



Brant with Canada Geese. Drawing by David Athans.

I surmise the Brant was migrating north with the widespread warm front of the several preceding days, until it collided with the severe northeasterly front which stretched from the Atlantic seaboard all the way to Nebraska. Whether the bird had been wintering within its normal range along the east coast or at some more westerly locale is anyone's guess, although it is intriguing that the two previous spring records from Illinois come from areas in the Mississippi basin of southwestern Illinois: 30 March - 5 April 1987, Baldwin Lake; and 4-6 May, 1968, Illinois levee below St. Louis (Bohlen 1989), as does a recent December record (23 December 1992, Union County) See *Meadowlark* 2:100.

A physical description and additional details of the Brant's occurrence are on file with the Illinois Department of Conservation.

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California Gull at Clinton Lake

On 4 March 1994, I learned that a Ross' Goose had been found near the Clinton Lake power plant in DeWitt County. When I arrived at Clinton Lake early 5 March; however, my plans seemed defeated, because the lake was completely fogged in. I was surprised, though, by the calls of

many hundreds of gulls, since they had been unusually scarce that winter on Clinton Lake and tended to concentrate at Springfield and Decatur. This was a sure sign a gull migration was underway. I was determined to wait out the fog in hopes of seeing the Ross' Goose and to check out the gulls.

By 8:15 a.m., the fog began lifting. Rather than gradually dispersing, the fog began retreating like a curtain toward the east, leaving an ever-growing portion of the lake clear while the rest remained totally enshrouded. At 8:30, I could see hundreds of gulls on a small sandspit and many hundreds more milling about. As I scanned the gulls, I saw what I first thought might be a Mew Gull next to a Ring-billed Gull and then realized that the smaller gull was a Ring-billed Gull, and that the larger gull was something else.

I immediately thought of a third-year Herring Gull, but realized this bird was smaller than the nearby herrings. Besides, it appeared to be an adult, perhaps already in nuptial plumage, as it had a clean white head, belly, and tail.

A close view with my telescope showed that the bill was much longer than that of Ring-billed Gulls and slimmer than the bill of any of the Herring Gulls. The bill was yellow, with a thin, black subterminal ring, nearer to the tip than that of Ring-billed Gulls, with a red gonydal spot. The mantle averaged darker than the Ring-billed Gulls'. The legs were greenish. These characters point to California Gull (*Larus*