

**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION AND NEW SITES FOR THE COMMON  
BLACK-HEADED GULL IN MISSISSIPPI**

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The first Mississippi sighting of the Common Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) at Grenada Dam in 1972, and one further sighting at the same place, were described by Davis (1986, Miss. Kite 16:13-16). Despite there being one additional sighting at Grenada Dam by J.A. Toups in January 1987, the species has not been documented for the state by specimen or photograph.

On 12 January 1991 a group of birders made an all-day search by boat for rarities among flocks of wintering gulls on the portion of Pickwick Lake that lies in Tishomingo County, Mississippi. At 4:00 p.m., Wilson sighted an adult Common Black-headed Gull among several hundred Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) that were feeding actively in the area. Knight was able to locate the same bird, despite its being about 70 to 100 meters from the boat, by spotting the dark outer one-third of the underwing, which differentiates the Common Black-headed from the very similar Bonaparte's Gull. The bird was under observation for only 30 seconds before it was lost among the many other gulls. The record provided only the second site of occurrence for this species in Mississippi.

On 18 January 1991, another adult Common Black-headed Gull was located, this time at the outlet channel of Sardis Dam, by Davis. The bird was also seen on 24 January by Knight. Davis obtained one photograph which confirms the identification, although it is unsuitable for publication. The dark outer portion of the underwing called attention to the bird and is visible in the photograph. Copies of this slide deposited in the bird collections at Mississippi State University and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science comprise the best current documentation for this species in the state. The Sardis Dam site, also a new one for the

species, is very similar to the locale at Grenada Dam, which lies 76 km to the south.

Also during the winter of 1990-91, an adult Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) was identified from a boat on Sardis Lake on 12 December by Knight and Vic Theobald, and an adult Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) was seen at the outlet channel of Grenada Dam on 15 January by Knight and Davis, found again by Knight on 15 February, and photographed on 16 February by Wilson accompanied by Terence Schiefer. In no previous season have all three of these rare, irregular species coincided in Mississippi. What the conditions were that made this season more favorable than usual for their occurrence is uncertain.