

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU

Biology Faculty Publications

Biology

Spring 2000

Abnormal pigmentation in a Franklin's Gull

Philip C. Chu

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/biology_pubs



Part of the [Biology Commons](#), and the [Ornithology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Chu PC. 2000. Abnormal pigmentation in a Franklin's Gull. *The Loon* 72(1): 56.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Biology Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csbsju.edu.

There are currently 33 records of this Casual species in Minnesota. The spring records range from 19 April – 4 June (20 total), and the fall records range from 9 July–2 October (12 records). The present record therefore represents an odd date which probably cannot be confidently classified as either a spring or fall migrant. Although this species was regular during the period 1982–1992 (only year missed was 1989), and the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee had indicated this species' official status would be Regular on the 1993 checklist (*The Loon* 65:33), this decision was reversed (*The Loon* 66:43) before publication of the checklist. The Thielke Lake Ruff is the first observation of this species since 1994, and a first county record. **Karl Bardon, 13073 Hastings St. NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**

ABNORMAL PIGMENTATION IN A FRANKLIN'S GULL — From 3:00 to 3:10 P.M. on 7 August 1999, on Lake Benton in Lincoln County, I saw a Franklin's Gull with abnormally pigmented plumage.



The abnormally pigmented individual was part of a group of hundreds of Franklin's Gulls. For most of the observation period, the gulls were floating on the water 300–400 yards offshore. Periodically one individual or another flew, and the abnormally pigmented bird was no exception; its short flight at the end of the observation period provided useful views of its spread wings.

In my field notes, I recorded the following information. In size and shape, the abnormally pigmented bird was indistinguishable from the normally pigmented Franklin's Gulls surrounding it. Its bill was blackish-red, becoming purer red toward the tip; its legs, seen only briefly, were dark. It was wholly white except for a complete, but extremely faint, brown-gray hood and an even fainter gray mantle. Regarding the latter, my notes identify the faintly gray areas as the back, scapulars, upper secondary-coverts, secondary bases, upper primary-coverts, and primary bases; both secondaries and primaries were white-tipped.

I cannot overemphasize the pallor of the pigmented areas of plumage. The hood was so faint that 15–20 seconds of observation were required to verify its presence, and, as for the mantle, my field notes describe it as, "the faintest gray imaginable — just barely darker than the breast and neck, just barely darker than the primary tips." As a result, except under close scrutiny the bird appeared entirely white; indeed, when I viewed it from a second vantage point 500–700 yards away I could see nothing but a faint discoloration of the head, and even that was so weak that it could have been mistaken for dirt, or an artifact of the imagination. **Philip C. Chu, Department of Biology, St. John's University, Collegeville, MN 56321.**

POMARINE JAEGER ON MILLE LACS LAKE, MILLE LACS COUNTY — Shortly after noon on 22 November 1999, during a periodic survey of loons and gulls on Mille Lacs, Peder Svingen and Anthony Hertzell found a juvenile Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) near the mouth of the Rum River on Vineland Bay, Mille Lacs County. The previous day, we had studied a probable Parasitic Jaeger (*S. parasiticus*) as it harassed gulls in the Grand Marais harbor, Cook County, and heard that a possible Parasitic had been reported by Maurita Geerts along the north shore of Mille Lacs near Wealthwood, Aitkin County. We started at Malmo and surveyed the north and west shoreline of Mille Lacs as usual, but found no signs of any jaeger.



Proceeding south from Vineland on U.S. Highway 169, we crossed the Rum River and turned east onto Mille Lacs County Road 35. As soon as we stopped at the next