

side and continue around to the log cabin where nearby there are primitive restroom facilities and a short Loop Trail. Continue down the road through the woods until you reach the old abandoned railroad bed where you turn right. Proceed along the railroad bed until you reach the entrance road once more. A new modern comfort station by the entrance road should be completed this spring. The Spring Trail begins and ends at the parking area and takes about ten minutes to walk.

Birding at the meadows is best in the late summer and fall. During the late summer, water levels are lowered to encourage shorebirds to stop by on their migration. Many excellent inland sightings of shorebirds have been made at the meadows in the past few years, such as Wilson's and Northern Phalarope, Hudsonian Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Golden and Black-bellied Plover, Stilt, White-rumped, Baird's and Western Sandpiper, and many others. Since 1970, two Bald Eagles, a Peregrine Falcon, a Sandhill Crane, a Le Conte's Sparrow and a European Wigeon have also been observed. During the fall, waterfowl by the thousands may be seen, particularly Canada Goose, American Widgeon, and Green-winged Teal. After sundown, hundreds of waterfowl may be seen coming in to roost.

Regulations governing public use of the refuge are posted. Disturbance of wildlife or habitat is prohibited, and pets must be kept on a leash. Alcoholic beverages are likewise forbidden, and visitors must remain on existing roads and trails. The refuge is open to the public during daylight hours.

Additional specific information may be obtained by writing, telephoning, or visiting the office.

Berlin Heck
Acting Refuge Manager

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
(Larus fuscus graellsii)*

A sub-adult was first found at Nauset (Eastham) on August 17, 1973, by the undersigned, who later showed it to Carl Goodrich, Bradford Blodget, and Blair Nikula. Wallace Bailey, Jeff Harris, and Vernon Laux were able to see the bird on the evening of the 17th.

This Lesser Black-backed Gull appeared to be entering into its third winter plumage. It had a slightly broken tail band (actually smudges on the ends of some of the rectrices), while the middle wing coverts and some of the under-wing linings were brownish, in sharp contrast to the slaty gray color of the back and parts of the mantle. The head had considerable freckling, especially on the crown. An eye ring was not visible. The bill appeared slightly shorter than that of surrounding Herring Gulls, being orange-yellow with a pale orange spot, immediately behind which was a black smudge. The dull pinkish legs were lighter than those of adjacent Black-backs, shading to pale straw-yellow on the backs near the joints.

Overall, the size was that of the Herring Gulls, being much less than that of the Great Black-backs. The mantle color was much darker than the Herrings but not nearly as deep as the Great Black-backs.

This bird was studied for over an hour from a distance of 300 feet through a 20-power telescope. The weather was cloudy and cool with a 15 m.p.h. northeast breeze. It rained all day on the 15th.

I believe this is only the second published record for Massachusetts, despite the recent increase in sightings throughout the Northeast. The other Massachusetts record was for September 14, 1971, when an adult (also of the race L. f. graellsii) was seen at Monomoy Point by Robert Clem and Wallace Bailey.

Wayne R. Petersen
Abington, Mass.

* Larus fuscus graellsii is the British and western European race of Lesser Black-backed Gull, recognized in adult plumage by a pale gray mantle and wings relative to the Scandinavian race L. f. fuscus, which is often as dark as the Great Black-backed Gull. -- ED.