

## DOMINICAN GULL



• *Dominican Gull at nest.*

Photo: R. Carrick

# Dominican Gull *Larus dominicanus*

## Age Group Plumages

### First Year

Entire body speckled brown and white, similar to juveniles of other large *Larus spp.* Tail black; primaries entirely dark (see Fig. 1).

*Bill:* Entirely black, or with light tip later in year.

*Iris:* Dark brown.

*Eyelid:* Grey.

*Feet:* Brown to dark brownish-flesh colour.

### Second Year

Head, neck and underparts very variable, ranging from dark mottled brown to, in some individuals, pure white later in year. Mantle initially dark brown, becoming black later in year. Some black in upper wing coverts, especially later in year. Tail either black, or black and white, the amount of black varying with the individual. Those primaries exposed in folded wing entirely dark. (see Fig. 2).

*Bill:* Mostly light with black smudging or black sub-terminal band. Light yellow with pale orange gonydial spot later in year.

*Iris:* Dark brown to light hazel early in the year, light grey later.

*Eyelid:* Light yellow at first becoming orange later in year.

*Feet:* Becoming bluish-grey during the year.

### Third Year

Head, neck and underparts white, except for some brown mottling on head and neck early in the year. Mantle and upperwing coverts black. Tail pure white. Primaries black with white tips (as in adult birds). Birds resemble adults (see Fig. 3) except for dusky-grey primary underwing coverts later in the year.

*Bill:* Yellow, with light orange gonydial spot. Some individuals have dark smudging on bill, especially during early part of year.

*Iris:* Pale grey; sometimes hazel-brown during early part of year.

*Eyelid:* Orange.

*Feet:* Bluish or greenish-grey, becoming dull yellow later in year.

### Adult

Snowy white head, neck, underparts and tail (no subterminal bar as in the Pacific Gull); mantle black; wings black with white markings.

*Bill:* Yellow with bright red gonydial spot.

*Iris:* White.

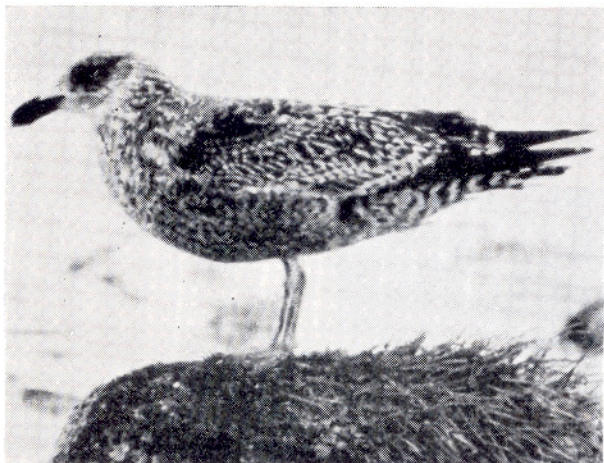
*Eyelid:* Red.

*Feet:* Yellow.

## Separation of Sexes

A. Bill Depth at Gonys*	Male	Female
First Year	18.5 to 21.5 mm	15.5 to 19.0 mm
Second Year	19.0 to 21.5 mm	17.5 to 19.5 mm
Third Year	20.0 to 22.0 mm	18.9 to 20.0 mm
Adult	20.5 to 23.5 mm	18.0 to 21.0 mm
B. Mass	(usually) Above 1020 g	Under 1020 g

\* Data taken in part from Kinsky (1963).



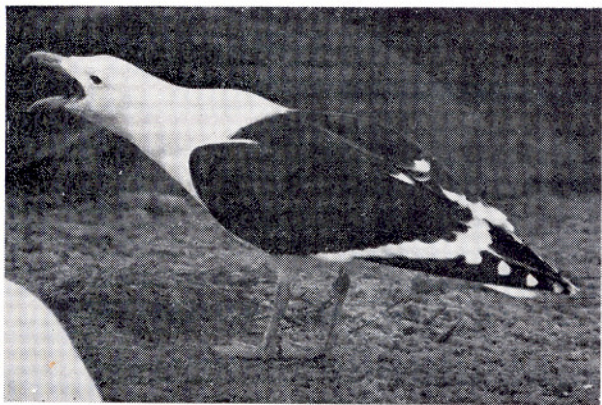
• Figure 1. *Dominican Gull* in juvenile plumage (first winter).

Photo: J. Béchervaise



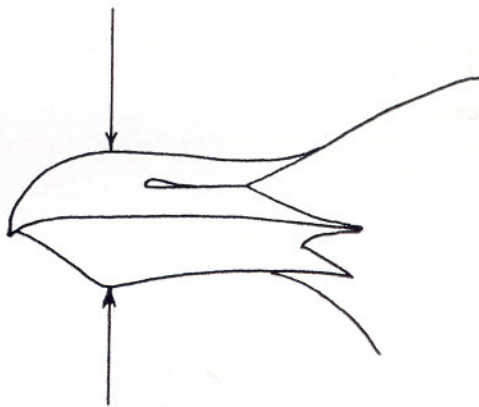
• Figure 2. *Dominican Gull* in intermediate plumage (probably second winter), with *Sheathbills* in foreground.

Photo: J. Béchervaise



• Figure 3. *Dominican Gull* in adult plumage.

Photo: J. Béchervaise



• Figure 4. Bill measurement taken at gonydial angle.

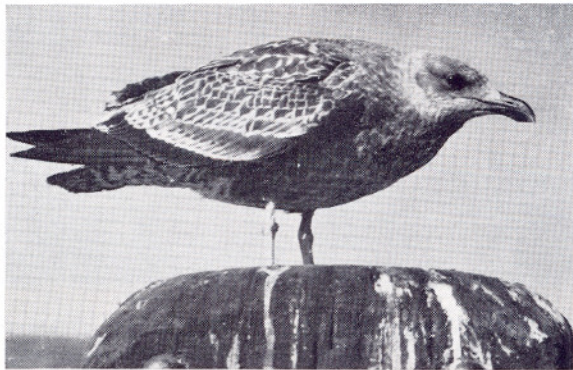
#### Acknowledgements

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#### References

Kinsky, F. C. (1963), 'The Southern Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) Lichtenstein', *Records of the Dominion Museum*, 4(14): 149-219.

Drawing by Author



• *Dominican Gull (juvenile)*

Photo: F. C. Kinsky



• *Dominican Gull (juvenile) showing the protective colouration of the plumage against the background of its natal island.*

Photo: H. Battam