

General Field Notes

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COMMITTEE REPORT

The CBC Records Committee reviewed the literature on the identification of "white-winged" gulls and voted to retain the Iceland Gull on the North Carolina Hypothetical List until a voucher specimen has been obtained. There are several Glaucous Gull specimens for the state. Examining series of white-winged gulls in various systematic collections further supports our belief that these species are often virtually impossible to distinguish in the field and in photographs. The popular American field guides do not indicate the amount of individual variation and, therefore, are not adequate to identify the species of many individual Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. The degree of competence of the observers is not questioned. The decision to require a voucher specimen prior to admitting Iceland Gull or Thayer's Gull (Chat 37:50-51) to either state list is a matter of necessity. We hope that bird students who have struggled with the problem of identifying white-winged gulls in the field will understand the dilemma. We continue to welcome detailed reports of sightings of white-winged gulls from the Carolinas. Several convincing reports are published in this issue of *The Chat*.

CBC Records Committee
November 1977

Iceland Gull at Clemson, S.C.

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6 March 1976

On the morning of 3 February 1976 I observed a white-winged gull in flight at Lake Hartwell, Clemson, S.C. I identified it as an Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*) because of its dark bill and Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) size, in addition to its overall whitish-buff coloration with white primaries. As the bird flew south over the lake, it encountered two Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) and chased one of the Ring-billeds for several seconds. The Iceland appeared to be approximately 3 to 4 inches longer than the Ring-billeds.

On the afternoon of 3 February, and nearly every day through 8 February, the Iceland Gull was found in a large flock (about 60 birds) of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls at Lake Hartwell near the J.P. Stevens textile plant. The gulls were usually resting on mudflats and were studied in great detail by Sidney Gauthreaux, Bob Beason, Frank Moore, Paul Hamel, and me. Most of these observations were made with 20-40X scopes, and excellent size and plumage characters were noted among the three species. The Iceland was whitish-buff throughout, and its size was intermediate between the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. However, it was a slender bird, its bulk being closer to that of the Ring-