

as that of a Laughing Gull. A low-flying helicopter flushed the entire flock, and when the birds settled we were unable to relocate the Franklin's Gull.

At the time of the observation, the sky had recently become overcast, but sufficient light was available during the entire period. Because we did not observe the bird in flight, its identification as a Franklin's Gull rests on the plumage characteristics noted above, the bill, and the obviously smaller size as compared to the Laughing Gulls.

There is but one other record of the Franklin's Gull in South Carolina, a bird observed by Harry LeGrand near Townville, Anderson County, on 8 May 1975 (Chat 39:92). An earlier record claimed for the state (South Carolina Bird Life, 1970, p. 605) is based on a young female shot at the Catawba River near the N.C.-S.C. border, but in North Carolina (Chat 39:92).

Sabine's Gull in Forsyth County, N.C.

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On Saturday, 2 October 1976, my husband Jim and I went to Salem Lake, a 365-acre Winston-Salem water reservoir, to check for fall migrants. The sky was completely overcast, winds were from the north, and it appeared that rain might begin falling at any moment.

While scanning the lake from the end of a 300-foot fishing pier, we saw a small dark-headed gull sitting in the water about 900 feet distant. In the poor light we could not see any detail with our 7 x 35 binoculars, so we waited for the gull to fly. The first flight was short, and the wing pattern was not well seen. When the gull landed on the water it raised its wings and the large black wedges on the wing tips provided the first field mark. The gull made several flights before the light improved enough for us to observe the black wing tips, white triangles, and gray back pattern. After referring to *A Field Guide to the Birds* (Peterson 1947) and to *Birds of North America* (Robbins et al. 1966), we identified the bird as an adult Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*).

Immediately Ramona Snavely and Fran Baldwin were called. With the aid of Snavely's Questar 50X scope we were able to see the yellow tip on the beak and the black outer primaries tipped in white. After photographs had been taken from the pier, we decided to try to approach the bird closer with a boat. The gull allowed the boat to approach very close, and it was then that the head took on a grayer appearance and the black collar became evident. Molt into winter plumage had begun on the forehead. In flight the pure white tail appeared only slightly forked.

Many bird students saw the Sabine's Gull and confirmed our identification. The bird was photographed by several people, including E. Wayne Irvin who took the picture that appears on the front cover of this magazine.

The water reservoir on which the bird appeared is equipped with strategically located aeration systems that tend to attract forage fish, especially thread-fin shad (*Dorosoma pretenense*). The gull seemed to show a preference for these locations and appeared to rely heavily on these fish as a source of food.

The Sabine's Gull remained at the lake for 5 days, being seen last on 6 October 1976.

According to R.M. Lockley (*Ocean Wanderers: The Migratory Sea Birds of the World*, 1974, p. 66, 142, and 143), the Sabine's Gull breeds circumpolarly in the high Arctic and migrates in fall to spend the winter at sea generally south of the equator. Large numbers of these gulls move southward offshore along the Pacific Coast of North America to reach the food-rich waters of the Humbolt Current off Chile and Peru. Because relatively few Sabine's Gulls winter in the western part of the south Atlantic Ocean, the species is only a casual spring and fall transient on the East Coast. It rarely occurs inland.

A Sabine's Gull was reported on 27 May 1972 offshore at Coquina Beach, N.C., by Robert Ake (*Am. Birds* 26:750). The Forsyth County sighting is the first inland occurrence for North Carolina and the first record for the state to be supported by a photograph.