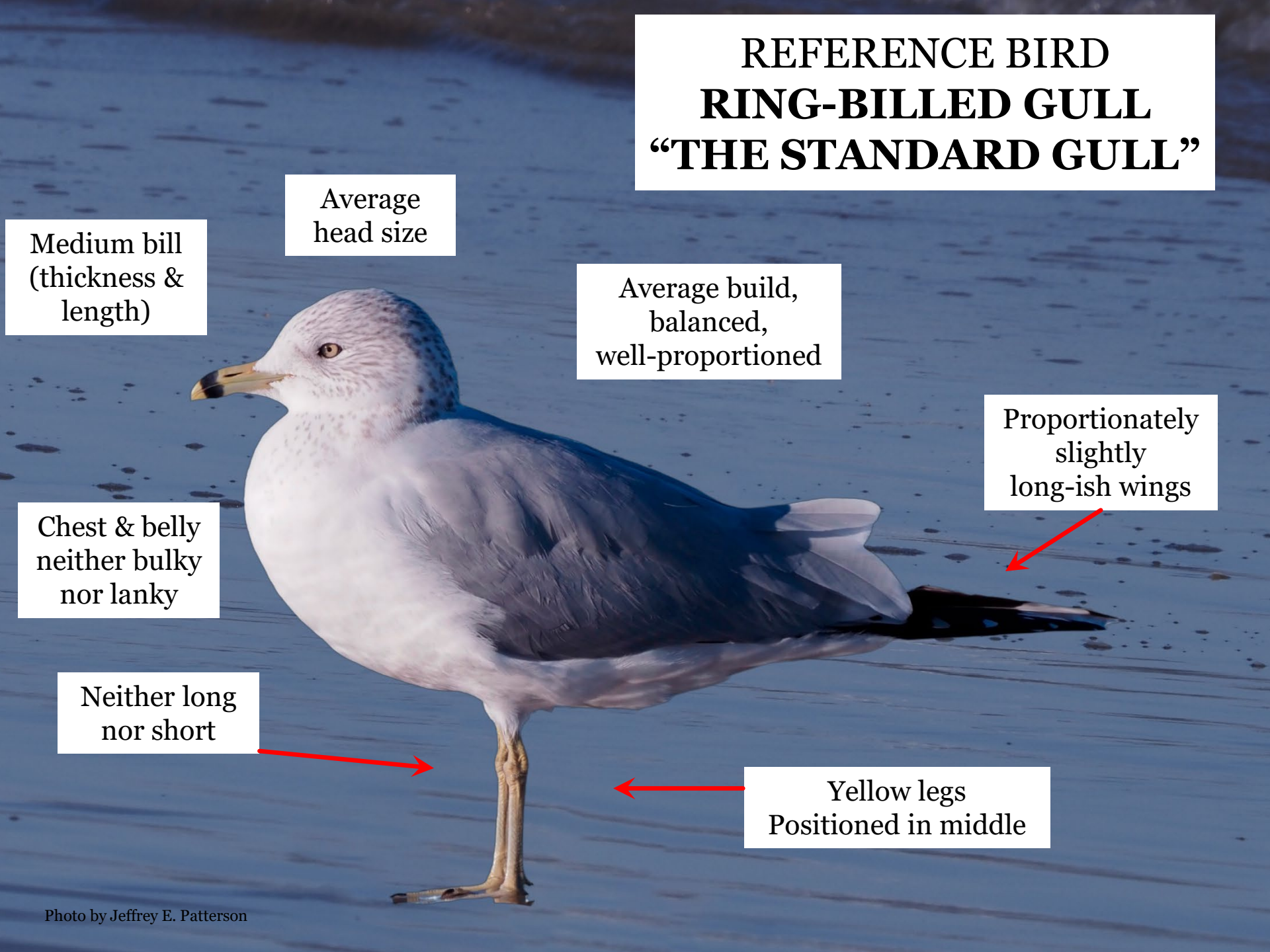
SIZE COMPARISON

Laughing **Ring-billed** **Herring**





Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson


REFERENCE BIRD
RING-BILLED GULL
“THE STANDARD GULL”
Average head size
Medium bill (thickness & length)
Average build, balanced, well-proportioned
Proportionately slightly long-ish wings
Chest & belly neither bulky nor lanky
Neither long nor short
Yellow legs Positioned in middle
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

HEAD & BILL
RING-BILLED – ADULT NONBREEDING

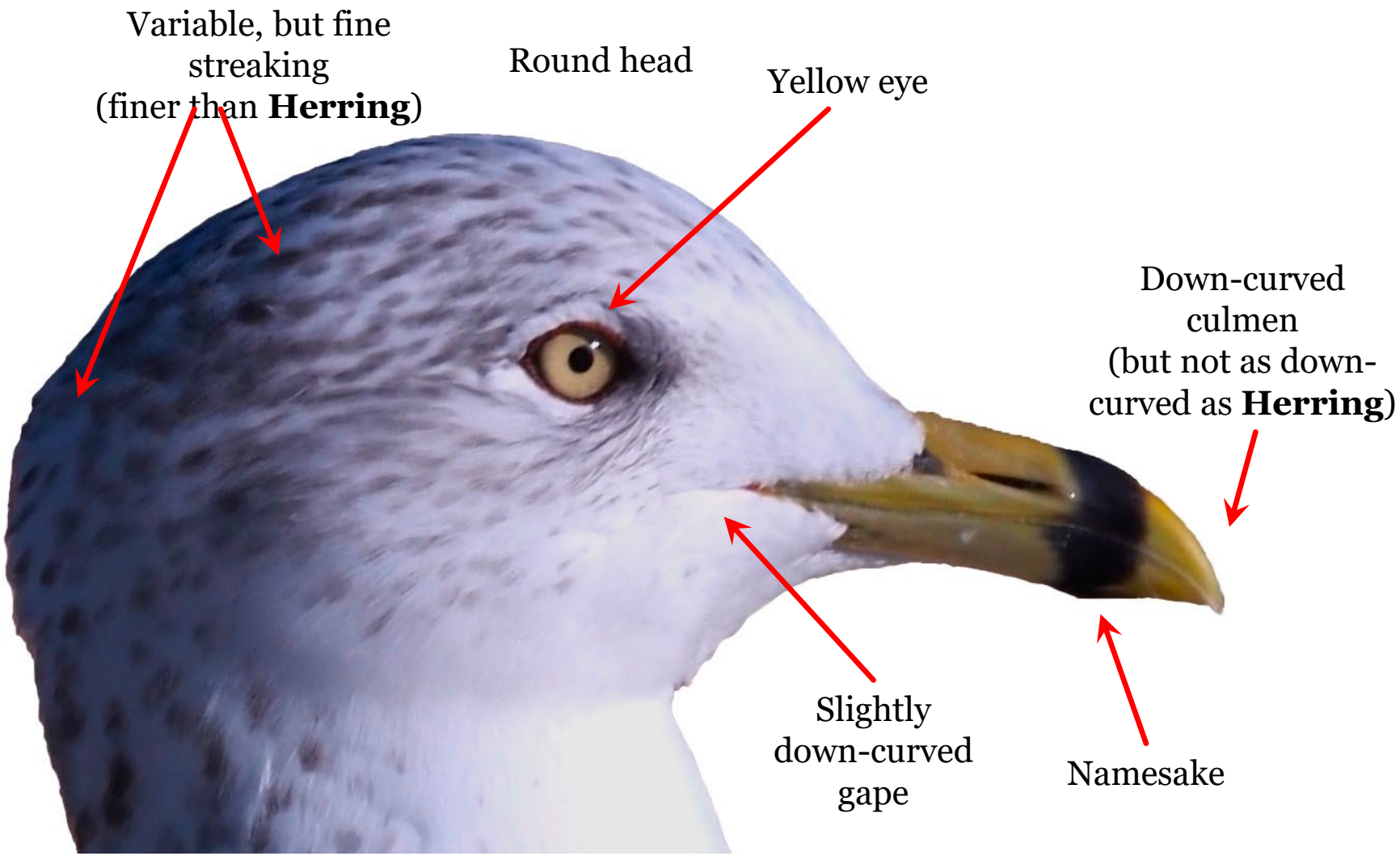


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

AGING RING-BILLED A 3-YEAR GULL

Juvenile



Sub-adult



Adult



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

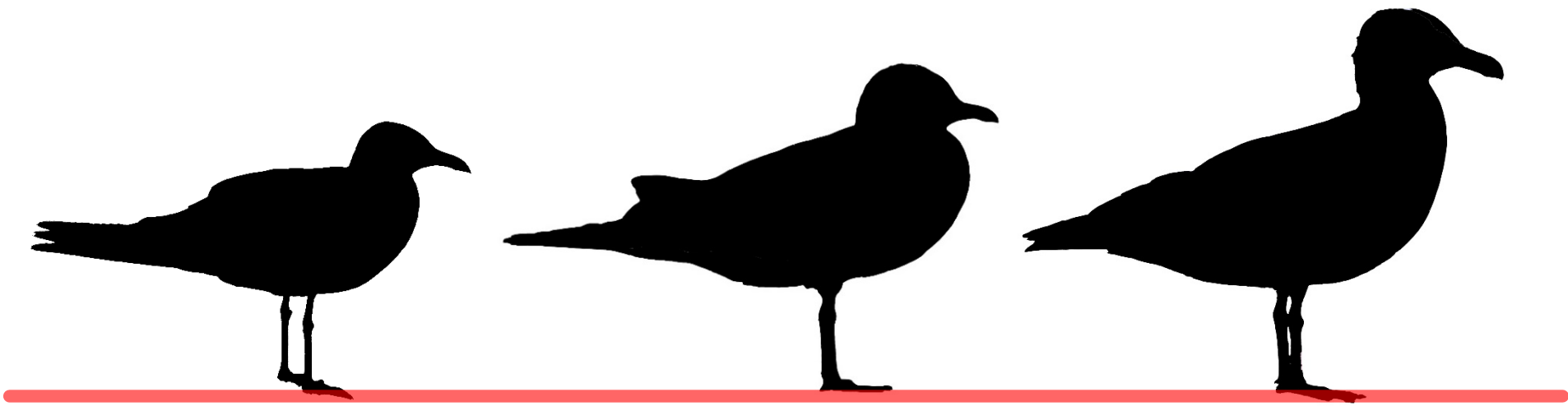
LAUGHING

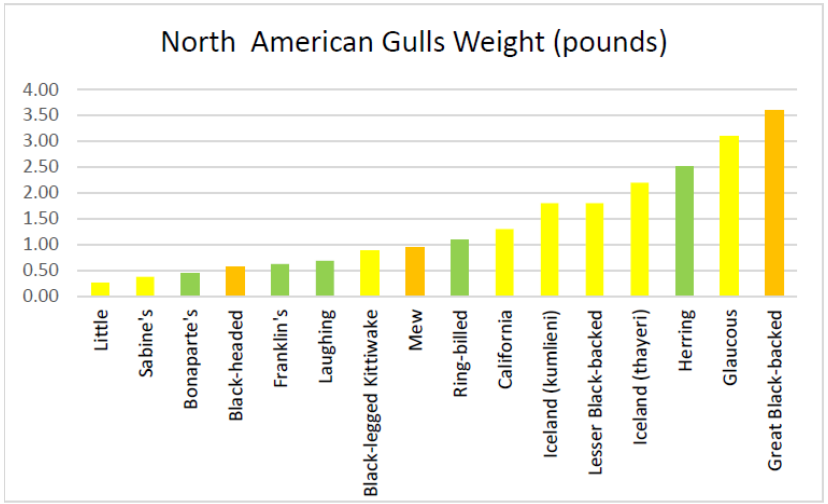
REFERENCE BIRD
GULF COAST

- **Laughing Gulls** are ubiquitous on the Gulf and East Coasts.
- They are characterized by their long, pointy wings with black outer undersides, long legs, small heads, and droopy black, or during the breeding season, red bills.
- The extensive black on the underside of the pointy wings gradually grades from black to gray to white towards the body.

SIZE COMPARISON

Laughing **Ring-billed** **Herring**





Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

STRUCTURE

LAUGHING ADULT BREEDING

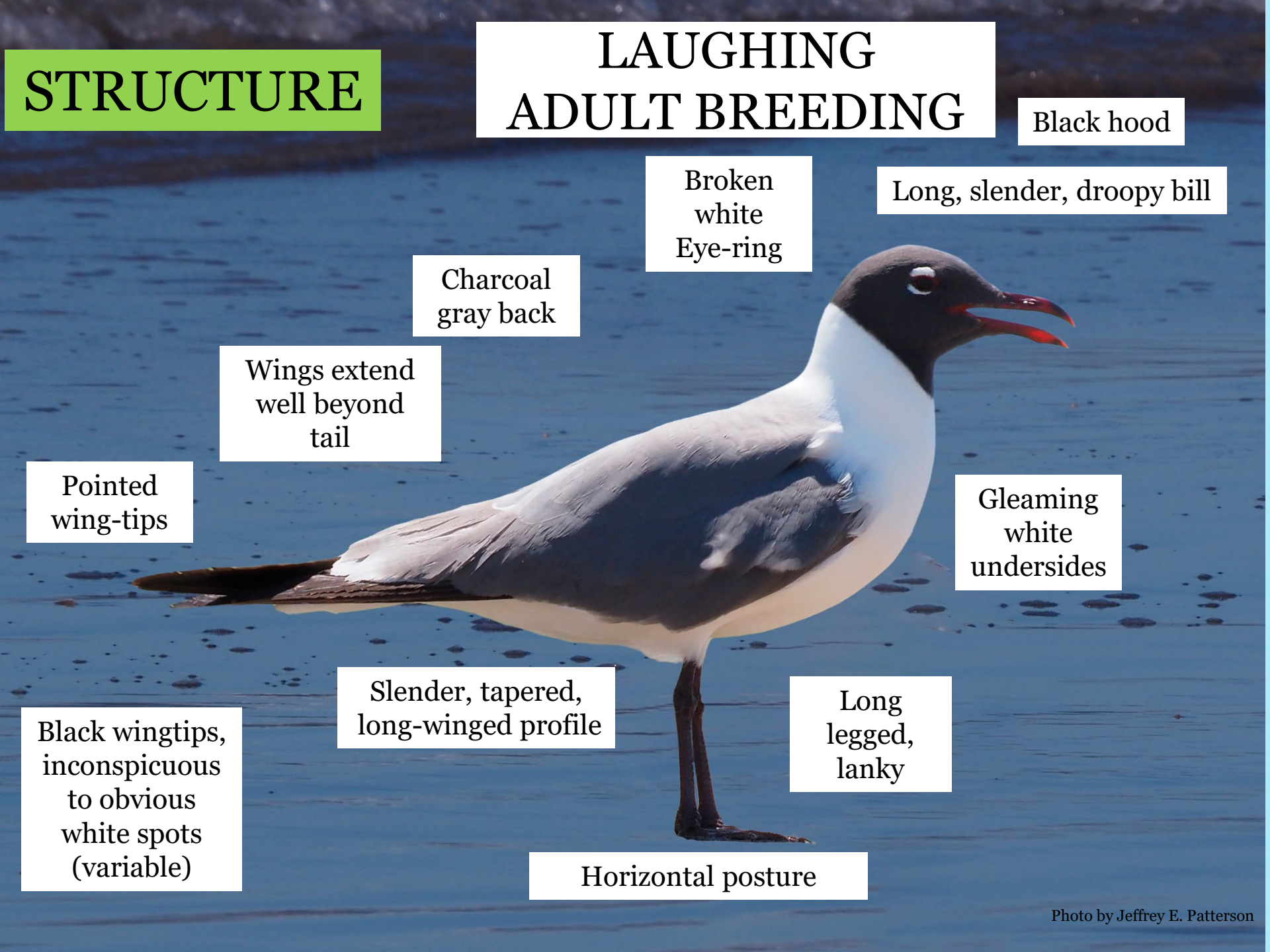
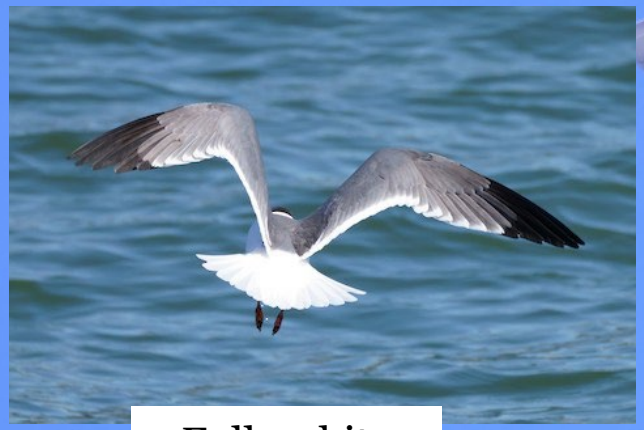


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

LAUGHING
ADULT NON-BREEDING

Pointy tips

Long, slender wing



Fully white tail & rump

Extensive black with gradual transition to gray, then white

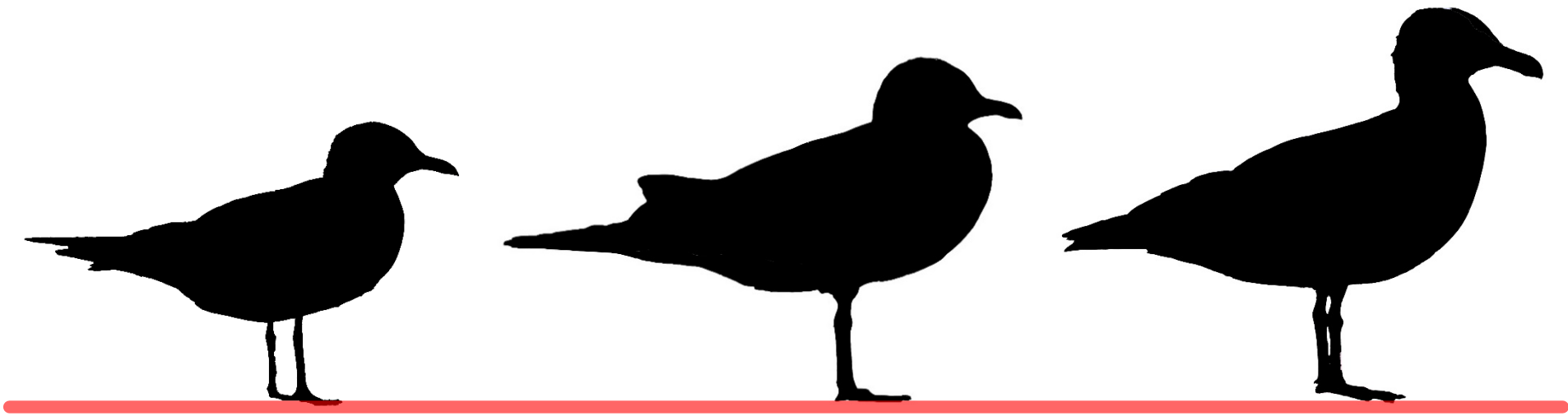
Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

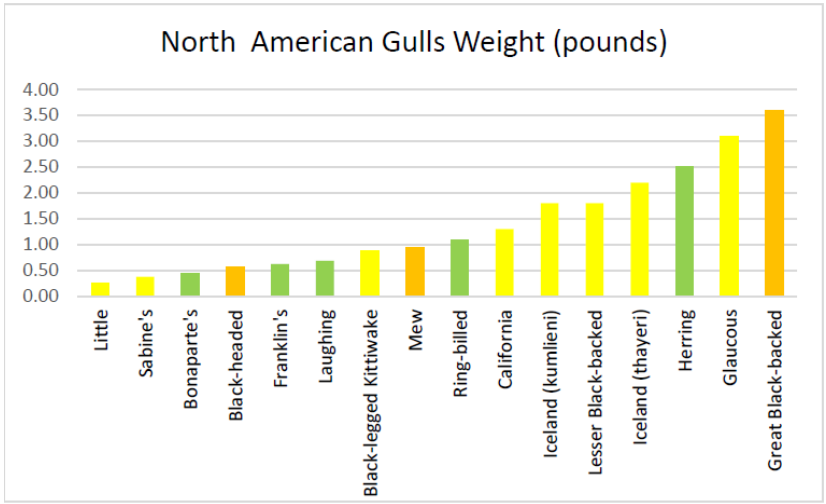
FRANKLIN'S

- Although a few are seen in winter and summer, for the most part **Franklin's** are migrants in Texas. Often seen overhead in loose follow-the-leader flocks in April & October.
- Note the call and the white-black-gray pattern of the wing-tips for overhead birds.
- Due to their hooded, or partially hooded (non-breeding) plumage, they are usually only confused with **Laughing.**
- In comparison to **Laughing, Franklin's** have shorter bills, wider eye-arcs, shorter legs, have a shorter, more-rotund build and more rounded wings.
- In the past the larger white spots on the folded primaries of the **Franklin's** has been touted as an ID point, but this can be ambiguous. Structure and the points mentioned above are better field marks.

SIZE COMPARISON

Franklin's **Ring-billed** **Herring**

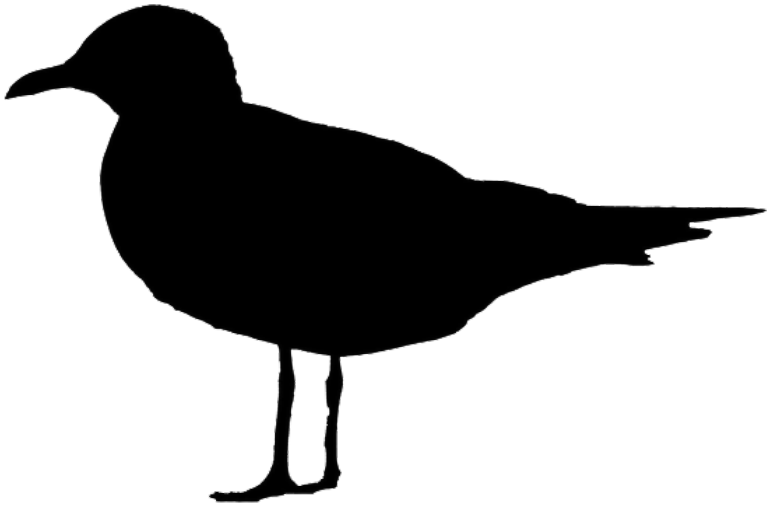




Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

FRANKLIN'S VS LAUGHING

Franklin's



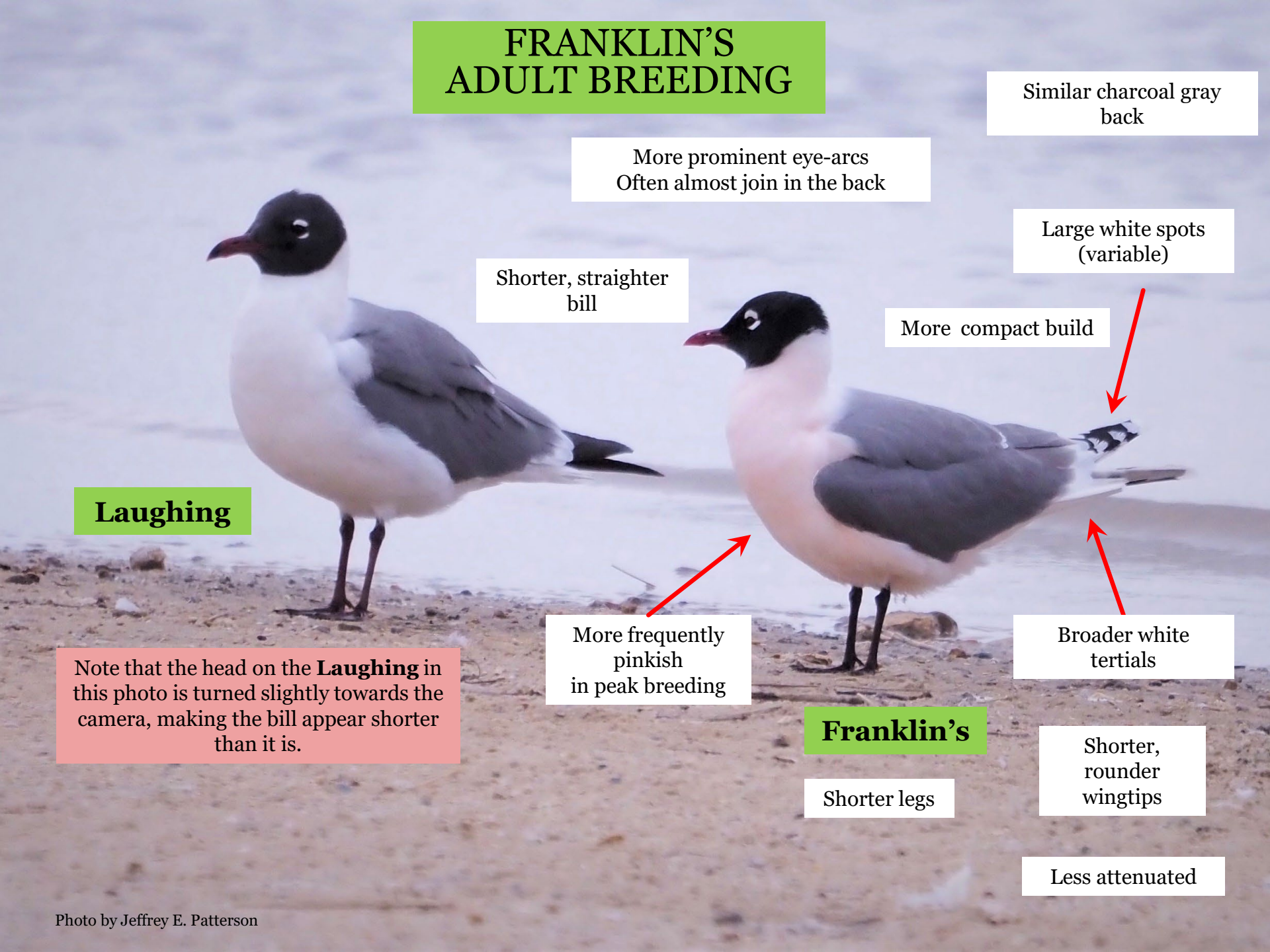
Laughing



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

FRANKLIN'S VS LAUGHING




FRANKLIN'S
ADULT BREEDING
Similar charcoal gray back
More prominent eye-arcs
Often almost join in the back
Large white spots (variable)
Shorter, straighter bill
More compact build
Laughing
More frequently pinkish in peak breeding
Broader white tertials
Note that the head on the **Laughing** in this photo is turned slightly towards the camera, making the bill appear shorter than it is.
Franklin's
Shorter, rounder wingtips
Shorter legs
Less attenuated
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson



FRANKLIN'S VS LAUGHING

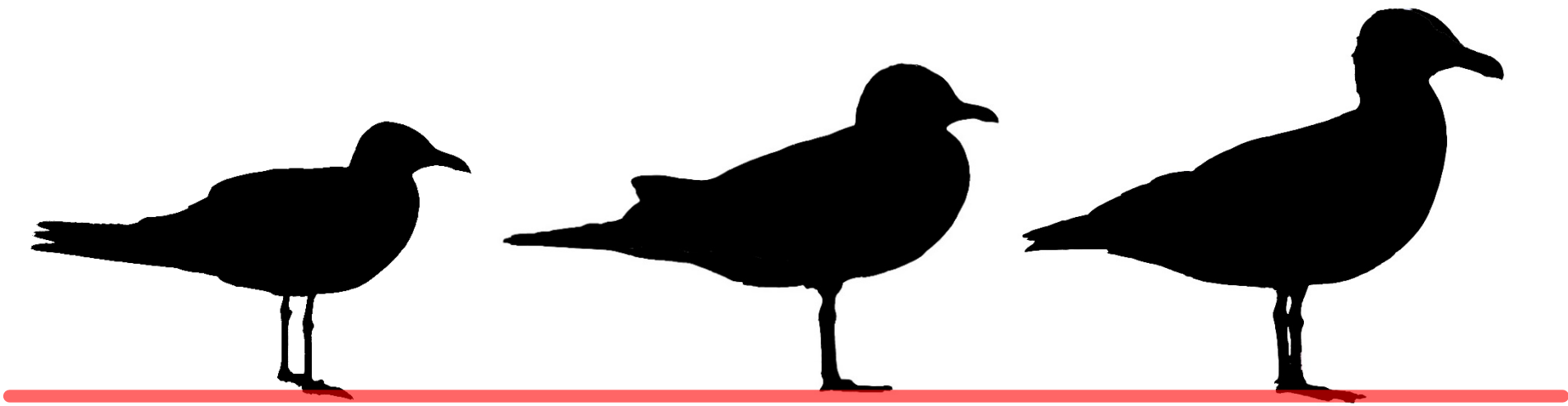
Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

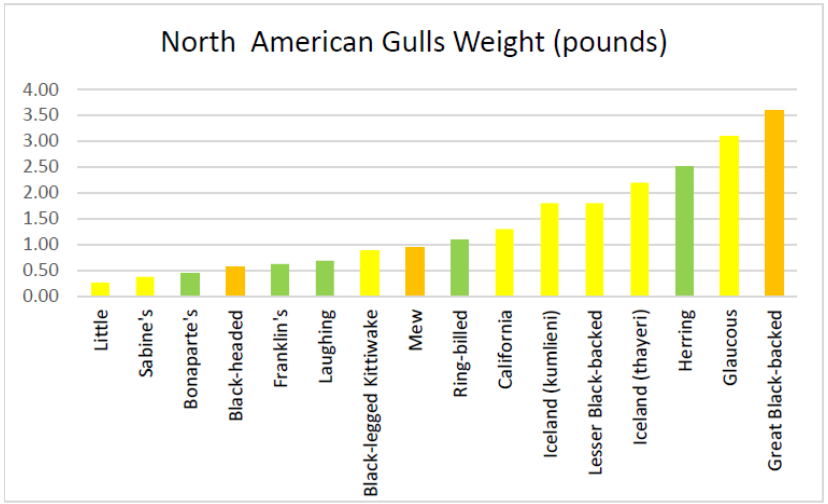
HERRING

- **Herring** are by far the most common large white-headed gull.
- They vary in size and build, but should be considered the default pink-legged, large gull in Texas. They are distinctly larger than all the other common gulls.
- Their structure is variable, but generally more bulky in the belly than in the chest. They usually have relatively moderate wing projection beyond the tail, but some females can appear fairly long-winged.
- The bill of the **Herring** should be studied carefully. It is medium-long and sports a fairly conspicuous gonydeal angle.
- The eye is usually light yellow in adults.

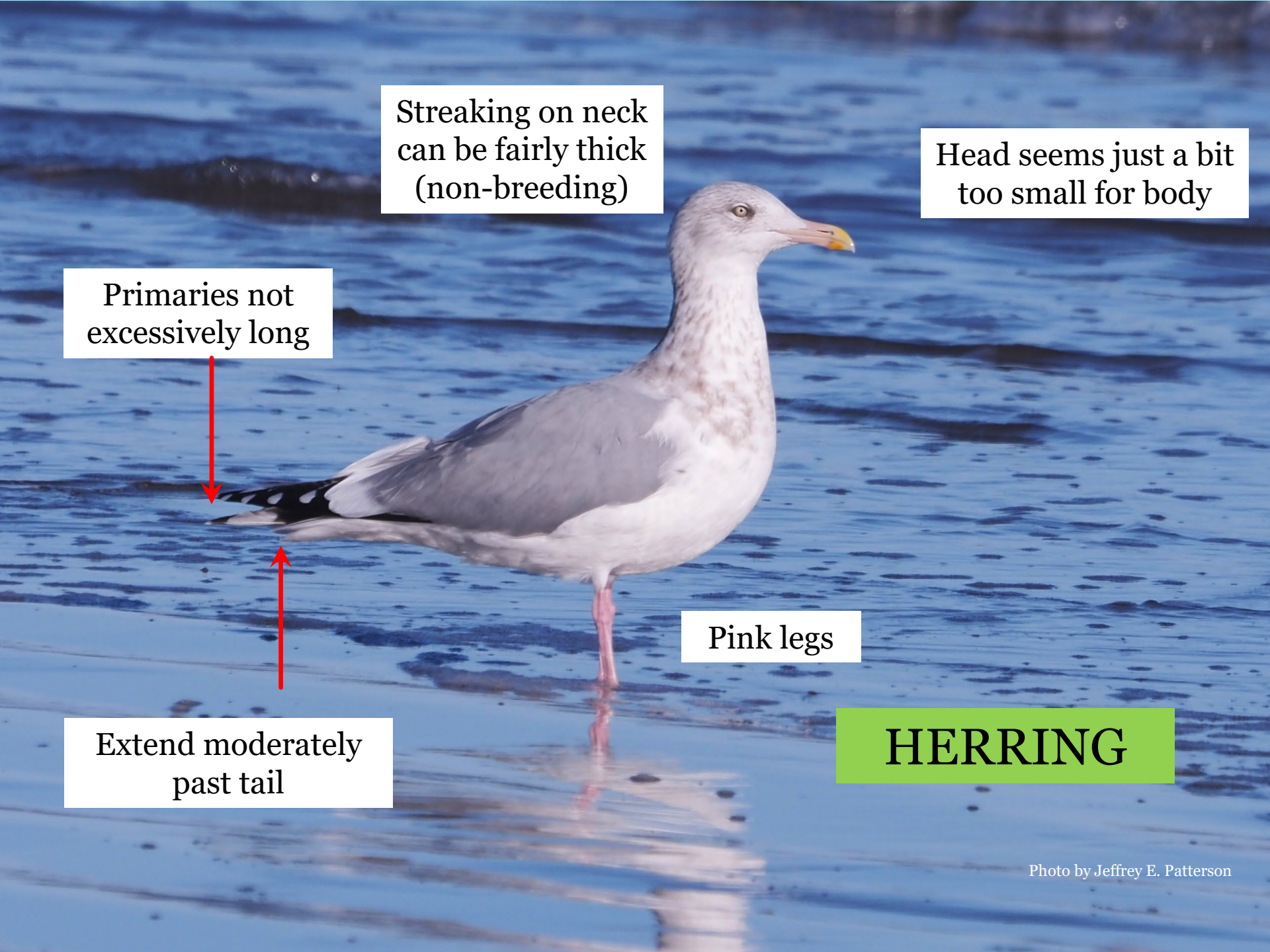
SIZE COMPARISON

Laughing **Ring-billed** **Herring**



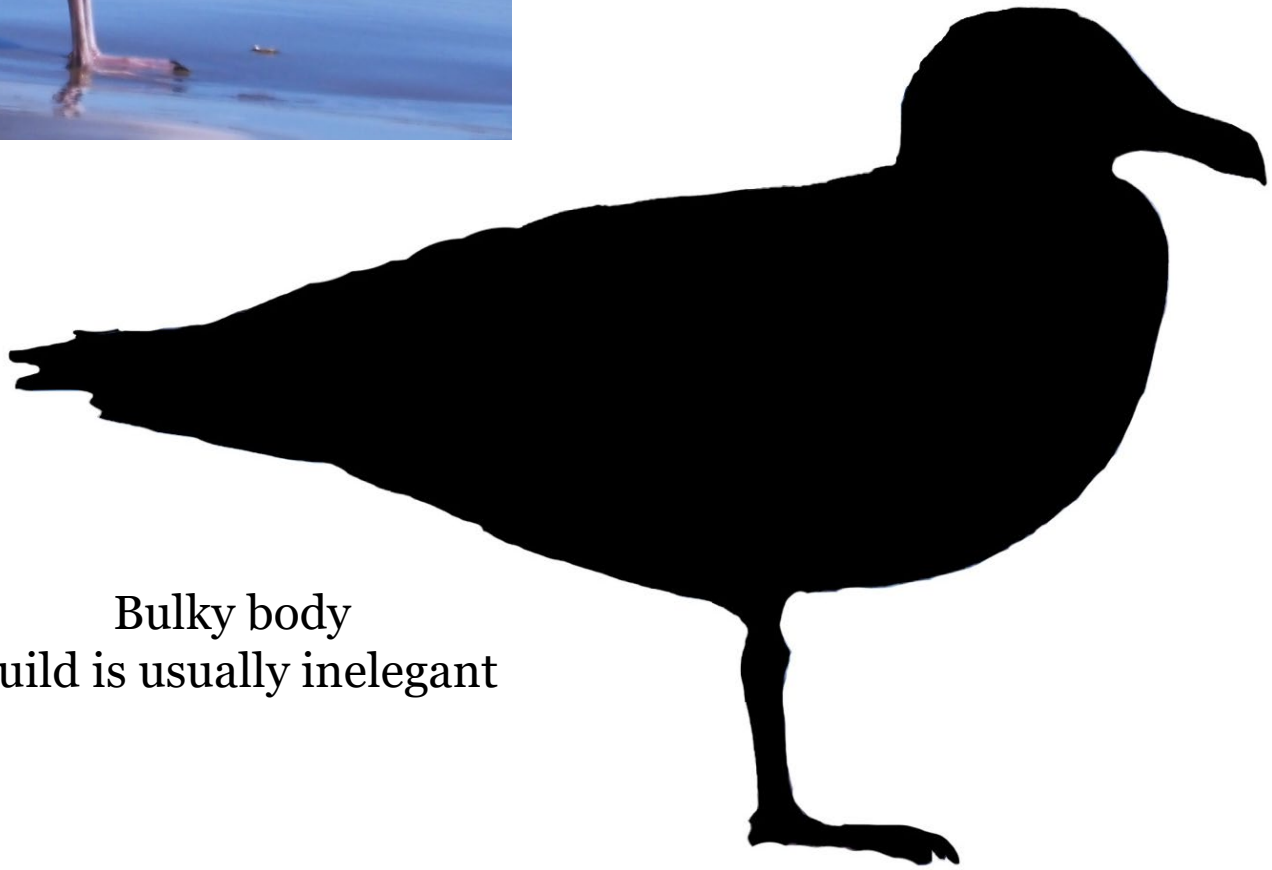


Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson


Streaking on neck can be fairly thick (non-breeding)
Head seems just a bit too small for body
Primaries not excessively long
Pink legs
Extend moderately past tail
HERRING
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson



HERRING STRUCTURE



Bulky body
Build is usually inelegant

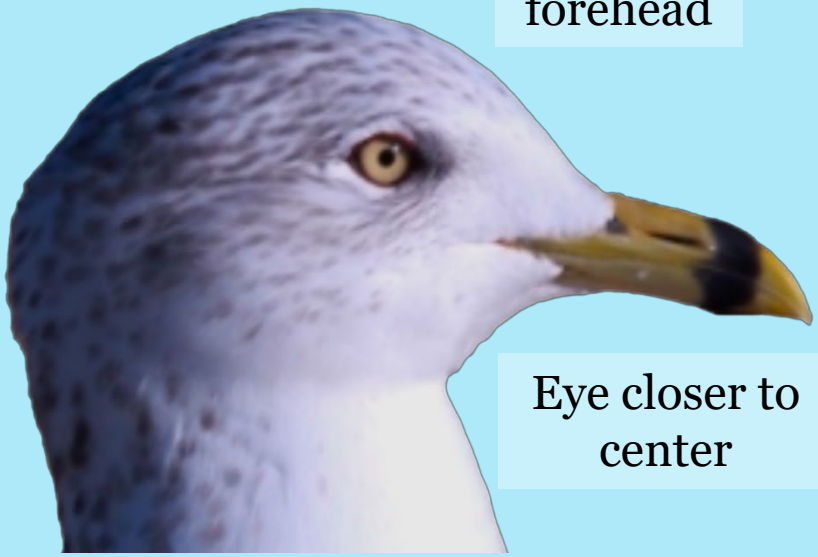
Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

STRUCTURE: BILL & HEAD

Ring-billed

Rounder head

Steeper forehead



Eye closer to center

Herring

Flatter head

More bird behind eye

Eye more forward



Pulled taffy look of snout

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

HERRING VS RING-BILLED VS LAUGHING



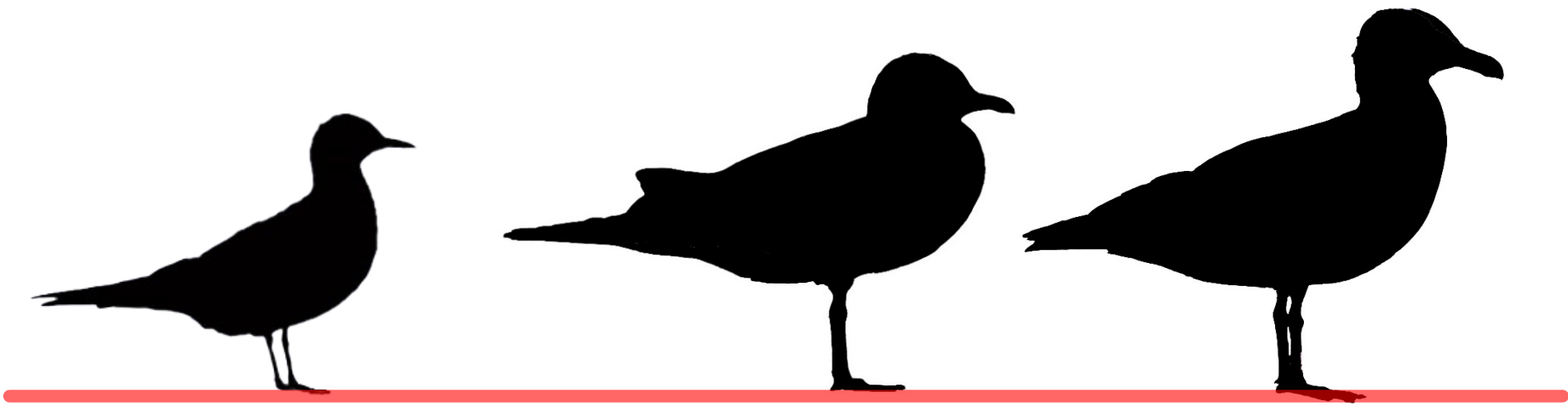
Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

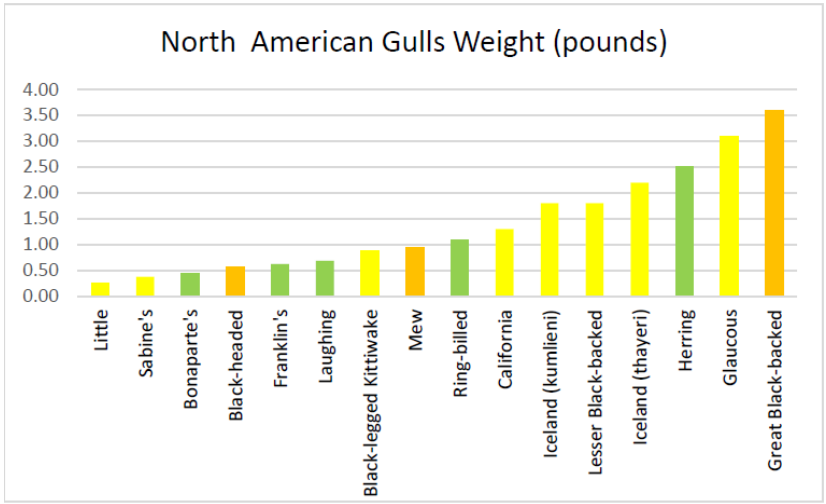
BONAPARTE'S

- The smallest of the Texas Hex, the **Bonaparte's** is usually seen snatching food items from the surface of lakes and the Gulf shores in the Texas winter.
- With practice it can be identified from a distance by its buoyant flight style, delicate structure and habit of picking food items from the water's surface.
- The white leading edge and black trailing edge of the wings are often visible from a distance.
- At closer range the **Bonaparte's** size, thin black bill and black spot behind the eye are the best field marks.
- It has pink legs.
- Juvenile **Bonaparte's** are one of the "M-birds" showing a black bar across the wing coverts and a black leading and trailing edges of the wing.

SIZE COMPARISON

Bonaparte's **Ring-billed** **Herring**





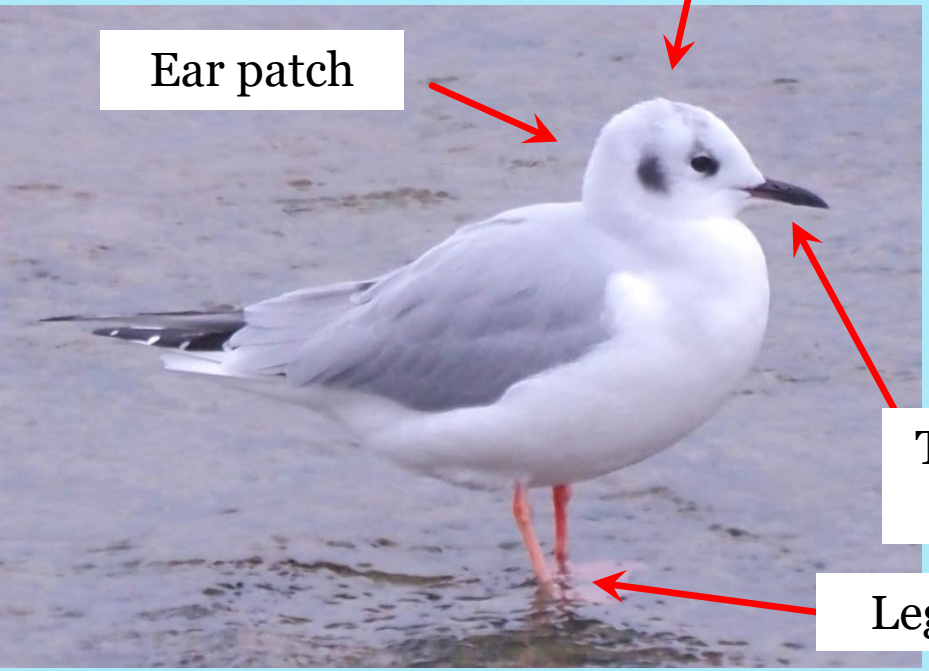
Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

WHY IS THIS NOT A RING-BILLED?

Smaller

Taller head

Ear patch



Thin, black bill

Leg color

Bonaparte's



Ring-billed

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

WHY IS THIS NOT A RING-BILLED?

Buoyant, tern-like flight

White leading edge

Black trailing edge



Bonaparte's



Ring-billed

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

BONAPARTE'S



Sub-adult

Adult

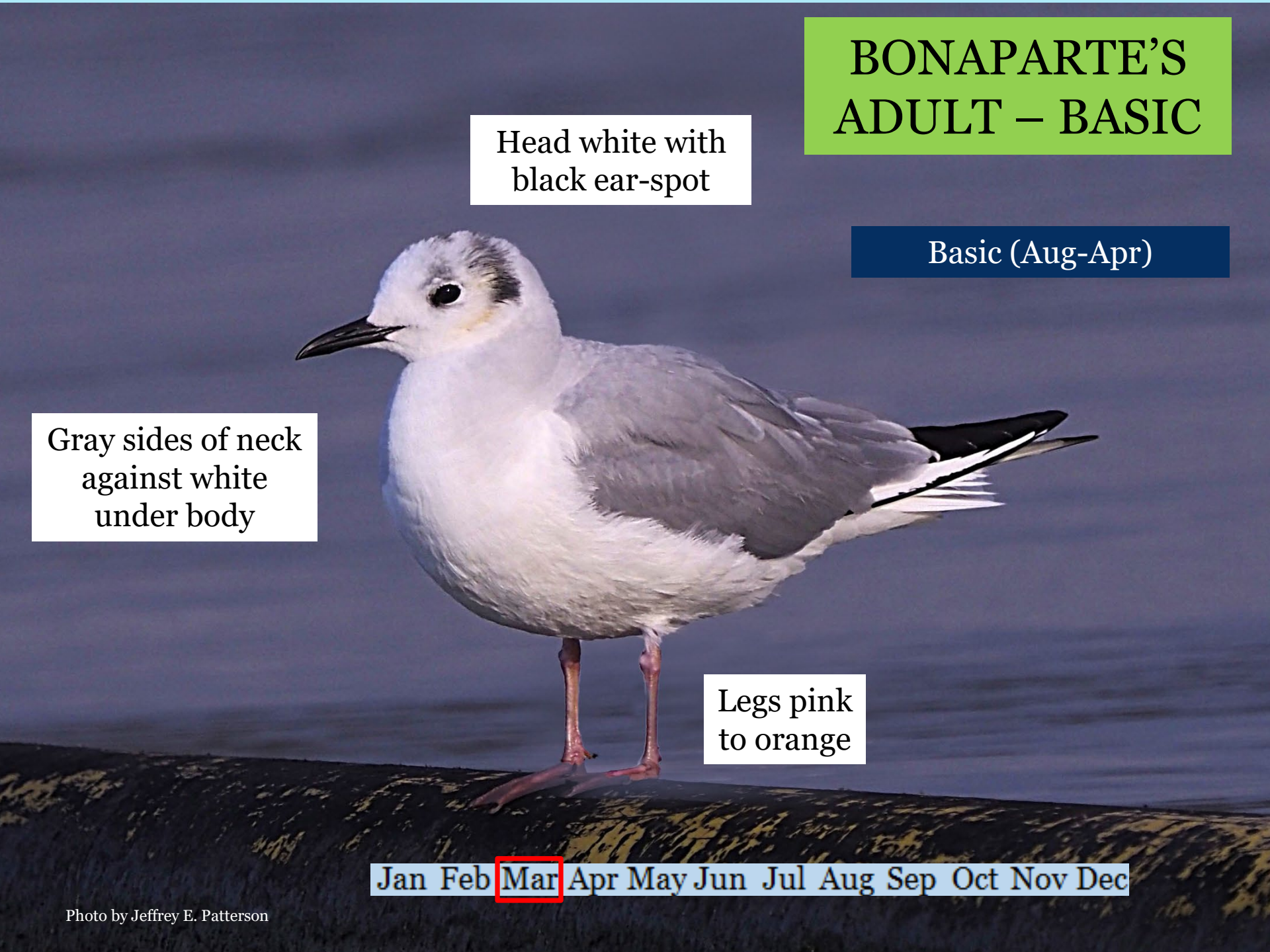


Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

BONAPARTE'S ADULT – BASIC

Head white with black ear-spot

Basic (Aug-Apr)



Gray sides of neck against white under body

Legs pink to orange

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson


Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Wings & back contrast to white leading edge
Black trailing edge
White outer-primaries
Head white with black ear-spot
Basic (Aug-Apr)
BONAPARTE'S ADULT – BASIC
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

BONAPARTE'S SUB-ADULT

Tail white with narrow black subterminal band.



Dark trailing edge of wing

Dark leading edge of primaries

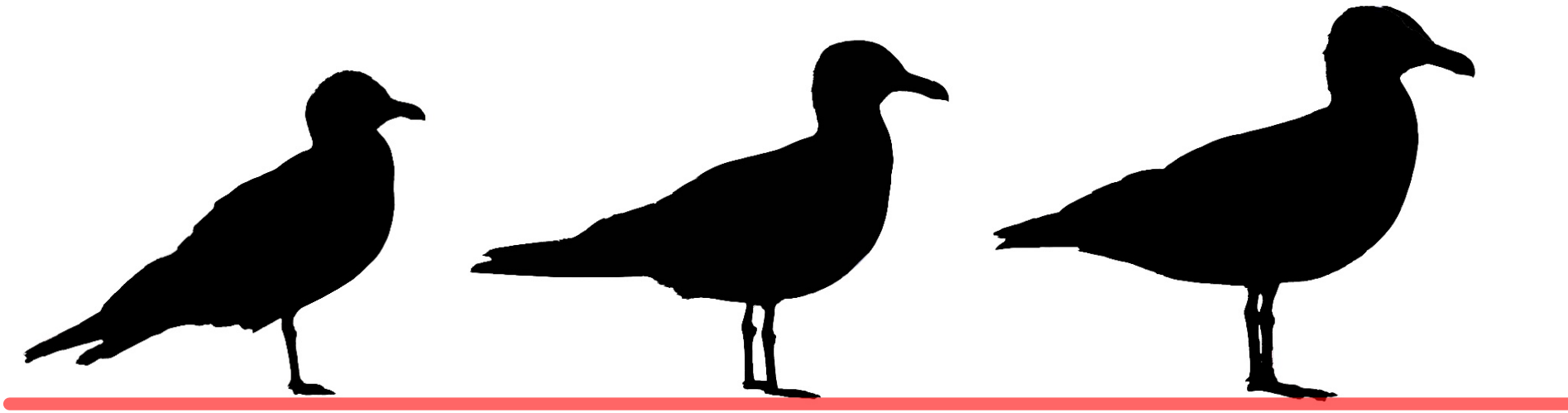
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

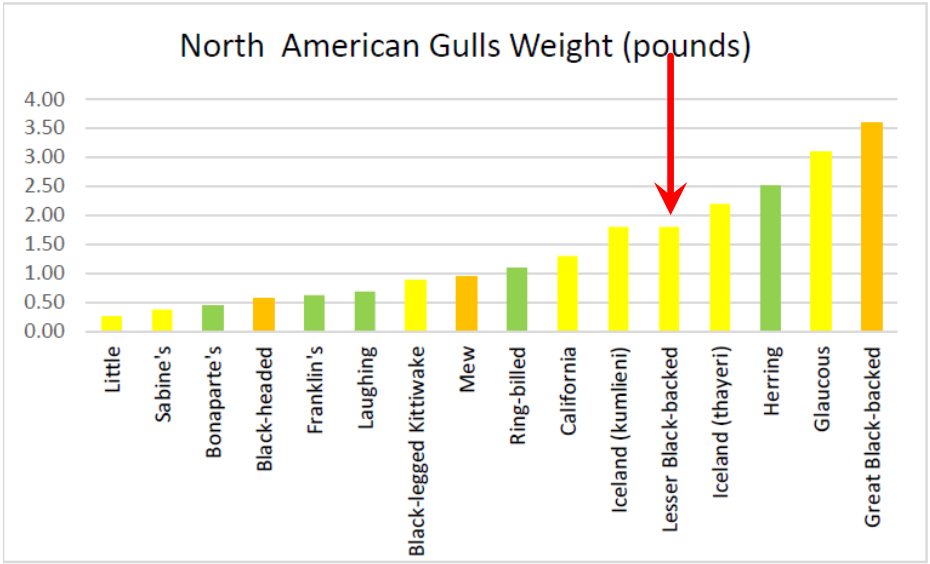
LESSER BLACK-BACKED (LBBG)

- The **Lesser Black-backed** has established a strong winter presence in North America and Texas over the last 25 years or so. It hatches primarily in Europe, Iceland and Greenland, but wanders to Texas in increasing numbers.
- Its characteristics should be compared to the **Herring** and **Ring-billed** for ID.
- The **LBBG** has long, narrow wings which usually extend well beyond the tail when standing.
- The structure is leaner and more-chesty than the **Herring**, but not as lean as the **Ring-billed**.
- The bill is bullet shaped – slimmer and less hooked than the **Herring**.
- The **LBBG** often sports a “punched-in-the-eye” look due to dark feathers around the eye in winter.
- The leg color is yellow and this along with the dark back-color easily separates adults from **Herring**.
- Juvenile **LBBGs** are IDed by their structure and darker, if not black, back.

SIZE COMPARISON



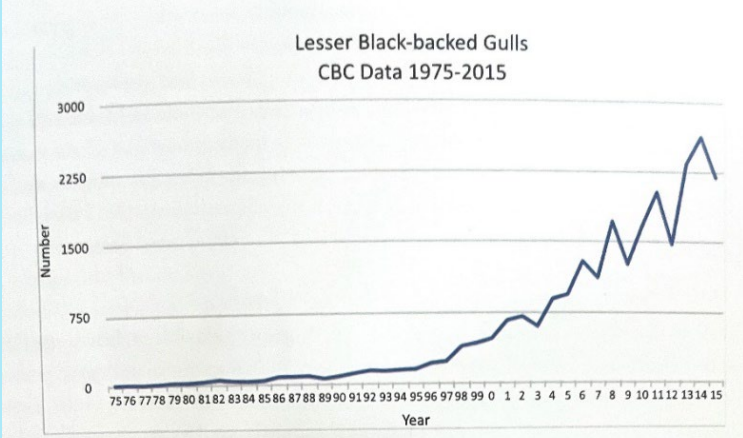
Ring-billed **LBBG** **Herring**



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

LESSER BLACK-BACKED (LBBG)

- Not part of North American avifauna until 1934
- Increased rapidly in 80s and 90s
- Originally a breeder in Europe
- Expanded to Iceland, Greenland, & then NA
- Same for Texas
  - A few in the 60s & 70s
  - More in the 80s & 90s
  - Removed from Review List in 1997
- If you go gulling enough – you will find one



National Audubon Society. The Christmas Bird Count Historical Results [Online]. Available http://www.christmasbirdcount.org [April 26, 2017]

Source: birds.audubon.org/historical-results

LBBG

Long primary projection
Dark back
Punched in the eye look
Chesty build
Slimmer, bullet-like bill

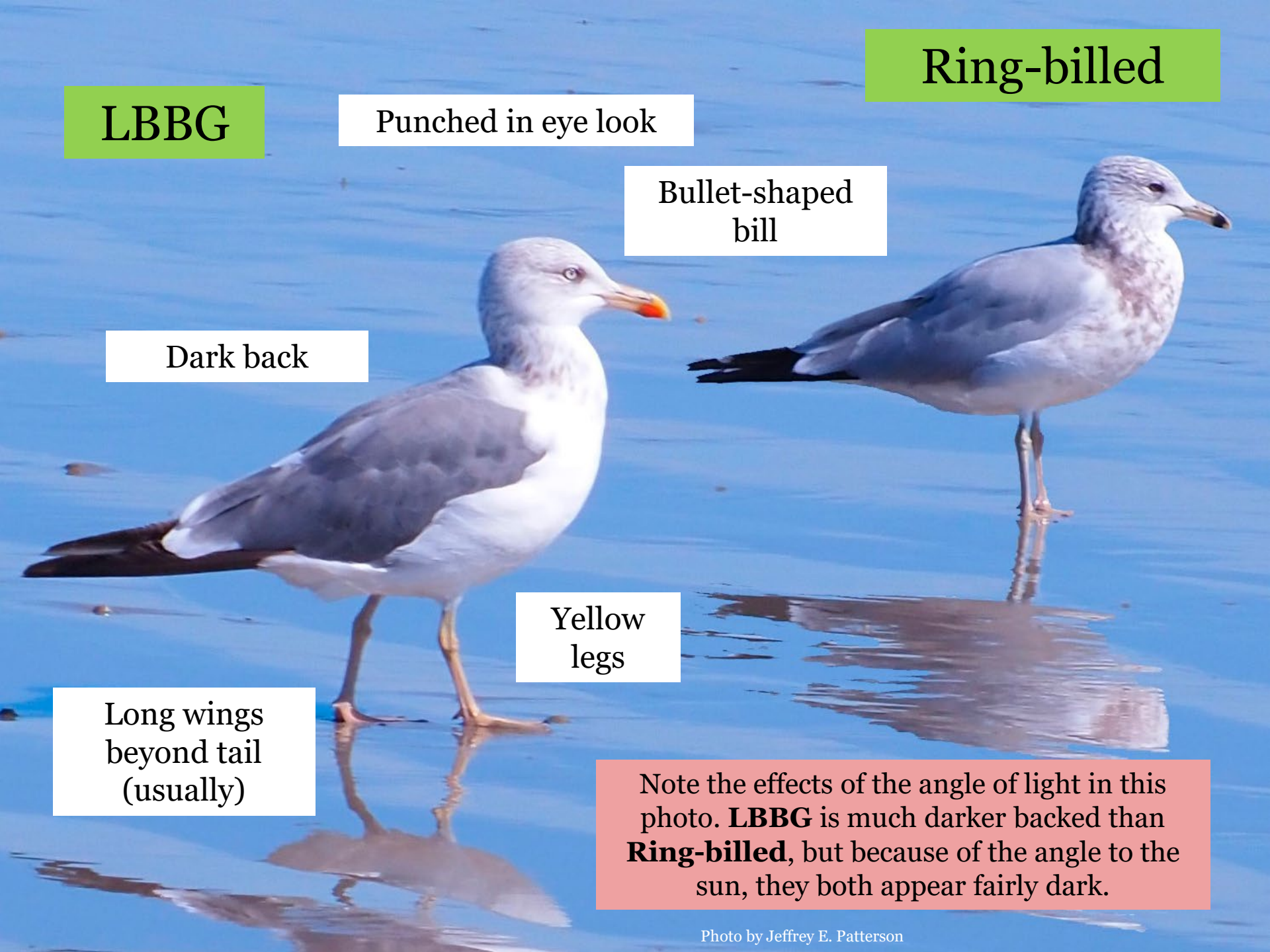


Slimmer than **Herring**,



Slightly bulkier than
Ring-billed

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson


LBBG
Punched in eye look
Ring-billed
Bullet-shaped bill
Dark back
Yellow legs
Long wings beyond tail (usually)
Note the effects of the angle of light in this photo. **LBBG** is much darker backed than **Ring-billed**, but because of the angle to the sun, they both appear fairly dark.
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson


LBBG
Yellow eye, slim head and "punched in eye" often results in a fierce look
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

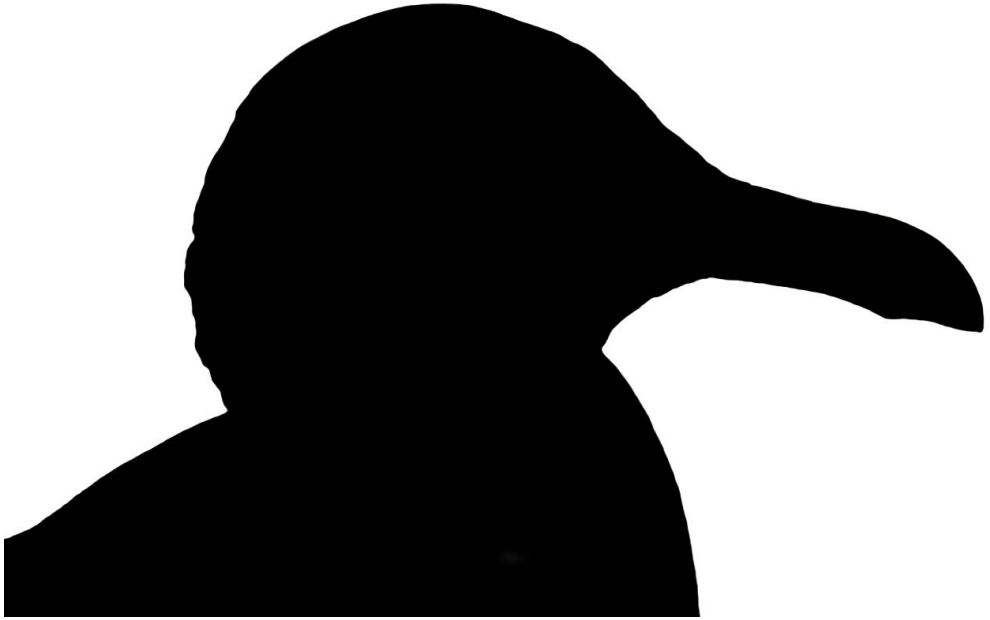


Individual variation and different lighting conditions result in different “looks” of these 3 LBBGs.

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson



LBBG



Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson



LBBG



Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Overall color: the LBBG is darker on the rear-half of the body (behind the legs) in these 2 first winter gulls. Note that the scapulars have been replaced in both species but that those of the Herring are much lighter.



LBBG **Herring**

Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Lower chest, belly & undertail: The markings on the underside of the LBBG are more distinct.

Head, neck & breast: become paler, then white, resulting in a 2-tone look.



LBBG



Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Bill: the bill of the LBBG remains black for much of the 1st year, while the Herring's bill starts to get pink at the base fairly early in its 1st winter.

Face: the LBBG often develops a "punched-in-the-eye look, formed by dark feathers around the eye.



LBBG



Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Rump & tail: The **LBBG** shows more contrast between the white rump and the dark tail.
The upper wing of the **LBBG** is uniformly dark.



LBBG



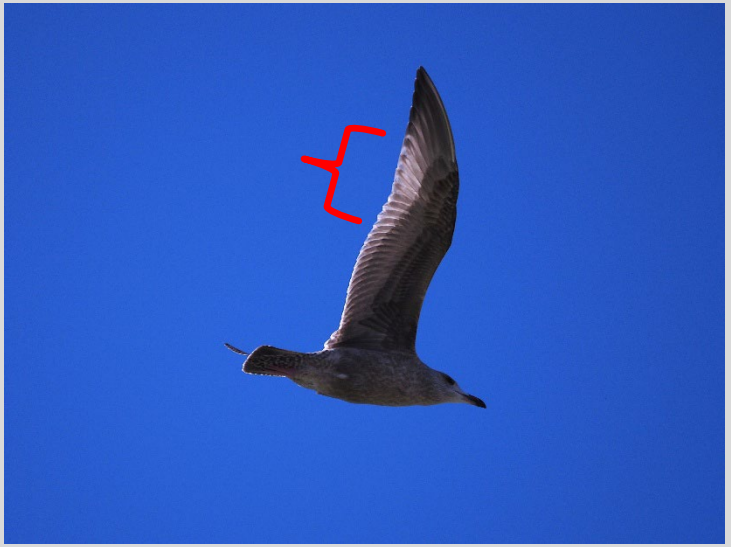
Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

Open wing: the **LBBG** usually lacks the pale inner primary window that the **Herring** shows.
The long slender wings of the **LBBG** are narrower, especially at the base.



LBBG



Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

6 (+1) WANDERING TEXANS

7	Black-legged Kittiwake
8	California
9	Glaucous
10 (+1)	Iceland (thayeri)
	Iceland (kumlieni)
11	Little
12	Sabine's

Texas Hex &
6+1 Wandering Texans
By adult back color



Lesser Black-backed

Dark-backed Gulls

Medium-Dark-backed Gulls



Laughing



Franklin's



Sabine's

Paintings by David A. Sibley

Medium-backed Gulls



Black-legged Kittiwake



Little



California



Bonaparte's



Iceland

Pale-backed Gulls



Ring-billed



Herring

Reference bird

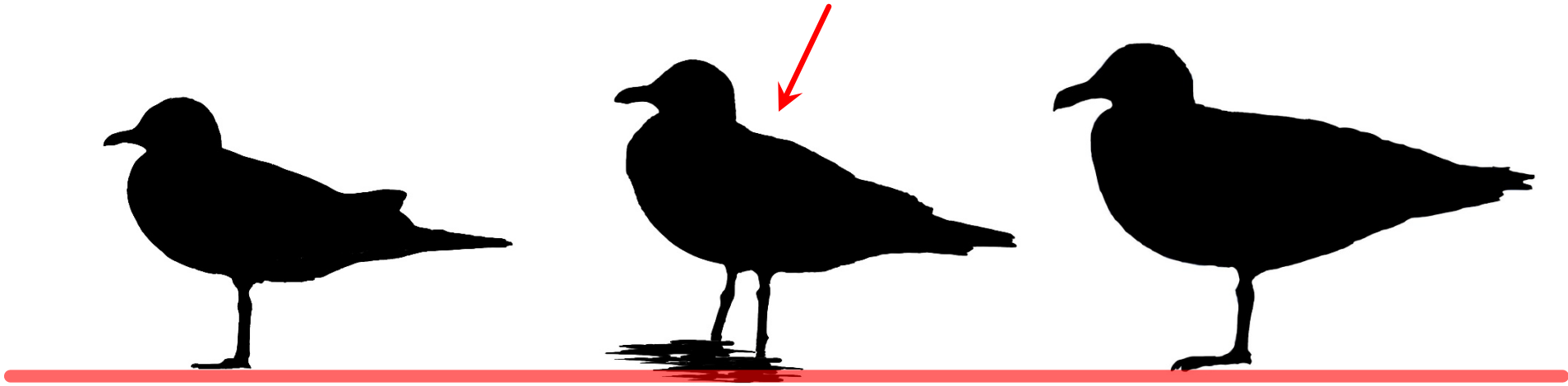


Glaucous

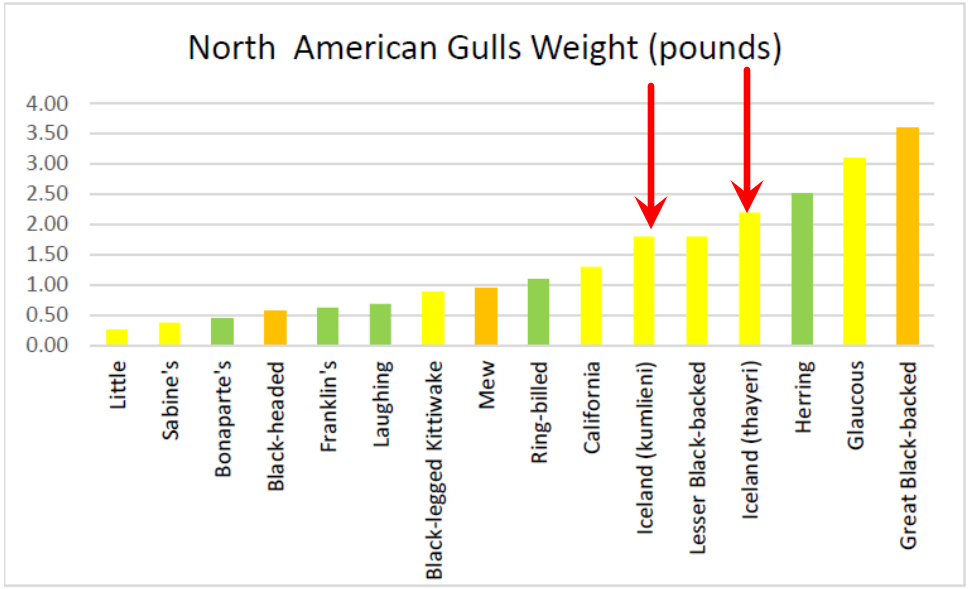
ICELAND

- Currently the **Iceland Gull** consists of 3 subspecies: *thayeri*, *kumlieni* and *glaucoides*. The first 2 are semi-regular in Texas, with sightings of *thayeri* much more numerous than *kumlieni*.
- Comparative size, eye color, leg color and primary tip color are the best field marks for adult **Iceland**.
- The **Iceland's** eyes are usually dark or at least dusky.
- The legs are generally a brighter pink than **Herring**.

SIZE COMPARISON

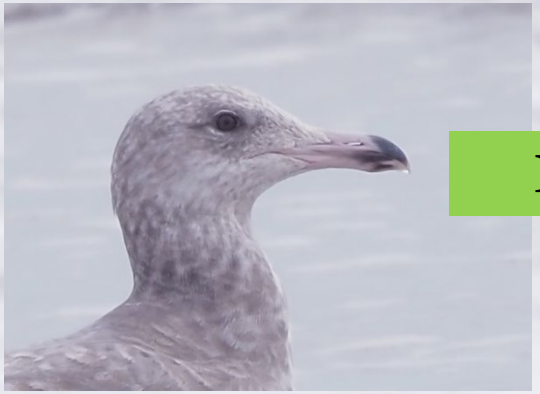


Ring-billed **Iceland** **Herring**



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

ICELAND VS HERRING



Herring

Iceland



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson


ICELAND
(THAYERI)
Juvenile scapulars
(same age as coverts)
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

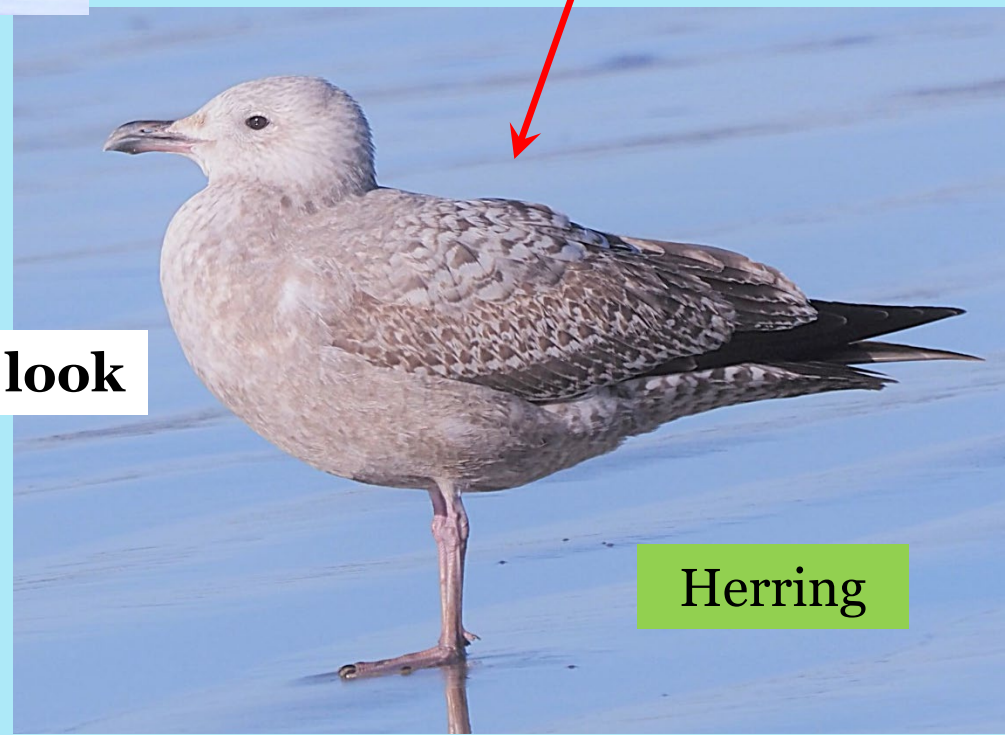


Iceland
(thayeri)

The scapulars on the **Iceland** will not be replaced till the late winter or spring (October).

The scapulars on this 1st winter **Herring** have already been replaced (December)

2-toned look



Herring

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

HEAD & BILL

ICELAND
(*THAYERI*)



ICELAND
(*THAYERI*)



Herring



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

ICELAND (*KUMLIENI*)



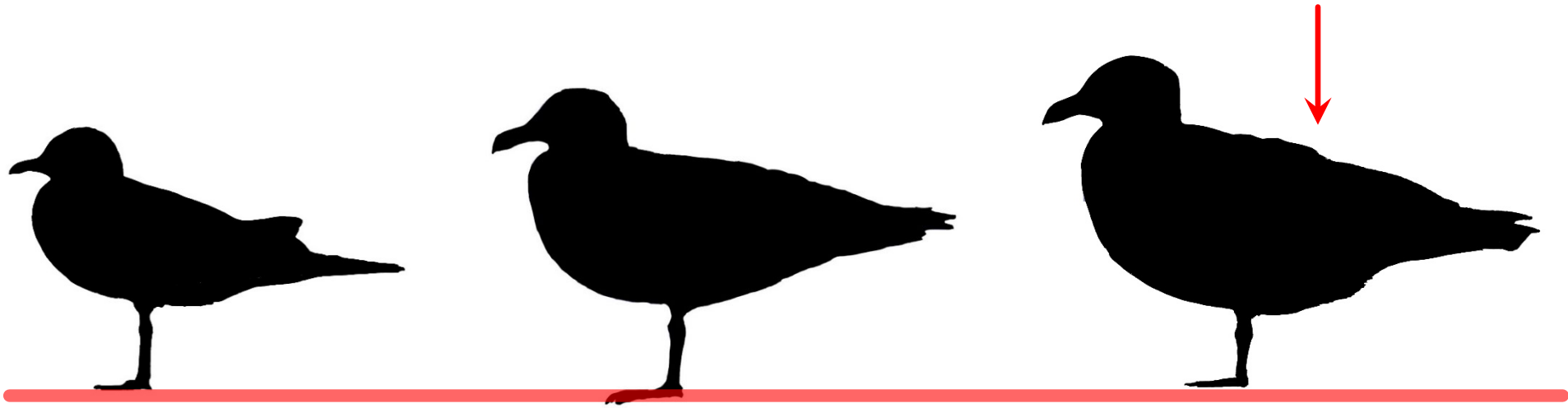
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

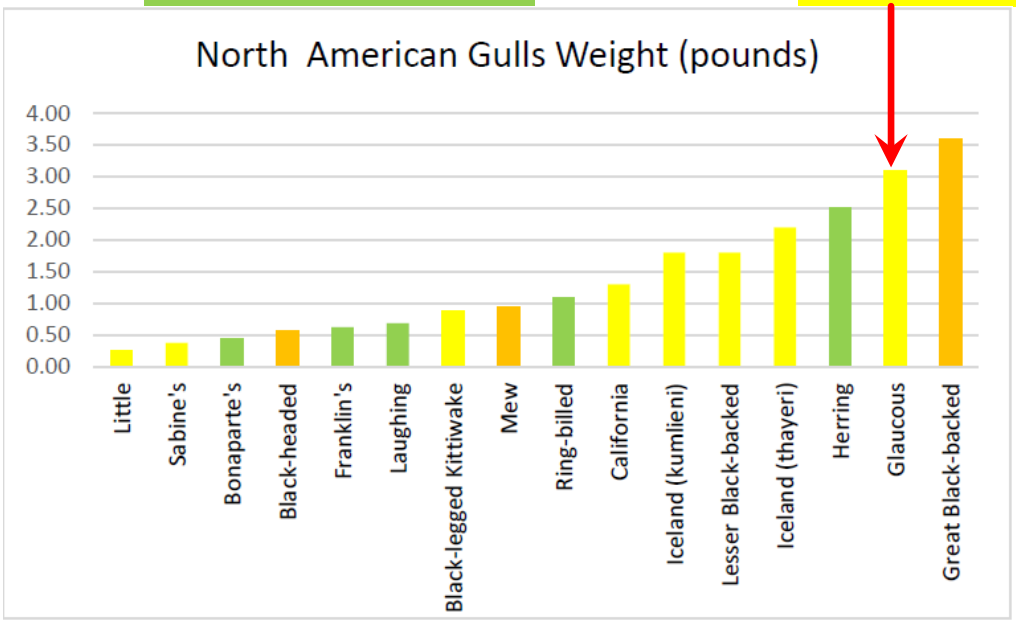
GLAUCOUS

- The **Glaucous Gull** is the 2nd largest gull in the world; smaller than only the **Great Black-backed Gull (GBBG)**. Some large **Glaucous** even exceed the size of some **GBBGs**. So, as usual relative size is one of the first clues to identification.
- Many of the **Glaucous** that show up in Texas are immature birds. They are identified by their pink bill with a sharply demarcated black tip, bulky build, short primary projection and pale primaries.

SIZE COMPARISON



Ring-billed **Herring** **Glaucous**



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

GLAUCOUS
1ST CYCLE

Large, robust, proportionate head & neck

Short-ish stout bill



Pink & black sharp demarcation

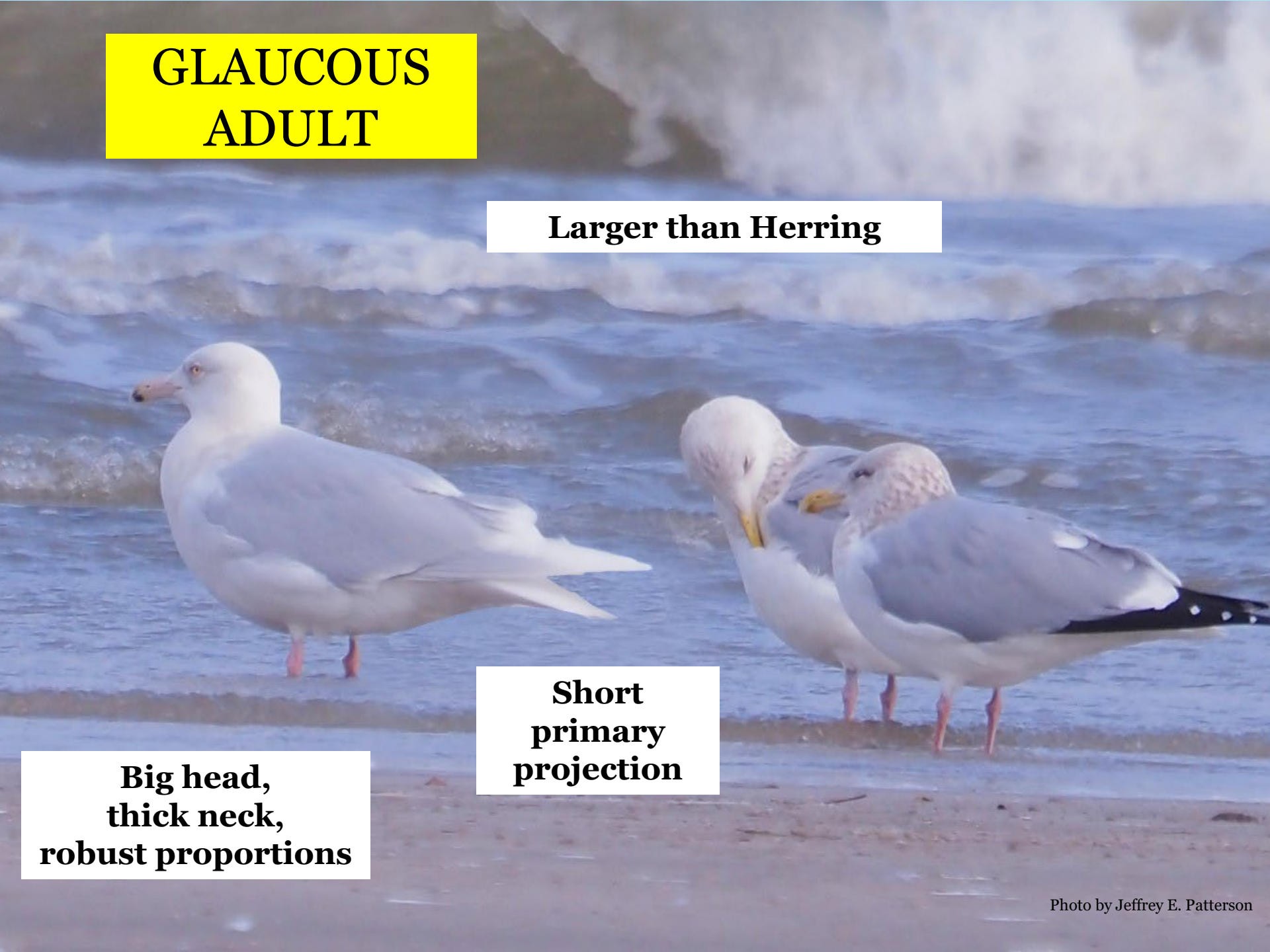
Jan **Feb** Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

GLAUCOUS 1ST CYCLE



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

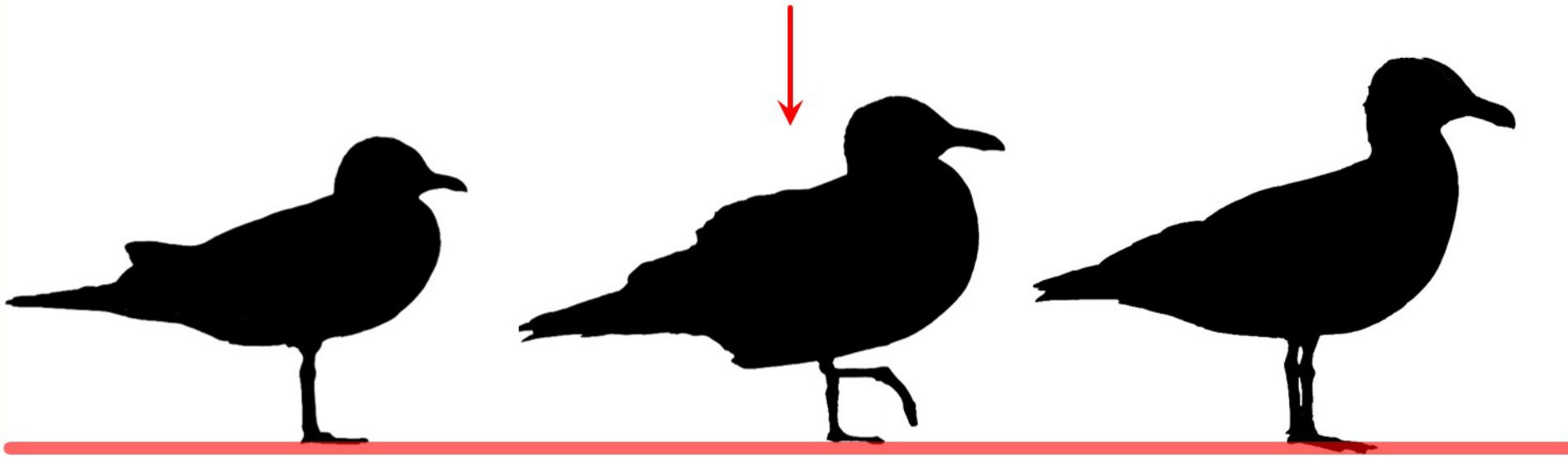

GLAUCOUS ADULT
Larger than Herring
Short primary projection
Big head, thick neck, robust proportions
Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

CALIFORNIA

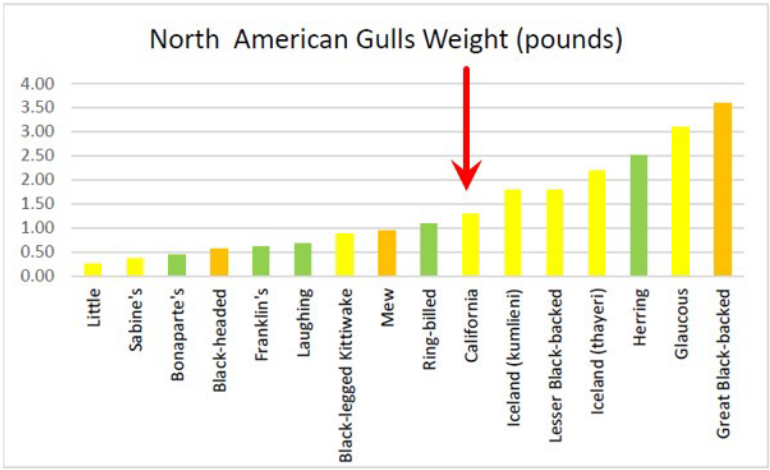
- The traditional story is that the seagulls annihilated the insects, ensuring the survival of some 4,000 Mormon pioneers who had traveled to Utah. For this reason, Seagull Monument was erected and the **California Gull** is the state bird of Utah.

SIZE COMPARISON

Ring-billed | **California** | **Herring**



Larger than
Ring-billed
Smaller than
Herring



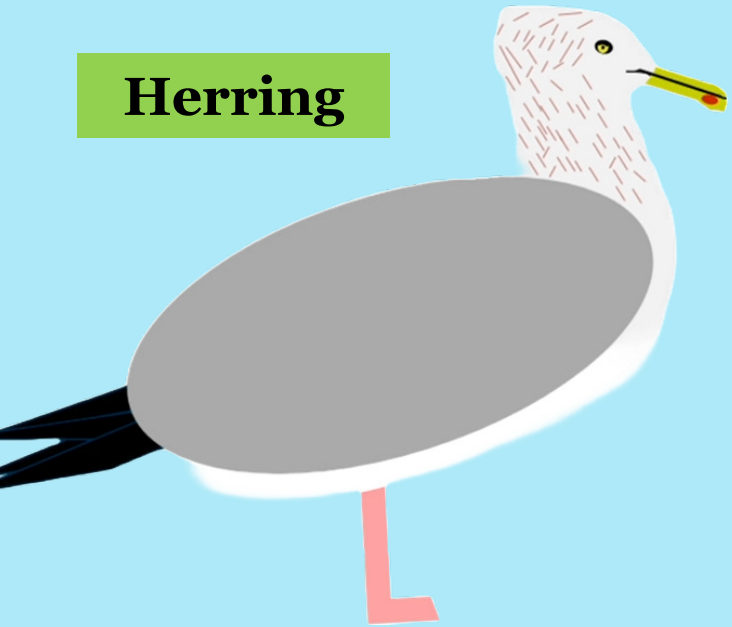
Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

HERRING VS CALIFORNIA

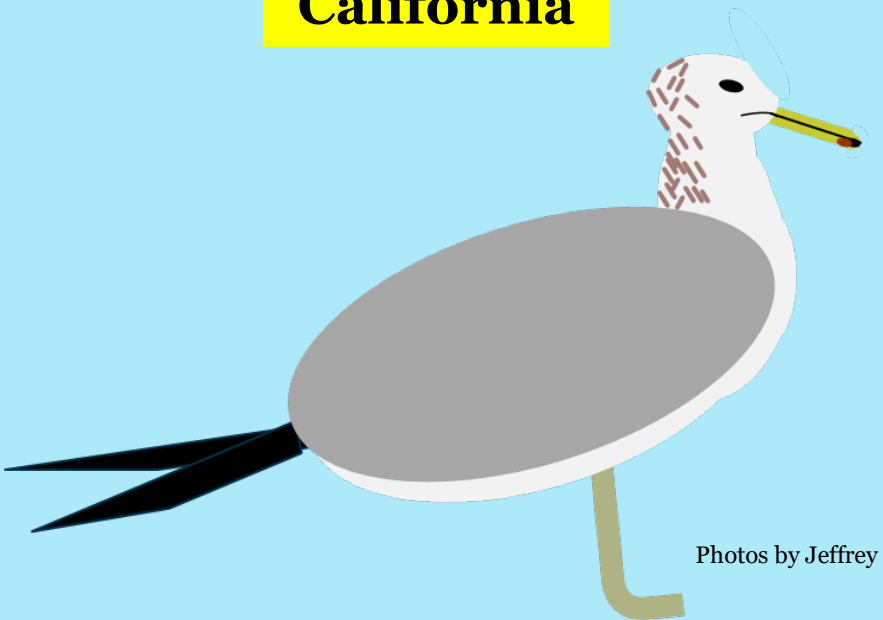




Herring



California

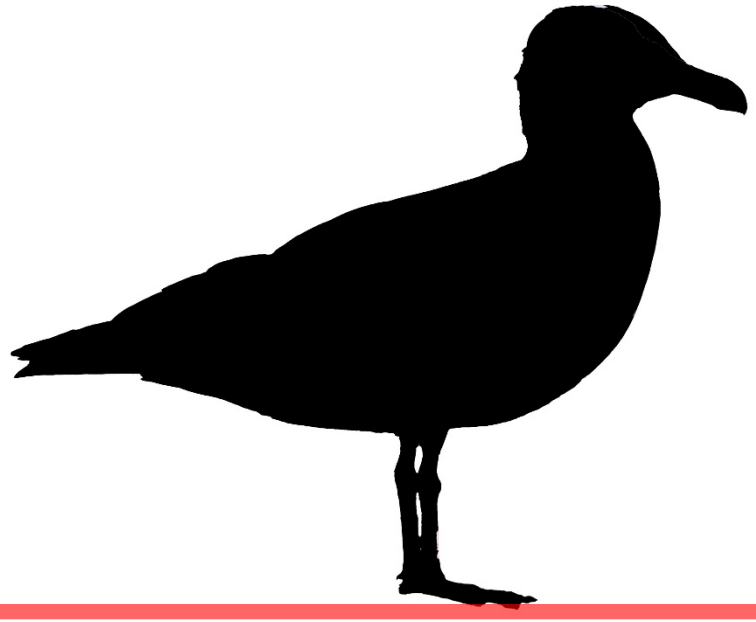


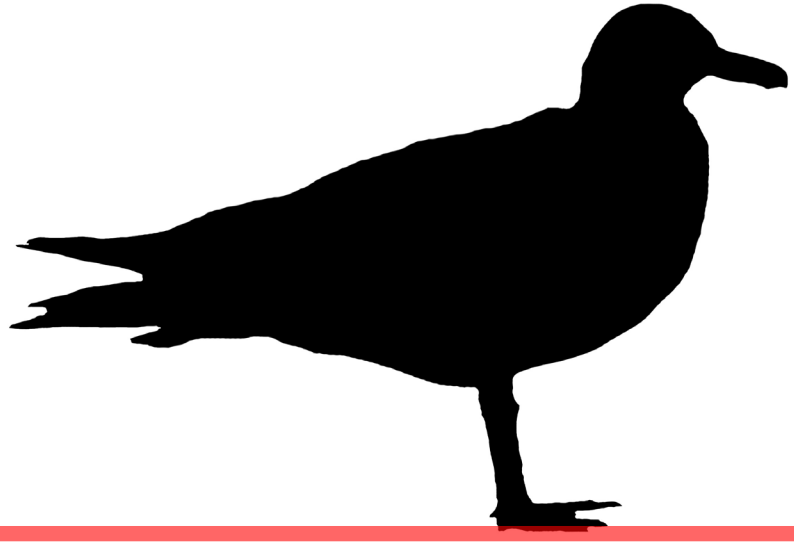
Artwork by Plumbius V

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

STRUCTURE

Fairly long, parallel-sided bill





Herring

California

Between Herring & Ring-billed size

Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

California

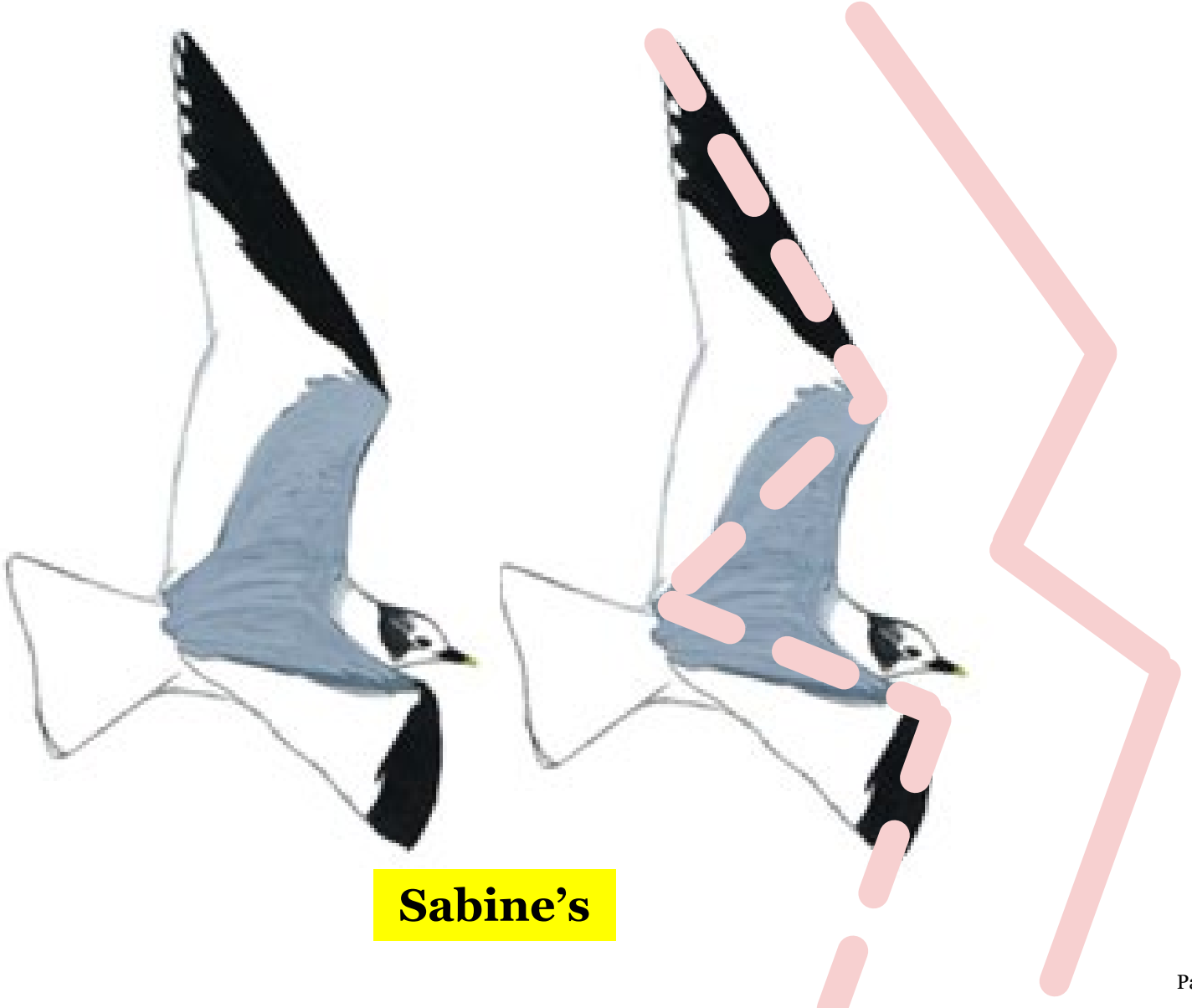


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

SABINE'S

- The Sabines breeds in the far north, but often wanders over North America, especially immatures in the fall.
- Winters, migrates & forages at sea in flocks.

ID GROUP: THE “M-BIRDS”



Sabine’s

Painting by David A. Sibley

SIZE COMPARISON

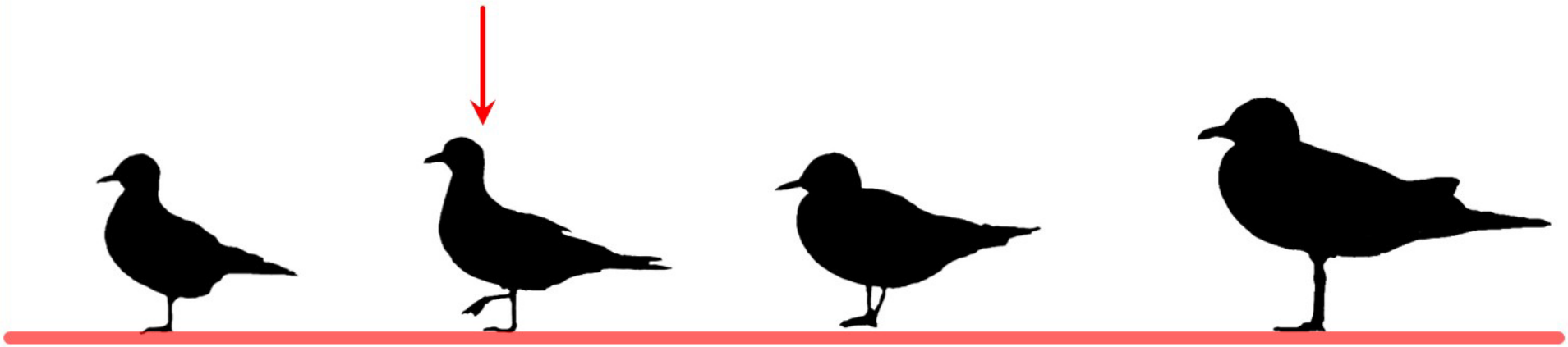
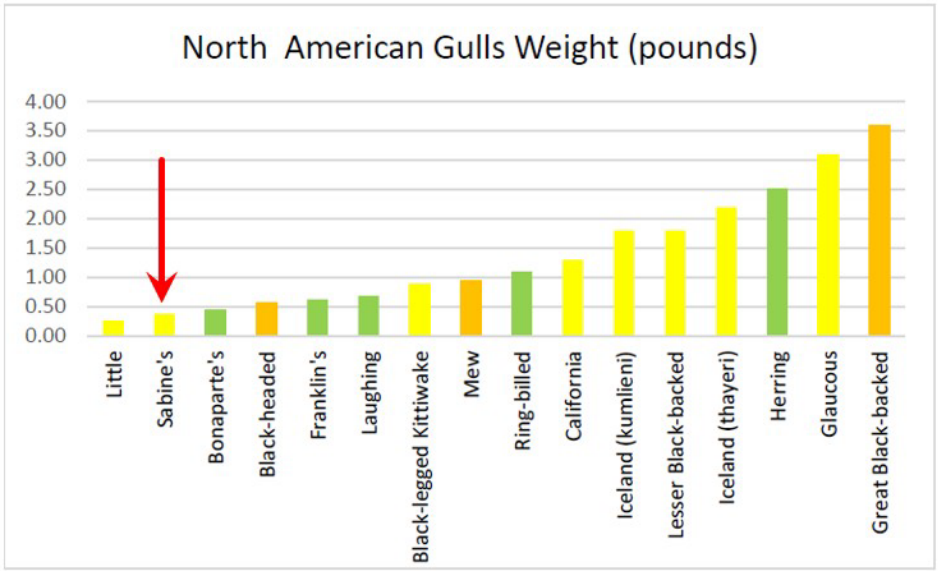


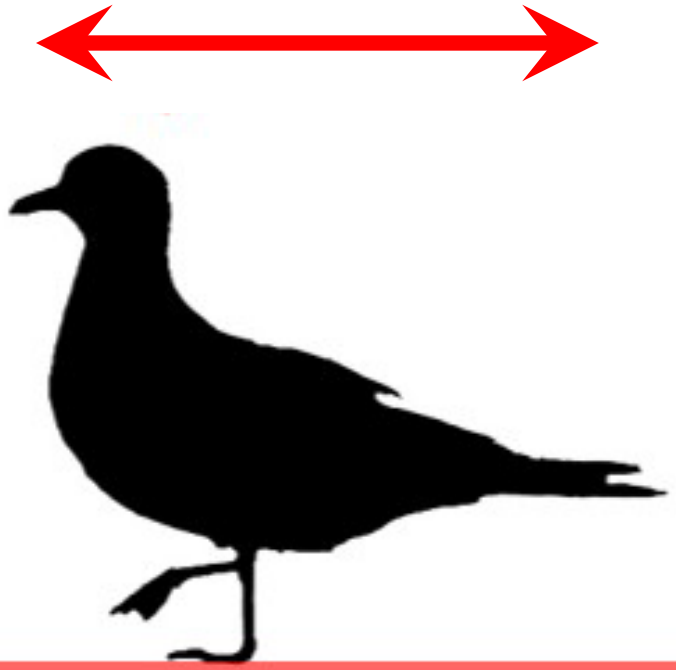
Photo by Lance Felber

Little **Sabine's** **Bonaparte's** **Ring-billed**



Other Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

STRUCTURE





Sabine's

Photo by Lance Felber

Bonaparte's

Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson



Sabine's

JUVENILE
HORNSBY BEND
(SEPT 2016)

Long neck
with gray sides

High "keel" in back

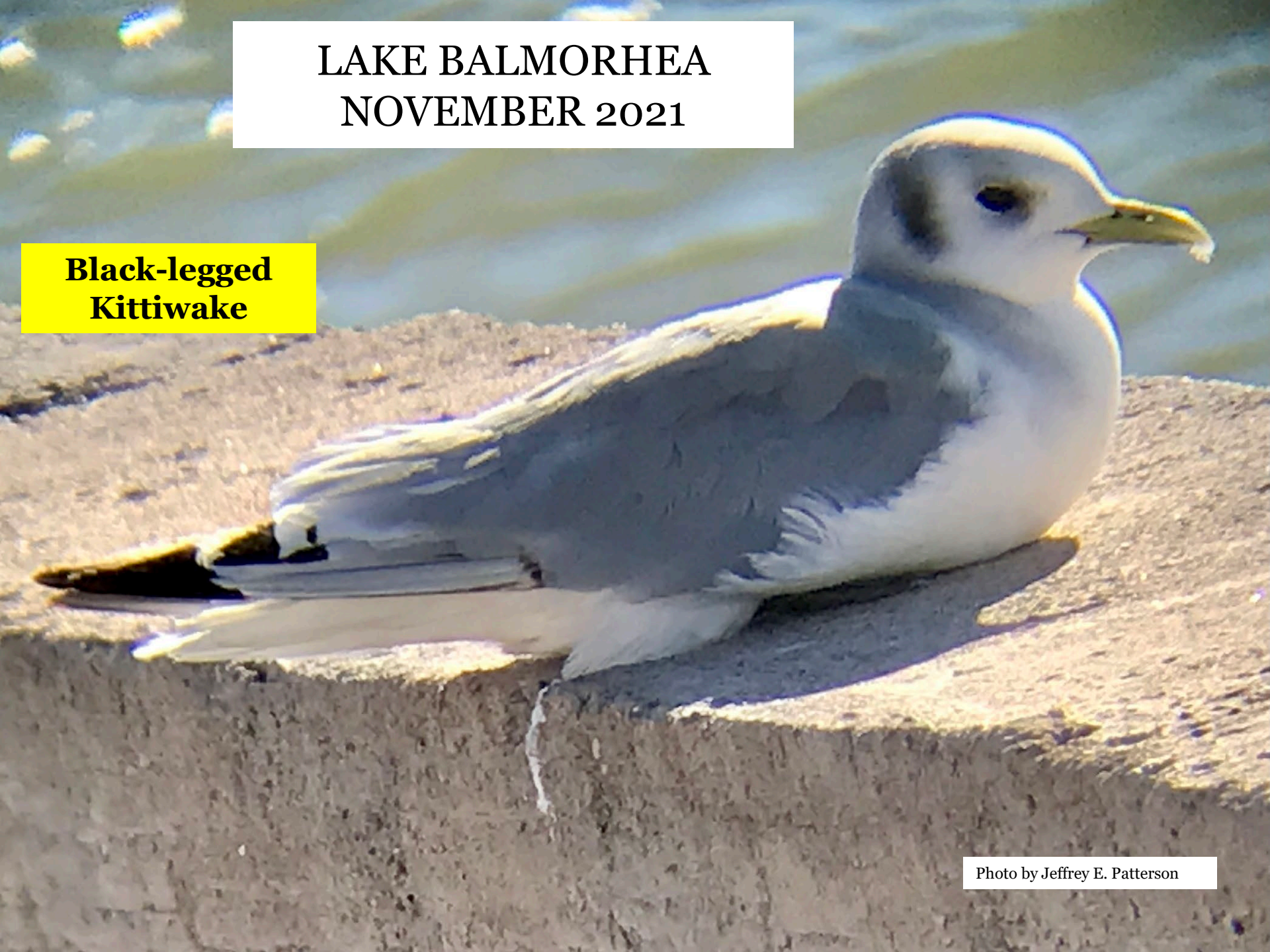


Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

- Far north coastal breeder
- Nests on seaside cliffs
- Forages in open ocean, cold waters

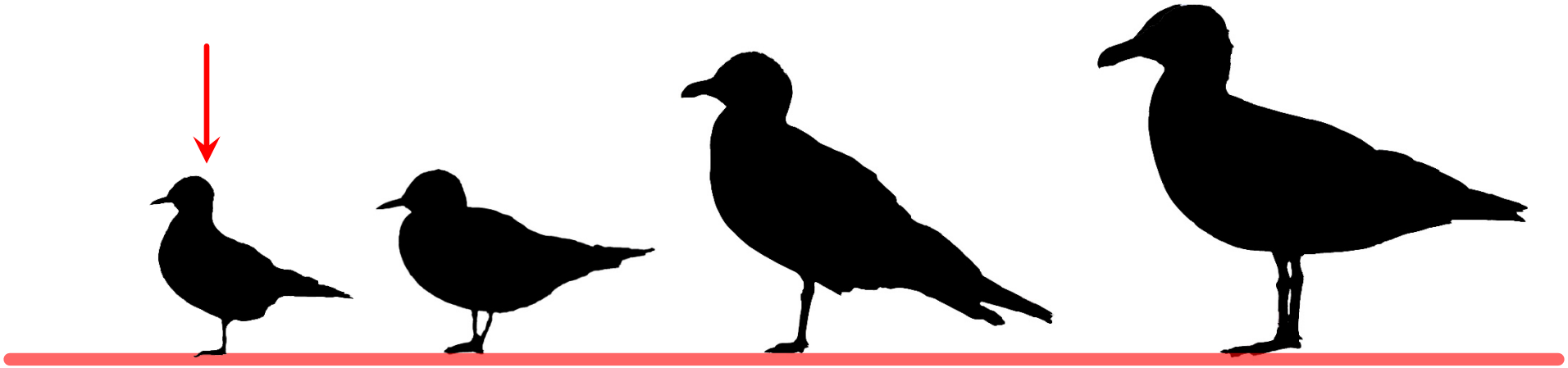
LAKE BALMORHEA
NOVEMBER 2021



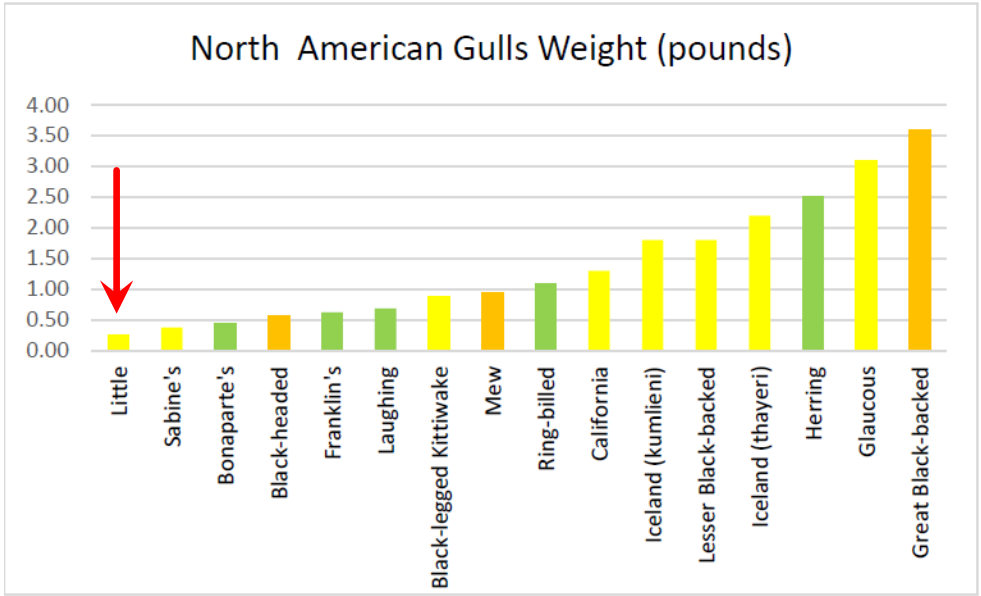
LITTLE

- World's smallest gull
- Dainty
- Small bill
- Distinctive dark underwings
- Graceful flight – like a tern
- Mostly Eurasian nester
- Some nest Hudson Bay/Great Lakes

SIZE COMPARISON

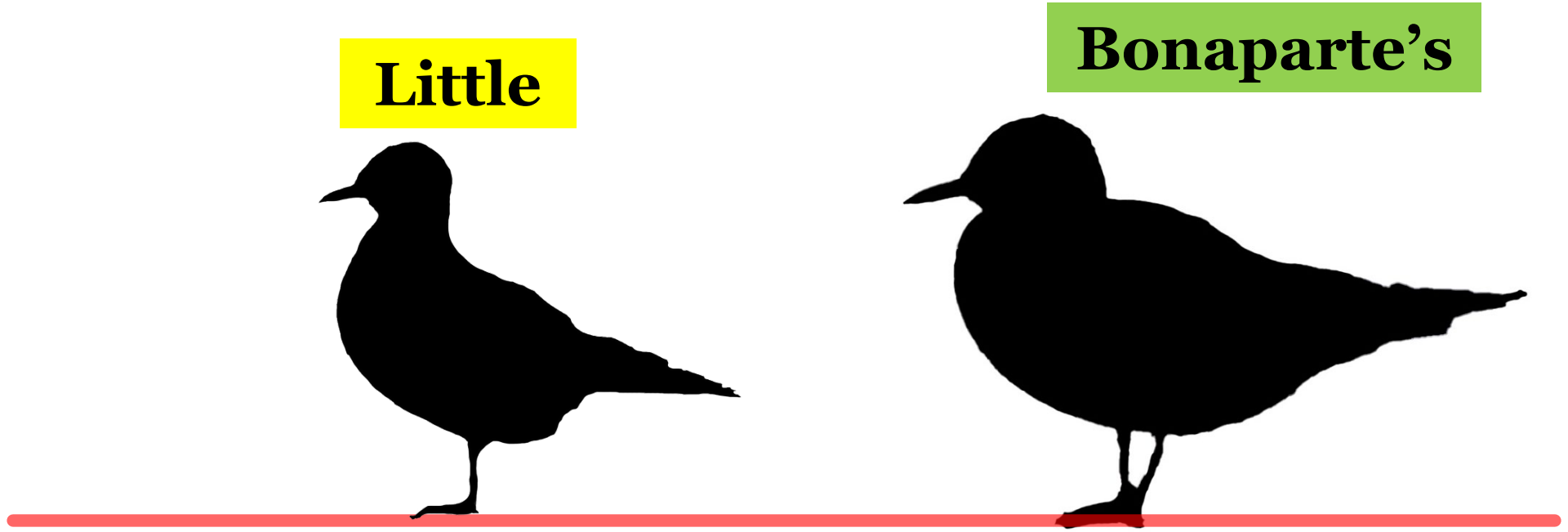


Little **Bonaparte's** **Ring-billed** **Herring**



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson

STRUCTURE



Photos by Jeffrey E. Patterson



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson



Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson

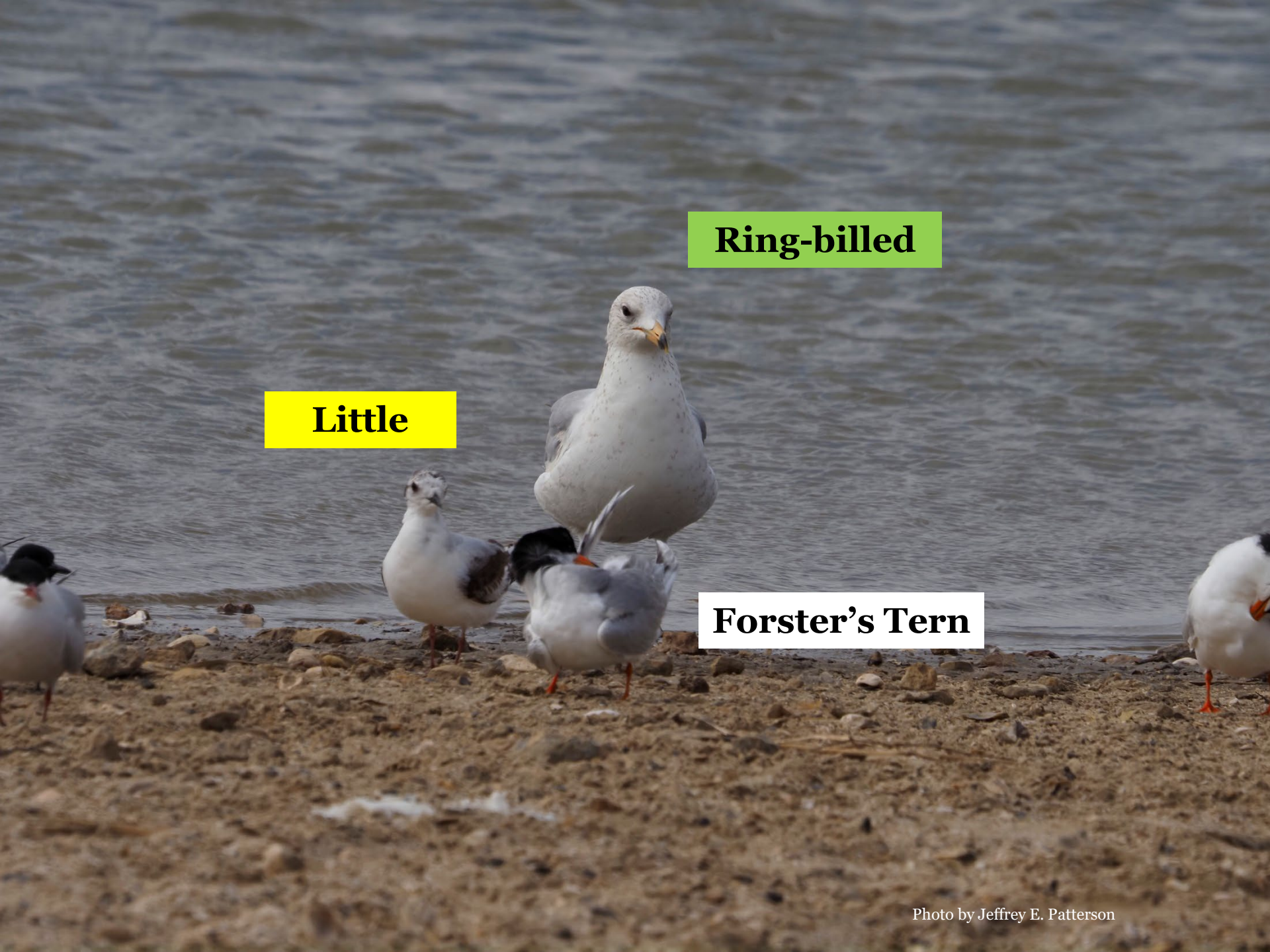


Photo by Jeffrey E. Patterson