First record of Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*) in the Moroccan Atlantic Sahara

Cees DE VRIES (1) & Patrick BERGIER (2)

(1) Het Wamellant 35, 1902 AS Castricum (The Netherlands)  
ceesdv@gmail.com

(2) Go-South - 4 Avenue Folco de Baroncelli – 13210 Saint Rémy de Provence (France)  
www.go-south.org pbergier@yahoo.fr

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Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*) is a nearctic species with two recognized subspecies: *L. g. kumlieni* breeds in North East Canada and winters between the Labrador, the Great Lakes and Virginia. It is occasionally seen in Europe.

The nominate subspecies *L. g. glaucoides* inhabits Greenland and winters locally but also in Europe, mainly in Iceland, Faroe Islands, Ireland, Great Britain and on the Norwegian and Swedish coasts.

Observations are rare in Western and Southern Europe. However, there have been 155 records (166 individuals) in France until 2005, mostly on the Atlantic coast from Finistère to the Spanish border (Dubois *et al.* 2008).

In Western France, Spain and Portugal high numbers were seen since mid-December 2013 after severe winter storms (cf. WP reports in *Dutch Birding* 36: 124, 2014).

Records of *Larus glaucoides* in North Africa and Morocco

There is no record in Tunisia (Isenmann *et al.* 2005) or in Algeria (Isenmann & Moali 2000) but there are seven data in Morocco, all on the Atlantic coast from Rabat (Oued Bou-Regreg) to Agadir (Oued Souss), with the exception of a bird seen at Ceuta, Straits of Gibraltar:

- A second-winter bird at the Oued Bou-Regreg estuary on December 28th, 1979 (Beaubrun 1979-80)
Larus glaucoides

- A first-winter bird at the Oued Loukkos estuary on October 4th, 1980 (Beaubrun 1979-80)
- A sub-adult at the Oued Souss estuary from April 8th to May 30th, 2003 at least (V. Schollaert et al., C. Koller in Bergier et al. 2004 & 2005)
- A third-winter bird photographed at Aghroud on January 11th, 2004 (H. Dufourny et al. in Bergier et al. 2005)
- A first-winter bird photographed at Essaouira on March 2nd – 4th, 2008 (P. Lampila et al., M. Hornman et al. in Bergier et al. 2010)
- A first-summer bird at the Oued Souss estuary on April 18th, 2009 (P. Vantieghem et al. in Bergier et al. 2010)

The record of February 2014

During a trip in the Moroccan Atlantic Sahara, one of us (CdV) discovered a first-winter Iceland Gull at the Oued Chebeika estuary on February 4th, 2014. The bird was probably pushed there after the severe storms that swept the Atlantic in the preceding weeks and seemed in poor condition. CdV saw the bird again on February 12th. PB saw it then on February 19th and 26th and it was then flying perfectly.

This is the first record of this species in the Moroccan Atlantic Sahara.

References


First-winter *Larus glaucoides* at Oued Chebeika estuary, February 19th, 2014 (Photo P. Bergier)