

HEERMANN'S GULL AT HARRISON HOT SPRINGS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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The updated species account for Heermann's Gull (*Larus heermanni*) in British Columbia recently published by Campbell et al. (2006) prompted me to relate an interior record that I noted at Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia. On 8 November 1991, while birding along the sandy shore of Harrison Lake in front of the Harrison Hotel, I noticed a dark gull resting among 28 Mew Gulls (*L. canus*) and four Glaucous-winged Gulls (*L. glaucescens*). The bird was all dark, blackish in appearance, with dark feet and an orange-red bill with a black tip. It was the darkest gull I had ever seen. The gull was identified as a juvenile Heermann's Gull entering its first winter season.

Inland occurrences of the ocean-loving Heermann's Gull anywhere in its post-breeding range are very rare. Merrifield (2006) lists 12 records for Oregon west of the Cascade Mountains, and in Washington, Mlodinow (2005) cites two records for inland locations. All of these inland birds occurred during the southward autumn migration period, between 15 October and 14 November.

It seems likely that the British Columbia bird may have followed Glaucous-winged Gulls up the Fraser River from the coast to the Harrison Bay and Cheakamus River areas where thousands of gulls, mostly Glaucous-winged Gulls, gather each autumn and winter to feed on spawning salmon. The inland distance is about 80 km from the nearest marine waters.

The only other inland record for British Columbia is also a juvenile seen resting on log booms with other gulls on the Fraser River, near Tree Island, just east of the Port Mann bridge, on 11 November 1989. (R.W. Campbell pers. comm.).

Literature Cited

Campbell, R.W., M.I. Preston, S.G. Sealy, B. Hansen, and M.G. Shepard. 2006. Featured species – Heermann's Gull. *Wildlife Afield* 3:152-204.

Merrifield, K. 2006. Pages 261-262 in D.B. Marshall, M.G. Hunter, and A.L. Contreras (eds.). *Birds of Oregon: a general reference*. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, OR. 752 pp.

Mlodinow, S.G. 2005. Pages 176-177 in T.R. Wahl, B. Tweit, and S.G. Mlodinow (eds.). *Birds of Washington: status and distribution*. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, OR. 436 pp.

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About the Author

Jan gained an early desire not just to "watch" birds, but to study them. His teenage years, including long weekends and an entire summer were spent learning more about birds. He volunteered as a warden, banding and surveying birds at the Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario. As a young adult, his desire was to have his own study area and know it well. For 21 years he watched and studied birds in the Harrison Hot Springs, Agassiz, and Seabird Island areas and provided most of the information that was included in the four-volume set *The Birds of British Columbia*.

From 1993 to 2005 he recorded birds in the vicinity of the mouth of Adams River and surrounding areas and then moved to Kamloops, where a new avi-fauna has captivated his interest. Now, Lac du Bois Grasslands Provincial Park has become the love of his life.
