

for constructive reviews of this note.

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A LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*LARUS FUSCUS*)  
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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WE OBSERVED A LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*) in first-year plumage at Las Salinas, Bani, Dominican Republic on 22 November 1997. The bird was in the company of a small flock of other gulls and terns, including Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Royal Tern (*S. maxima*), Laughing Gulls (*L. atricilla*) in various plumages, a Greater Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*) in first- or second-winter plumage, a first-winter Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*), and an adult Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*). The terns are common at this site, the Ring-billed and Herring gulls are both uncommon but regularly seen, and several Greater Black-backed Gulls, although rare throughout the Caribbean, have been present here for more than a year. Fortunately, we were able to study the Lesser Black-backed Gull from a distance of 20-25 m with a spotting scope, with the bird at times side-by-side with each of the other gull species. The Lesser Black-backed Gull was first picked out as possibly unique owing to its size (intermediate between that of the larger Herring and Greater Black-backed gulls, but larger than the Ring-billed Gull) and an entirely black, comparatively small bill, contrasting with the larger, two-tone bill of the young Herring Gull, which was distinctly lighter at the base. In general, the bird was largely brown, but considerably paler than the Herring Gull, especially on the head, neck, and underparts. In comparison,

the Herring Gull was darker brown with less contrast among the head, upperparts, and underparts. When the gull jumped in the wind, spreading its wings, or took short flights, a well-defined, dark tail-band was seen, contrasting with a light, almost white rump, which also contrasted with the brown back. In addition, the wing showed dark primaries, secondaries, and coverts, such that two dark bars formed on the inner wing. No light window in the inner primaries was seen as is typical of Herring Gulls.

This appears to be the first record of the Lesser Black-backed Gull for Hispaniola, and one of only a few for the Caribbean. No records of this species exist in Keith et al. (in prep.), and Bond (1979) lists the species as a vagrant, with records from Puerto Rico and St. Martin. The bird was also seen by Mia Sondreahl of the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, and Kate Wallace and Danilo Mejias of the Club de Observadores de Aves Annabelle Dod.

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