

revealed that the now visible legs and feet were indeed bold pink - a full pink, not the pale flesh or whitish seen on legs of many immature gulls. We watched the bird intently until it departed with the other gulls at 9:15 a.m. The gull flew several times allowing observation of the wing pattern. Though the primary bar was not detected, a broad white trailing edge was observed and the underwing displayed gray, rather than black, primaries.

We broke for lunch and obtained some detailed gull literature including Grant (1986). The bird returned from the west at 1:05 p.m. and joined the flock. Cassady followed it in his telescope. Upon landing, the bird flared its wings allowing Cassady to see white spots on two inner primaries. The gull was still present when we left at 2:20 p.m., but was very difficult to see since it was almost always obscured by other gulls and frequently disappeared into crevasses.

We recorded the following information while watching the bird.

### Observations while Perched

The bird was about the size of the largest Herring Gull present. Its mantle was blackish with no hint of

brown, and stood out boldly among the herring and ring-bills. I had observed two adults lesser black-backed within five weeks (the last on 8 March); both appeared distinctly paler-backed than this bird. Though no other dark back gulls were present for direct comparison, I believe the Michigan City bird was darker than a typical Lesser Black-backed Gull (*L.f. graellsii*) but lighter than a great black-backed. Bold white scapular patches and tertials were apparent on the perched bird (figure 2).

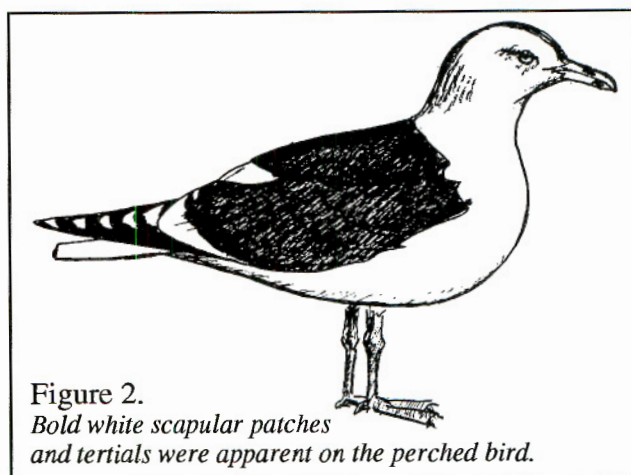
The head was whitish with fine brownish mottling, which was moderately intense on the nape and more diffuse elsewhere (figure 3). The faint mottling gave the entire head a creamy cast compared with the stark white heads of nearby breeding-plumaged Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. Slightly darker mottling was present around the eye. The head appeared

well rounded, rather than angular.

Upper surfaces of the primaries were jet black with white apical spots; the spots were similar in size to those on nearby Herring Gulls. A large white mirror was visible on the outermost primary; seen clearly on the underwing of the perched bird. The yellow bill displayed a red spot on the lower mandible; no black was present. The bill was about the same size and the same proportions as those on nearby Herring Gulls. The upper and lower mandible edges were parallel and there was only a slight enlargement at the gonydeal angle. Legs and feet were pink.

### Observations in Flight

The mantle appeared paler than the black primary tips; contrast was



Drawing by John Cassady.

clearly visible in flight. The most conspicuous feature on the upper wing was a very broad (2-3 cm. wide) white trailing edge, which was especially evident on the inner wing (figure 4). The trailing edge was much wider than those noted on nearby Herring Gulls.

The underwings were white except for a diffuse grayish wash that covered the primaries, and extended