

Eric was telling Richard Biss all about the gull, the gull decided to lift off, circle the harbor, and disappear over the lake heading northeast.

Eric came back saying that Biss and who knows how many other birders would be here in 30 minutes. I pointed out that the gull was gone and that folks might not be too happy leaving their Christmas dinners for naught. Furthermore, since Eric was the one who called in this information, he would be in even more trouble than the rest of us. The rule is: He who calls in the rare bird gets the most glory if it stays. But he who

calls in the rare bird is also most likely to be lynched if the bird leaves. I admit I'm the one who told Eric to call when I noticed this gull had the look of a wanderer.

So the Ivory Gull Gang of Four continued our count. We added no new gull or duck species after leaving Montrose, but we didn't complain. We didn't want to be too greedy.

Incidentally, the folks who rushed to Montrose Harbor that day never saw the gull. As for the Ivory Gull, it went on to become a celebrity when Richard Biss rediscovered it at Burnham Harbor on the Sunday

after Christmas. Hundreds of people from all over got to see the gull. It even had a feature role in at least two newspaper articles and several short segments on Chicago television stations.

I did not get down to Burnham to see the gull again. Maybe it was just as well since you never know how old friends will act after they become famous. After all, we knew the Ivory Gull when it was just a dirty-faced bird with a "pigeon-like" head sitting on the rocks just outside Montrose Harbor. ■



*Immature Ivory Gull at Burnham Harbor, Chicago, 2 January 1992. (Joe B. Milosevich photo)*