

A record of Black-Tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*) at Bang Poo, Thailand

While looking at gulls at Bang Poo, Samut Prakan (13° 30' N; 100° 46' E) on 25 Jan. 1984, G.J. Speight and I found a first-winter Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*) in a flock of several hundred Brown-headed Gulls (*Larus brunnicephalus*).

The Black-tailed Gull was first seen at high tide about 200 m off the end of the pier with a flock of Brown-headed Gulls. It was watched in flight and on the sea for an hour from a range of down to 15 m. It flew off east as the tide receded, and was last seen at long range, standing on mud.

Description: Size slightly, though noticeably, larger than Brown-headed Gulls, thought to be roughly the size of a Common Gull (*Larus canus*) with which I am familiar from N.W. Europe.

Overall appearance reminiscent of Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*), this enhanced by bill size and gently sloping forehead.

Forehead and forecrown dirty white. White eyelids on dark eye. Rest of head dirty grey-brown, this colour extending down nape and sides of neck to form a complete breast band. Throat and chin white, belly to undertail coverts same. Flanks above water line dirty grey-brown.

Mantle, scapulars and wing coverts pale greyish-brown with wide worn pale edgings. Tertiaries dark chocolate brown. Primaries long and black. Tail not visible when on sea.

Bill larger than Common Gull and more like Ring-billed, though probably longer. Looked greyish-green at distance, but when seen close was creamy orange with a heavy black, slightly drooping distal third. Legs, only seen when on mud at a distance, appeared greyish-green and long.

In flight very dark greyish-brown wings with darker primary wedge and secondary bar; wings looked pointed. Mantle paler, greyer than wings; rump same colour as mantle. At a distance appeared to have a pale greyish white tail with wide black terminal bar. At closer range it could be seen that it was the uppertail coverts which were pale and that the whole of the short tail was black. At a distance upperparts resembled first-winter Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). Underwing dusky-grey, caused by grey lines of feather tips. When seen head-on in flight, showed a very obvious white forehead and underparts broken by dusky breast band.

The Black-tailed Gull breeds on the northern coasts and islands of the Sea of Japan, bordering eastern Siberia, China and Japan. In winter birds disperse north to Sakhalin and south to Hong Kong (HARRISON, 1983). It has also strayed south as far as Australia (SLATER ET AL., 1986).

The bird was also seen by Philip Round and Jon Dunn on the following day. This was only the second record for Thailand.

REFERENCES

- HARRISON, P. 1983. *Seabirds: an Identification Guide*. Croom Helm, London.
- SLATER, P., P. SLATER AND R. SLATER. 1986. *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds*. Rigby Publishers, Dee Why West, NSW.

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