

First records of Silver Gull *Larus (Chroicocephalus) novaehollandiae* for Bali and Oriental Region

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Ringkasan. Gulls merupakan jenis yang jarang atau vagran di Indonesia yang di kawasan Sunda Besar tidak terdapat jenis yang residen. Penulis mengamati dan memotret Camar Perak di Bali: *pertama*, di Sanur pada bulan Oktober 2009, merupakan burung muda yang sedang berganti bulu dewasa, dan yang *kedua* pada bulan Agustus 2010 adalah seekor burung dewasa di Palau Serangan selatan Sanur. Laporan-laporan ini merupakan yang pertama baik untuk Bali maupun kawasan Oriental.

There are no resident species of gulls in Indonesia, and only one, the Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, is known to regularly visit the northern coasts of Borneo, Wallacea and Papua (Irian Jaya) between November and March, during the northern winter (Bishop & Diamond 1987; Argeloo 1993; MacKinnon & Phillips 1993; Coates & Bishop 1997; Myers 2009; Phillipps & Phillipps 2009). Confirmed records also exist for Sabine's Gull *L. genei* and the Brown-headed Gull *L. brunnicephalus* on or off the coast of Sumatra (Andrew 1985; MacKinnon & Phillips 1993).

This report documents two independent sightings of Silver Gulls *Larus (Chroicocephalus) novaehollandiae* on Bali, Indonesia. The only previous published record of a gull on Bali is that of a Black-headed Gull at Benoa Port (Harbour) on 17 August 1994 (Myers 2000). The Silver Gull is widespread throughout Australia and New Zealand including most outlying islands. It is also an occasional visitor to the northern Torres Strait and west Gulf of Papua (Higgins & Davies 1996). Other sightings have been made in Papua (N. Brickle *pers comm.*), which is part of the Australasian biogeographic region. In Australia the species is abundant and widespread, with some populations moving and breeding far inland (Higgins & Davies 1996).

First sighting

On 12 October 2009 at Sanur Beach in southern Bali at approximately 15:00 hrs an immature gull, tentatively identified as a Silver Gull, was observed and photographed by the first author (MGa). The location was adjacent to the Bonsai Cafe off Jalan Danau Tamblingan on Sanur Beach (8°41'10.87" S; 115°15'55.58" E). The area is primarily a built environment with markets and seaside hotels along a sandy beach, which is frequented by many people. The beach is somewhat sheltered from the Indian Ocean by a shallow reef off Sanur Beach. Weather conditions were clear and sunny with a light southerly breeze.

The following description was recorded soon after the observation:

Head white with shape typical of Silver Gull, eye dark, bill black or dark grey. Back, mantle and scapulars light grey like adult, juvenile scapulars with brown markings absent. Rump white. Underparts white. Feet dull yellow with dark smudging to joints and webbing. Upper and under tail coverts white. Dark terminal band on tail. Median wing coverts mottled brown. Alula black, primary coverts white or grey with black edges. First to third primaries black with slight signs of white windows and remaining primaries white or grey with a black edge. Secondaries apparently with dark brown or black sub terminal panel. Lesser underwing coverts white or light grey; other underwing coverts and secondaries dusky grey; underwing primaries dusky grey.

The bird flew from the southern end of Sanur Beach and landed on a rock wall pier opposite the cafe where it was first noticed. Several photographs of the bird (Plates 1,2) were taken using a small compact digital camera before it flew towards an object discarded by a snorkeller in the shallows near the pier. After realising that the discarded object was seaweed the gull continued north along the beach, and out of view. It was not observed again during the remainder of the afternoon or on a subsequent visit on 14 October 2009.

The bird was recognised as a Silver Gull because the observer had had extensive experience with this species in Australia. The description matches that of a juvenile moulting into a first year immature plumage (Higgins & Davies 1996; Pizzey & Knight 2007). In Australia, Silver Gulls are known to occupy places of human occupation, parks, agricultural areas, harbours, estuaries, coastal areas, wetlands, ocean beaches and rubbish tips (Higgins & Davies 1996). However, as the plumage was not adult, and several other species could potentially visit the region at this time, several references were consulted to confirm the identification.

The Black-headed Gull is similar to the Silver Gull in general shape and proportions, but is slightly smaller and slimmer (Higgins & Davies 1996). Juvenile and immature Black-headed Gulls have pinkish and orange bills, respectively, with a black tip (Grant 1982; Higgins & Davies 1996; Olsen & Larson 2003), whereas the Sanur bird had a fully blackish bill. All plumages of Black-headed Gulls including juveniles, immatures and non-breeding adults have dark markings on the ear coverts, crown and nape (Grant 1982). The Sanur bird's head was totally white consistent with an immature Silver Gull. MGa has since observed and photographed vagrant Black-headed Gulls in Australia.

The Brown-headed Gull is larger and stockier than the Silver Gull, and the bill is thicker. Whilst the bill is crimson to black in breeding adults, it is orange to red with a dark tip in juvenile and immature birds (Grant 1982; Olsen & Larson 2003). Although the wings of adult Silver Gulls can resemble those of adult Brown-headed Gulls (Olsen & Larson 2003), the primary coverts are always white in the latter species, whereas those of the gull at Sanur had a black edge.

Sabine's Gull is smaller and slimmer than the Silver Gull (Higgins & Davies 1996). Adults have a short, thin, black bill with a white tip, but juveniles

have a totally black bill, flesh coloured legs and a grey rear hood extending to the nape (Grant 1982; Higgins & Davies 1996; Olsen & Larson 2003). Although the Sanur bird possessed a blackish bill, its feet were dull yellow and it did not have a grey rear hood extending to the nape. In all plumages, Sabine's Gull also has a unique upperwing "triangular" pattern, consisting of grey (adult) or brown (juvenile) coverts, black tips to the quills, and gleaming white inner primaries and secondaries (Grant 1982; Higgins & Davies 1996; Olsen & Larson 2003). The Sanur bird's upperwing had no such triangular pattern.

Second sighting and concluding remarks

On 28 August 2010 at 09:00 hrs a lone Silver Gull was found wading in the shallows of a large (c. 1 km²) coastal lagoon at the southeast end of Pulau Serangan, Bali (8°44'52"S, 115°13'23"E). The main shipping channel to Benoa Harbour runs along the southern edge of the lagoon, separated by a raised earth bank. The gull was observed for 10 minutes from about 200 m before it flew to rest on a low shingle island on the western edge of the lagoon, where thousands of waders and hundreds of terns roosted during high tides. Photographs taken at the time show that this individual had unmarked plumage, a pale iris, reddish legs and a predominantly reddish bill, suggesting it was a second year immature or non-breeding adult (Plate 3, 4). As with the bird at Sanur, this individual did not call.

These records constitute the first for this species on the island of Bali, as well as in the Oriental biogeographic region. Although there are previous records for Papua, Indonesia, this region is part of the Australasian biogeographic region. The record also represents a fourth vagrant or visiting gull species to the Greater Sundas Region.

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Plate 1. Immature Silver Gull at Sanur Beach, Bali, October 2009.



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Plate 2. Immature Silver Gull at Sanur Beach, Bali, October 2009.



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Plate 3. Adult Silver Gull at Pulau Serangan, Bali, August 2010.



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Plate 4. Adult Silver Gull at Pulau Serangan, Bali, August 2010.