

TWO NEW *LARUS* GULLS RECORDED IN COSTA RICA

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Ten species of gulls have been recorded from Costa Rica (Sandoval & Sánchez 2013); the majority occur sporadically as vagrants in coastal waters (Stiles & Skutch 1989). Information on actual abundance and frequency of occurrence of this group in Costa Rica is limited (Elizondo & Sandoval 2010), owing to a lack of census and monitoring programs (Sandoval *et al.* 2008, Young *et al.* 2010). Herein, we report the first two Costa Rican records of Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* and Belcher's Gull *L. belcheri*.

KELP GULL

On 8 January 2013, SB photographed a second-cycle individual (Fig. 1) at the mouth of the Colorado River, in the Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Barra del Colorado, Limón province, on the Caribbean coast (10°47'N, 83°34'W). We identified the individual based on the proportions of its head and bill and the greenish color of its tarsi. This last characteristic was also used to separate this individual from the similar Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus*, which has pinkish to yellowish legs at this age (Harrison 1983). Kelp Gull is widespread along continental margins in the Southern Hemisphere (Harrison 1983, Howell & Dunn 2007). In the Americas, the Kelp Gull has been recorded at the northern limit of its normal distribution in Trinidad, Barbados, Panama, Mexico and the US

(Howell & Dunn 2007). Similar to previous Northern Hemisphere records, our observation was made along the Caribbean coast.

BELCHER'S GULL

On 10 June 2007, FLP photographed a second-cycle individual (Fig. 2) at Wafer Bay, in the Parque Nacional Isla del Coco, Puntarenas province, along the Pacific coast (05°33'N, 87°03'W). We identified the gull based on the plumage pattern (whitish front, white collar and rump) characteristic of second-cycle individuals, distinct from other gull species. However, we acknowledge that our photograph and documentation do not yield enough information to distinguish this individual from the close relative Olog's Gull *L. atlanticus*. However, the distributions of these species may offer a clue. Olog's Gull is restricted to the Atlantic coast of Argentina; Belcher's Gull, however, occurs along the Pacific coast of South America (Howell & Dunn 2007), with some individuals found as far north as Ecuador in post-breeding dispersal (Harrison 1983). Therefore, the individual that we observed is most probably Belcher's Gull. This post-breeding dispersal behavior may also explain this species' occurrence in Colombia (Salaman *et al.* 2009) and Panama (Angehr & Dean 2010). A more consistent coastal monitoring program in Costa Rica would be necessary to determine how regularly Belcher's Gull is present.



Fig. 1. Second-cycle Kelp Gull individual (largest gull on right) and four second-cycle Laughing Gulls *Leucophaeus atricilla* observed on 8 January 2013 at the mouth of the Colorado River, in the Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Barra del Colorado, Limón province, on the Caribbean coast. Photograph by Sebastian Bonilla.



Fig. 2. Second-cycle Belcher's Gull individual observed on 10 June 2007 at Wafer Bay, Isla del Coco, Puntarenas province, on the Pacific coast. Photograph by Felipe López-Pozuelo.

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