



News Item

Glaucous gull (*Larus hyperboreus*): a new bird record in Xinjiang, China

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Abstract: XIA Yong and WANG Yaotian saw a first-year glaucous gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) at Beihu Lake, Shihezi (a city of Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region; 44°22'N, 86°07'E; 416 m asl) on 2 January 2016. The gull was also seen and photographed by other observers in the period of 19 December 2015 to 10 January, 2016.

Keywords: Glaucous gull; *Larus hyperboreus*; first record; Shihezi; Xinjiang

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On 2 January 2016, XIA Yong and WANG Yaotian observed and photographed a suspicious first-year glaucous gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) at Beihu Lake, Shihezi, Xinjiang (44°22'N, 86°07'E; 416 m asl). The gull was along with a group of mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) rather than mixed with other gulls. The bird was identified as a glaucous gull (*L. hyperboreus*) (MacKinnon et al., 2000; Svensson et al., 2009; Olsen and Larsson, 2004) through carefully matching the photographs (Figs. 1 and 2) with the relevant references. According to Ma (2011) and Zheng (2011), this was the first time the species recorded as a vagrant in Xinjiang.

Glaucous gull is a typical coastal bird with a length of 62–70 cm, wing span of 138–160 cm and weight of 1.07–2.70 kg (Zhao, 2001; Brazil, 2009; Olsen and Larsson, 2004). The head, neck, underparts and tail of adult-birds are white while the mantle, back and wing coverts are light gray. In winter the head and neck of an adult-bird have some brown-patterning, which creates hooded appearance. However, a first-year glaucous gull retains most or all juvenile plumage in the first winter of its life. According to the photographs, we believe that the glaucous gull spotted in Shihezi was a first-year one. The gull was pale brown with neat brown pattern, pale and translucent flight feathers, and poorly marked tail. When standing, there is a contrast between the pale wing-tip and the darker body. The bird's head mark was not obvious and the dark eyes were circled with white eyelids. Glaucous gulls are different with similar large gulls such as glaucous-winged gull (*L. glaucescens*), and herring gull (*L. argentatus*). The wing-tips of glaucous gulls are paler than their rest part of wings (Zhao, 2001; Svensson et al., 2009; Olsen and Larsson,

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2004; Ayé et al., 2012).

Glaucous gulls frequently appear in tundra, coasts, bays and islands in the Arctic regions during breeding seasons. They migrate south in winter and inhabit at coasts and fishing harbors. The species is occasionally found on the inland riverbanks during the migration (Olsen and Larsson, 2004; Ayé et al., 2012). They feed on fish, rats, insects, crustacean and mollusks as well as fledglings, eggs and animal organs (Zhao, 2001; Olsen and Larsson, 2004). During the observations, we found that the first-year glaucous gull ate mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), fish organs and hid the leftover food in water near the shore.



Fig. 1 Glaucous gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) at Beihu Lake in Shihezi on 2 January 2016 (The photo is provided by XIA Yong)



Fig. 2 Glaucous gull (*L. hyperboreus*) at Beihu Lake in Shihezi on 2 January 2016 (The photo is provided by XIA Yong)

Glaucous gulls breed in the Arctic coasts and islands of northern Eurasia and North America, and inhabit in the areas south of the Arctic Circle in winter. They are also found in the northeast, east and southeast coastal areas of China (Brazil, 2009; Zheng, 2011). Some individuals are observed as vagrants in Kazakhstan, Mongolia and the inland regions of Russia etc (Kalyakin and Voltzit, 2006; Wassink and Oreel, 2007; Bird Life International, 2015). Glaucous gulls are often overlooked in China. They are pretty rare spotted even in the coastal provinces. Table 1 presented the records of glaucous gulls in China according to bird reports and relevant references. Glaucous gulls were found in Jilin, Liaoning, Hebei, Tianjin, Shandong, Jiangsu and Shanghai, and accidentally observed in Beijing, Fujian, Guangxi, Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Table 1 Records of glaucous gulls (*Larus hyperboreus*) in China

	Site	Date (mm/yyyy)	Number (individual)	Reference
Beijing	Wild Duck Lake	11/2011	1 (1 st -year)	Nilsén Townshend (2011 [*])
Hebei	Beidaihe River	02/1917	2	La Touche (1925–1934 [*])
		03/1985; 09/1986; 10, 11/1987	3 (ad.); 2(1 st -year); 3 (2 nd -winter); 1 (3 rd -year)	Holt et al. (1989 [*] , 1994 [*] , 1997 [*])
		05/2004	1	Jannes (2004 [*])
		05/2005	1	China Ornithological Society (2006)
		03, 04/2006	3; 2 (2 nd -winter); 1 (3 rd -year)	Hornskov (2006 [*])
		05/2011	1	China Coastal Water Bird Census Team (2015)
	Happy Island	05/1997	1 (ad.)	Olsen and Larsson (2004)
	Nanpu	04/2010; 04/2011; 04/2012; 04/2013	5 (ad.)	Slaymaker (2010 [*] , 2011 [*] , 2012 [*] , 2013 [*])
Jilin	Lower reaches of Tumen River;	03,04/1988; 03, 04/1989	5–8	Yang et al. (1994)
	Jingxin, Huichun	03/2014	3	China Bird Report (2014a [*])
		03/2016	>50 (30+ad.)	Guan et al. (2016 [*])
Liaoning	Shuangtaizi Estuary Nature Reserve, Panjin	05/1991	1 (ad.)	Brazil (1992)
		10/2001	1 (ad.)	Holt P (2001 [*])
		03/2015	1	China Bird Report (2015a [*])
	Yalu River Wetland Nature Reserve, Dandong	01, 12/2005; 12/2006; 12/2007	5	China Ornithological Society (2006, 2007)
		04, 05, 10/2010	3	China Coastal Water Bird Census Team (2015)
	Zhuanghe Quay	01/2008; 01/2012	4 (ad.)	Holt (2008 [*]); Holt and Wang (2008 [*]); Holt (2012 [*])
		09/2010	1	China Coastal Water Bird Census Team (2015)
	Huanggui power station	01/2008	1 (1 st -year) 1 (2 nd -winter)	Holt and Wang (2008 [*])
	Dalayaogang, Zhuanghe	03/2008	1 (ad.)	Zhong et al. (2008 [*])
	Jinzhou Bay	03/2010	1 (ad.)	China Bird Report (2010a [*])
	Pikou, Dalian	10/2011	1 (1 st -year)	Beeke et al. (2011 [*])
	Dalian Bay	01/2012	1 (ad. winter)	Holt (2012 [*])
			2 (ad.)	Beeke and Holt (2012 [*]); Holt and Townshend (2012 [*])
	Jinzhou Bay refuse dump	01/2012	1 (2 nd -winter) 1 (ad. winter) 1 (ad.)	Beeke and Holt (2012 [*]) Holt (2012 [*]) Holt and Townshend (2012 [*])
	Maoyingzi Landfill, Jinzhou	02/2015	1	China Bird Report (2015b [*])
	Laotieshan cape	09/2015	1 (2 nd -winter)	Beeke et al. (2015 [*])
Shandong	Shi Dao Wan	10/1901	1	Jones (1911)
	Chengshan island	02/1902	1	Jones (1911)
	Jiaozhou Bay	01/2008	1 (1 st -year)	Holt (2008 [*])
	Laizhou Bay, Laizhou	12/2005; 02/2006	4	China Ornithological Society (2006, 2007)
		11/2010	2	China Bird Report (2010b [*])
Shanghai	Shaweishan Island	05/1908	1	La Touche and Rickett (1912)
Tianjin	HaibinYuchang, Tanggu	01/2004	1 (1 st -year)	China Ornithological Society (2005)
		02/2010	1	China Coastal Water Bird Census Team (2015)

Notes: ad., adult; *, from field records not yet published.

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