1
A description of the nest, eggs, and
downy nestlings of the Gray-headed
Gull.

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The Gray-headed Gull (Larus
cinereocephalus Vieillot) is, to my eye,
because of the delicacy of its coloring,
the most beautiful of the Hooded
gulls. Its range extends across
South America and tropical Africa.
I am unable to detect any difference
in specimens ~~from~~ ^{of} the two continents. The
largest specimen ~~comes~~ from Argentina,
but another specimen, of the same sex,
and from the same locality is
smaller than the average. It appears
from the following that its
life-history has received little

It was with feelings of delight
 that we reached the south shore
 of Lake Tanganyika, in ^{East} Africa, from the dry and
 dusty Port of Plover, south of the
 southern Nguesso Nijiro River. ^{con} The 1909.
 green basin of ~~Lake~~ Tanganyika was
 refreshing, by contrast, and all the
 more interesting to the members of
 Colonel Roosevelt's hunting party
 because it was the first ~~large~~
 fresh-water lake that we visited.
 We spent the first night beside
 a stretch of sandy beach at either
 end of which the rank growth of
 papyrus claimed the shore-line
 almost around the lake. ~~Wood~~ Shore
 birds ran up the beach, and
~~Geese~~, Crested Greys, Moorhens, and
 Grebes, together with many ducks

I saw among the lily-leaves
 and other aquatic vegetation, and
 the pretty Jacarua ran gracefully
 upon the ^{large} leaves of the blue
 water-lilies. Above the water were
 herons, Terns, and Gulls were
 flying in abundance. On the
 following day ~~the~~ ^{the} camp was moved
 to the edge of a forest of green-barked
 oaks beside the lake, ^{the edge of which} ~~and~~ ^{we}
 were soon busily exploring. The edge
of the Nothing was more attractive
 than the Gray-headed Gulls whose
 nests occupied scattered tufts of
 papyrus and rushes beyond the
 denser zone of papyrus along the
 shore, into which ^{the} water birds seemed
 to come in the trails made by the
 Hippoboscids. Most of the ^{Gull's} ^{eggs} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{nests}

contained young; ~~There~~ but a few
eggs were found. The parents
came flying to the spot as we
approached the small canvas boat;
the neighboring pairs assembled
and circled overhead uttering notes
like those of the American Black-headed
Gull (Larus atricilla).

attention. Mr. C. H. B. Grant,
in "The Ibis" for ~~Octob~~ January,
1915, page 54, wrote as follows:

[Transcribe 2 paragraphs from Ibis.]
It is a trifle ^{smaller} ~~less~~ than the
Laughing Gull (Larus atricilla) of
the eastern United States, and the
pattern is the same. It is white,
with a pale gull-gray mantle, and,
in the breeding season, has a red
^{red eyelids} ~~red~~ bill, and ^{red} feet. The head is a
delicate gray, deepening to plumbeous
at the posterior margin of the hood.
Although described (~~by~~ from Brazil)
by Vieillot in the year 1818, and
well represented by specimens in
nearly all of the ^{bird} great ~~museums~~ collections of
the world, nothing ^{definite} appears to be
known as to ~~its~~ the region of its

breeding place, its nest, eggs,
or downy young. From ^{his statement, and} his familiarity
with the locality, there can be no doubt
that Sir Frederick Jackson was aware
"that this Gull gull breeds commonly
on Lake Naivasha." [unclear] p. 21

A Larus cirrhocephalus² Vieillot.

mated, parents of a downy nestling and one egg

A pair (Cat. Nos. 213842 and 213856, U. S. Nat. Mus.), whose floating nest contained one ^{male} young (Cat. No. 213843) in downy plumage, measuring 255 millimeters in length).

B The egg measured 55 by 38 millimeters. Color olive, streaked and blotched with dark brown, the streaks most numerous at the great end, the blotches ^{most numerous} at the small end.

Under side bands: -

Adults have the iris pale yellow, sometimes white. Eye-ring, entire bill, and entire foot and bare portion of tibial joint vinaceous-red, except the claws which are black.

C Nestling with iris grayish brown. Bill flesh color, subterminally gray. Legs and feet brownish flesh color; claws plumbeous, tipped with horn color.

Gullet filled with small fishes, which were preserved in a mixture of equal parts of alcohol and 1 to 20 solution of formalin, in a glass bottle tube.

E This pair was shot by Kermit Roosevelt. Average of 3 eggs: 54.5 (average of 2) by 37.33.

They

Larus

(Gray-headed Gull - (Cirrocephalus)

Viellot) ^{to my eye,} is ~~precious~~ of the delicacy of its coloring, the most beautiful of the hooded gulls. Its range extends across South America and tropical Africa. I can discern no difference in specimens from the two continents.

It is a trifle smaller ~~longer~~ than the laughing gull Larus atricilla of the Eastern United States and the pattern is the same. It is white with a pale gull-gray mantle and in the breeding season ^{has} a red bill and feet. The head is a delicate gray, deepening to plumbeous at the posterior margin of the hood.

Although described (~~from Southern~~ Brazil) by Viellot in the year 18__ and ~~well~~ represented by specimens in ^{many} of the great collections of the world nothing appears to be ^{definitely} known as to the region of its breeding place, ~~and~~ its nest, eggs or ~~nestlings~~ downy young.

In the ~~January~~ ^{January} 1916 ^{Page} C. H. B. Grant stated as follows. ** [Quote Grant's remark concerning Gov. Jackson's statement that it breeds abundantly on Lake Naivasha and give credit to Jackson for discovering one of its breeding places].

A. Describe its nest

B. Describe its eggs

A

Nest of gray-headed gull³

This nest, as preserved, measures 210 millimeters in diameter by 100 millimeters in depth. It is made up of ~~four~~ lumps of ^{mud mixed with aquatic roots} peaty mud, in the largest lump measuring, roughly 150 X 85 X 75 millimeters. Between these lumps are packed numerous stems, petioles and rootstocks of aquatic plants, chiefly of the blue water lily. The ^{flat} top of this nest is ~~thickly~~ ^{flatly} covered with roots, stems of ~~plants~~ grasses, ~~and not~~ rush, and water lily stems.

The nest was concealed in a small tuft of papyrus growing at the edge of the open water. Its situation was much like the nesting places of the red-knobbed cock (Fulica cristata Gmelin).

Larus cirrhocephalus Vieillot.

Cat

us not Mus.

No. 213862, sex undetermined. Lake Vair =
Yoshi, July 28, 1909.

Length (fresh), 255 millimeters

The bird is covered with down
throughout; but the quills are sprouting,
the primaries having attained a length of
20 millimeters, although still enclosed
in the calamus. The neck, ~~and~~ upper parts,
sides of body and ~~perisoma~~ ^{ventrum} are lead-gray, the feathers
of the back and wings are obscurely banded
with lead brown; crown ^{and cheeks} heavily spotted
with fuscous; ~~the~~ middle under parts
soiled white, ^{irides} grayish brown;
bill flesh color, subterminally gray;
legs and feet brownish flesh color;
claws plumbeous, tipped with horn color
(from fresh specimen).

2

straight

1.2

1.2

male

An older ~~male~~ nestling (Cat. No. 213843, ~~male~~, Lake Nawasha July 21, 1909) has shed the mesoptiles from the middle portion of the crown, ^{and the sides of the face,} where the permanent feathers or tectoptiles ~~are~~ are of a gray (dark gull gray) color. On the under parts, also, many of the mesoptiles have disappeared, ^{especially at the sides of the abdomen,} disclosing the pure white final feathers. In a broad area down the middle of the abdomen, where more of the downy feather-tips are retained the color is pale, yellowish drab-gray. The forehead, ~~and~~ a broad stripe from the base of the bill, above the eye, extending to the back of the head, the neck, throat, and chest are pale yellowish drab-gray; back dark gull gray; scapulars and wings dark gull gray topped with ~~yellow~~ pale yellowish; rump and caudum

(2)

3

drab gray

The gray-headed gull (*Larus*¹⁸
cirrhocephalus Vieillot)^{It is certainly a fact that} breeds ~~in~~ⁱⁿ
considerable numbers on lakes ~~Lehigh~~^{Syracuse}
and Naivasha. At the latter place
our expedition collected twenty-seven
specimens without noticeably depleting
the colonies around the lake.

A number of nests were discovered
on Lake Naivasha
by us, but at a season (late July
and early August) when most of them
contained young.

^{The writer} On July 21, 1909, in company with
Kermit Roosevelt, set out in a small
canvas boat to search for nests of
this gull. Soon a nest seen floating
in the lake. ^{A having doubtless become detached from the vegetation}
in which it lay. ^{on our approach} a
parent left this nest and began
circling overhead where it was quickly
joined by its mate, and both birds were
shot. A young downy nestling and
one egg were taken from this nest. As
noted at the time, etc.)

- C. Describe two stages of the downy young.
- D. Remark on its abundance, and the scarcity of immature dark colored birds during the breeding season at Lake Naivasha.
- E. State that it breeds abundantly on Lake Rudolph.
- F. Compare its habits, actions and notes with those of the American Laughing Gull.
- G. Describe the beauty of its flight ^{and} appearance and bring in its fearlessness.

(H) When the first nest is approached the ~~parentes~~ come circling close overhead uttering loud notes which speedily bring other birds from the vicinity of their nest until a large flock is assembled. All of the parent birds appearing much excited, and uttering cries which closely resemble those of the Laughing Gull. Nearly all are adults, but with here and there a dark, immature bird.

¹¹ R The type specimen (No. 20804, Pl. 2, Fig. 24), from a set of two, from the Bendire collection, was taken by myself, near Tucson, Arizona, June 28, 1872."

B The type measures 54 by 38 millimeters. Another egg from the same nest measures 57 (about) by 36 millimeters.

Type: - *Lew. U. L. U. U.*

The ground color is light olive-gray. The egg is smeared and blotched everywhere except at the little end (for about 20 millimeters) with drab or light greenish drab, the largest blotch, near the great end, hair brown.

B Another egg from the same nest has the ground color the same as the type, but is more sparingly blotched with drab, and, in addition, is smeared here and there with ^{very} pale purplish violet.

B Another nest with two eggs, ~~was~~, much incubated, was taken about the same time and ~~preserved~~ sent to the United States National Museum.