

Phalarope reported in Mississippi and the second from the sewage lagoons in Hattiesburg. Copies of photographs are on file at the John Martin Frazier Museum of Natural Science and in the Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University.

A Flock of Franklin's Gulls in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

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On 10 November 1980 we found a flock of 22 Franklin's Gulls (Larus pipixcan) at rest on a mudflat off Bay St. Louis beach in Hancock County. The birds were seen at about 11:30 from as close as 40 meters through binoculars and 20X spotting scopes. The sky was slightly overcast, creating excellent light conditions; the temperature was about 68° F., and the winds were out of the southeast at 6-8 km/h.

We first noticed the species by its much darker head, relative to that of a Laughing Gull (L. atricilla). All of the gulls were adults in winter plumage, and showed a sooty gray area around the back of the heads extending around the eyes, surrounding a clean white eye-ring. The face, underparts, rump, and tail of each were white; the mantle and wings were dark blue-gray. The outer primaries were black, showing a considerable amount of white on both sides of them. The Franklin's Gulls were noticeably smaller than two Laughing Gulls which stood with the flock. Their thin bills were dark, as were their legs and feet.

After watching them at rest for about 5 minutes, Hodges flushed the flock, so that the white "windows" were observed between the black and gray primaries. The birds flew south out of sight, and were not seen again.

This record represents a high number for the state; previous sightings have been of single birds. All records for Alabama (Imhof, Alabama Birds, University of Alabama Press, University, 1976) are also of single birds, but in Louisiana (Lowery, Louisiana Birds, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1974) 175 birds in two flocks were seen over Lake Pontchartrain in the fall of 1959.