

However, on 11 October 2005, just two days subsequent to my observation of the Lincoln Park bird, Paul Clyne noted two individual Hermit Thrushes on Wooded Island in Jackson Park, Chicago with varying amounts of retained juvenal plumage. One bird showed four to six long buff tips to the scapulars on either side as well as gray-buff spotting on the head (about 10 such spots on the right side of the head behind the auriculars through the nape; the left side of the head was not observed). The other showed at least nine long buff tips on the scapular and upper back feathers on the left side (the bird's right side was not seen, and views of the head were poor). Both birds were somewhat more advanced in plumage than the Lincoln Park bird but were strikingly juvenal nonetheless.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Field Museum of Natural History and its bird collections manager Dr. David Willard for access to and assistance with the museum's collection, and Dr. Douglas Stotz of the Field Museum of Natural History for helpful discussions.

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Memory Lane

The Chicago Ross's Gull of 1978

By Carolyn A. Marsh

When I was writing an article on Jackson Park birder, Dale Pontius, to celebrate his 100th birthday, I read in one of his bird notebooks: "Dec. 2, 1978, 7:00-1:00, North Avenue Beach. Watch for Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) with Doug Anderson." I wondered if it was instead a Ross's Goose or the Ivory Gull.

However, back then, according to Chicago Area Birds published in 1984 by Steven Mlodinow, the Ross's Goose was listed as a very rare vagrant and there was no record of it yet in Chicago. The Ivory Gull was considered hypothetical. The Ross's Gull was also marked a very rare vagrant, except there was a first record. These are the recollections of seven birders about the legendary bird and event in Chicago birding history.

Andy Sigler

I was birding at Gillson Harbor in Wilmette when I saw this small gull sitting in the lake. It was gray above and below on the wings with a white trailing edge. It didn't have much of a bill; it looked dinky because the dark feathering around the bill obscures it and makes it look tiny. The breast was pinkish. I asked a guy that was also bird watching, if he had a bird book. He did and lucky for me it was the Golden Field Guide as it was the only bird guide at the time that had the Ross's Gull in it. I didn't have a car then so once I realized it was the Ross's I ran all the way to the Baha'i Temple, up all of the stairs to find a public phone,

but there was none. I then ran to the phone booth in the train station and called Larry Balch. He came and we spent hours in the harbor searching for the bird, but it never showed up again.

Larry pulled a U-turn
in the middle of
Lakeshore Drive at
Division, in a blizzard,
with a traffic
cop furiously blowing
his whistle at us.

You have to remember the bird previously was considered totally a Siberian gull. Birders would go to Gambell, Saint Lawrence Island or Alaska to see Ivory and Ross's Gulls migrating through. It was found nest-

ing in small colonies in the Canadian Arctic and near Churchill, Manitoba in the early 1980s. I don't know what its status is today.

What's endearing about this sighting was that Larry and I had discussed this exact species just months before. I had mentioned to him that when I was living in New Jersey, I watched the evening news on television about a Ross's Gull found in Massachusetts. Larry declared that it was him on national television!

Larry Balch

This was not a life bird for me. A couple of years earlier I took a day off from teaching math and flew to see the Ross's Gull that was reported in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Thousands of birders were looking for it up and down the East Coast as it was the first North American sighting.

When I arrived, the group of birders already present did not see it at the usual place so I moved away to look for it by myself.