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First Confirmed Illinois Record of the Glaucous-winged Gull

By David B. Johnson, Laurence C. Binford, Ph.D,
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Thanksgiving is traditional for unusual birds to appear along Chicago's lakefront. Thanksgiving Day, 27 November 1992, was no exception, and this time birders were grateful for some good gull sightings. On the Shedd Aquarium breakwater was an adult California Gull (*Larus californicus*). At Montrose Harbor a Little Gull (*L. minutus*) fed with a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls (*L. philadelphia*), and

a third-year Lesser Black-backed Gull (*L. fuscus*) stood on the beach. Finally, the immature Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) found on 21 November was still at Navy Pier. The next day, birders failed to relocate these four rarities but instead made an even more remarkable discovery—the first confirmed Glaucous-winged Gull (*L. glaucescens*) for Illinois and the easternmost for North America. This sighting was reviewed and accepted in early 1995 by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee.

Sightings

Alan Stokie, having given up the lakefront search for the Thanksgiving Day gulls, decided to visit some new locations. He arrived at O'Brien Lock and Dam on the Calumet River, Chicago, Cook County, with fellow birders Louise Augustine, Pat Geis, and Andy Sigler. This foursome encountered Sue

Friscia and Wes Serafin chumming gulls. Just west of the river some 1,000 gulls foraged on a gigantic garbage dump. All six observers searched the flock but except for one possible Glaucous Gull (*L. hyperboreus*) they could find only the usual Herring

The Glaucous-winged Gull is essentially a bird of the Pacific coast. The Illinois bird apparently is a product of a recent pattern of inland vagrancy and range expansion of this species.....

(*L. argentatus*) and Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*) Gulls. Having reached the limit of how many herrings and ring-bills most birders can tolerate, Friscia and Serafin departed. The four remaining birders then shifted their attention to the gulls on the