

Island 
Ad-Vantages

THE  WEEKLY
PACKET

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

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Seagulls Aren't Real

In my undergraduate college studies, I am pursuing a double degree in wildlife ecology and marine science with the goal of researching the impact of climate change on migratory birds, focusing primarily on seabirds and penguins. Working in Stonington this summer, I have become much more familiar with the seabirds of the North Atlantic coast and have grown more comfortable in identifying the different species of gulls. I remember back in one of my marine classes when we were learning about gulls for the first time my teacher would always yell "SEAGULLS DON'T EXIST. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SEAGULL. THERE ARE GULLS THAT LIVE NEAR THE SEA." So, while most people simply refer to them as "seagulls," I am able to distinguish them as lesser black-backed gulls, great black-backed gulls, herring gulls, ring-billed gulls, or laughing gulls. Though telling them apart can sometimes be quite difficult, and even near impossible, I would like to provide you with a *very basic and general* guide on how I identify the breeding adults.

Lesser black-backed gull: The easiest way to identify these birds is by their dark gray to black wings and black tail feathers. They also possess a red spot on their lower mandible (the bottom part of their beak) and are generally smaller gull species. Their legs and beak are yellow.

Greater black-backed gull: Their plumage is similar to that of their lesser black-backed counterparts, but they are much larger in size. In fact, they are the largest species of gull in the world. One key difference is that the greater black-backed gull has pink legs as opposed to the lesser black-backed gulls' yellow legs.

Herring Gull: Herring gulls are the typical "seagulls" that come to mind for everyone. They exhibit pale light gray wings, black tail feathers with white spots, a red spot on the lower mandible, and pink legs. Younger individuals might also have pale light brownish spots on their necks.

Ring-Billed Gull: The plumage of ring-billed gulls is like that of herring gulls. However, ring-billed gulls have yellow feet and lack the red spot on their mandibles. Instead, they have a black ring that encircles both their lower and upper mandible.

Laughing Gull: These gulls look more like terns rather than gulls. They are a small species of gull with gray wings and a black tail. The most distinguishing feature setting laughing gulls apart

from other gull species is their black heads. Additionally, they have a red bill, dark reddish-brown legs, and a white ring around their eyes.

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Prices to Harvesters

Lobsters (select): \$7/lb.

Lobster (hard): \$6/lb.

Lobster (shedder) \$4.25/lb.

Bait (pogies): \$90/box

Fuel (diesel): \$4.10/gal. *Disclaimer: these figures were collected 8/28/2023*

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W - Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature: 12.75°C 54.95°F

Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 10.15°C
50.25°F

Source: www.neracoos.org