

## A second Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini* in Brazil

Alexander C. Lees, Almir F. Távora, Marcia Tavares, Antônio Távora  
& Dira Coutinho

Received 19 February 2014

The north-east Brazilian coast in the states of Maranhão and Pará hosts internationally significant numbers of waterbirds and has recently proven to be an excellent 'hunting ground' for Palearctic vagrants (Almeida *et al.* 2013, Lees *et al.* in press). In August 2013 AFT, MT, AT & DC participated in a bird tour of Maranhão, led by T. Rodrigues. They subsequently archived their images on WikiAves (hereafter WA; [www.wikiaves.com](http://www.wikiaves.com)). On 6 September 2013 ACL noticed that WA1074998 taken at Praia Raposa, in the municipality of Raposa (02°24'S, 44°05'W) on 24 August 2013 and captioned as a Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* was a first-summer Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*, an identification confirmed via contact with AFT who along with AT, MT & DC posted additional photographs. Identification was straightforward given the bird's small size, evident alongside a Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* (WA1075741), extensive white 'moons' in the primaries and a 'half-hood' effect produced by the white head contrasting with the grey nape (Fig. 1). The bird was aged as a first-summer based on the all-dark bill, lacking the yellow tip of an adult.

Sabine's Gull has a circumpolar breeding distribution, and winters along the Pacific coast of South America, off Peru and Chile in the Humboldt Current, and along the west coast of Namibia and South Africa in the Benguela Current (Mayaud 1965, Olsen & Larsson 2004, Stenhouse *et al.* 2012). It is rare in the eastern Atlantic south of the Gulf Stream (Moser & Lee 2012) with just three previous records from eastern South America: two in French Guiana and one in Brazil. Both those from French Guiana involved birds at sea: a winter-plumaged adult photographed by



Figure 1. Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*, Praia Raposa, municipality of Raposa, Maranhão, Brazil, 24 August 2013 (A. F. Távora)

O. Tostain, 15–20 km off Grand Connétable island (04°50'N, 51°56'W, 18 km from the Approuague estuary), on 1 November 1999, and an immature photographed by E. Hansen off Îles du Salut, 14 km north of Kourou, on 31 December 2004 (Comité d'Homologation de Guyane *per* O. Claessens). The sole previous Brazilian record was an adult photographed at Praia do Cassino, 4 km south of Casino, Rio Grande do Sul, on 16 November 2009 (Parrini & Carvalho 2009). Stenhouse *et al.* (2012) used geolocators to track the migrations of adults breeding in Greenland, finding that southbound birds appeared not to venture far from the coast but northbound birds took a shorter, more direct, route towards Ascension Island. Most first-summer birds do not return to breed (Olsen & Larsson 2004) and probably remain

in their wintering areas where they may be prone to transatlantic vagrancy caused by the intense storms prevalent in the Southern Ocean during the austral winter.

#### Acknowledgements

We thank Olivier Claessens and Johan Ingels for help tracking down the French Guiana records.

#### References:

- Almeida, B. J. M., Rodrigues, R. C., Mizrahi, D. & Lees, A. C. 2013. A Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* in Maranhão: the second Brazilian record. *Rev. Bras. Orn.* 21: 213–216.
- Lees, A. C., Thompson, I. & Moura, N. G. in press. Salgado Paraense: an inventory of a forgotten coastal Amazonian avifauna. *Bol. Mus. Para. Emílio Goeldi Cienc. Nat.* 9(1).
- Mayaud, N. 1965. Sur la zone d'hivernage Atlantique de la mouette de Sabine *Xema sabini* (Sabine). *Alauda* 33: 81–83.
- Moser, M. L. & Lee, D. S. 2012. Foraging over *Sargassum* by western North Atlantic seabirds. *Wilson J. Orn.* 124: 66–72.
- Olsen, K. M. & Larsson, H. 2004. *Gulls of North America, Europe, and Asia*. Princeton Univ. Press.
- Parrini, R. & Carvalho, C. E. S. 2009. Primeiro registro de *Xema sabini* (Charadriiformes: Laridae) para o Brasil. *Atualidades Orn.* 151: 53.
- Stenhouse, I. J., Egevang, C. & Phillips, R. A. 2012. Trans-equatorial migration, staging sites and wintering area of Sabine's Gulls *Larus sabini* in the Atlantic Ocean. *Ibis* 154: 42–51.
- Addresses:* Alexander C. Lees, Coordenação de Zoologia, Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, C.P. 399, CEP 66040-170, Belém, Pará, Brazil, e-mail: alexanderlees@btopenworld.com. Almir F. Távora, Rua Pereira Valente 640, Apto. 1101, Meireles, CEP 60160-250, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil. Marcia Tavares, Rua da Paz 455, Apto. 205, CEP 60165-180, Mucuripe, Fortaleza Ceará, Brazil. Antônio Távora & Dira Coutinho, Rua Plínio Monteiro 50, Casa 02, CEP 60811-285, Luciano Cavalcante, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil.