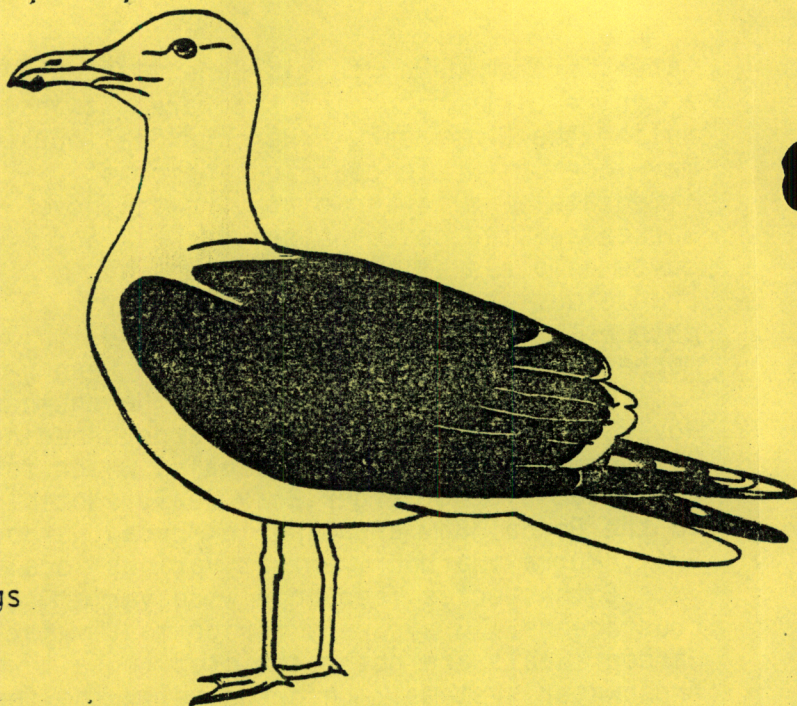


FIRST P.E.I. RECORD FOR LESSER BLACK- BACKED GULL

by Geoff Hogan, Springvale

On 2 January 1983 four members of the NHS, Joyce MacLeod, Vicki Friesen, Tim Birt and Geoff Hogan, observed an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) on MacLure's Creek, an upper reach of Murray River, Kings County, thus constituting the first known sighting of this Old World species on P.E.I. When first seen, the gull was standing alone on the



ice but later joined a nearby flock of Herring Gulls. Excellent viewing was possible from a distance of a few hundred meters for approximately 20 minutes using binoculars and a 20x spotting scope. Several photographs were taken.

The Lesser Black-backed Gull is native to northern Russia, Iceland, Britain and Europe with many individuals wintering along the Mediterranean and North Africa. It resembles our own Great Black-backed Gull in coloration but is slightly smaller than a Herring Gull. A diagnostic characteristic is that the legs of the Lesser Black-backed Gull are yellow, not flesh-colored, as they are on the Great Black-backed and Herring gulls.

While Lesser Black-backed Gulls have been reported previously in North America from the Atlantic provinces south to Florida, additional sightings are unusual and noteworthy.

CHRISTMAS MAMMAL COUNTS

Once again mammal counts were held in conjunction with the annual Christmas Bird Counts. Unfortunately the lack of snow cover and less ice than normal, especially on the first two counts, made it difficult to detect animal tracks and other sign. Nevertheless the following species were recorded.

P.E.I. National Park (Dec. 18, 1982)

- 1 Harbour Seal
- 1 seal sp.
- 6 Red Squirrel
- 'mouse' sign

Montague Count (Jan. 2, 1983)

- 10 Harbour Seal
- 7 Grey Seal
- 1 Snowshoe Hare (plus many tracks)
- 5 Red Squirrel (plus many tracks)
- 1 Muskrat
- 1 Weasel (tracks only)

Hillsborough Count (Dec. 27, 1982)

- 1 seal sp.
- 1 Red Fox
- 6 Red Squirrel
- 1 Muskrat
- 1 'mouse'
- 1 caterpillar
- 1 pussywillow

