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Reaction of Western Gulls, *Larus occidentalis* to Recorded Seagull Vocal Calls played at Golden Gardens



Developing curiosity and confidence through student-led scientific research on the waters of the Salish Sea

Reaction of Western Gulls, *Larus occidentalis* to Recorded Seagull Vocal Calls played at Golden Gardens

(Seagulls like to keep it real)



Western Gull

Larus occidentalis

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Species of Gulls in Washington State

- California Gull *Larus californicus*
- Western Gull *Larus occidentalis*



Western Gull



California Gull

Life History

Prey

- Marine invertebrates and fishes.
- Eggs and chicks of seabirds.
- Scavenges carrion and refuse.

Predators

- Falcons
- Osprey
- Bald Eagles

Nesting Description

- Nest is a scrape in the ground filled with vegetation, feathers, rope, plastic, or other items.
- Nests in colonies, often with other gull species

Nesting Facts

Clutch Size

1–3 eggs

Egg Description

Light buff or greenish with dark blotching.

Condition at Hatching

Chicks semiprecocial at hatching; may leave nest cup at one day old. Covered in cryptically colored down.



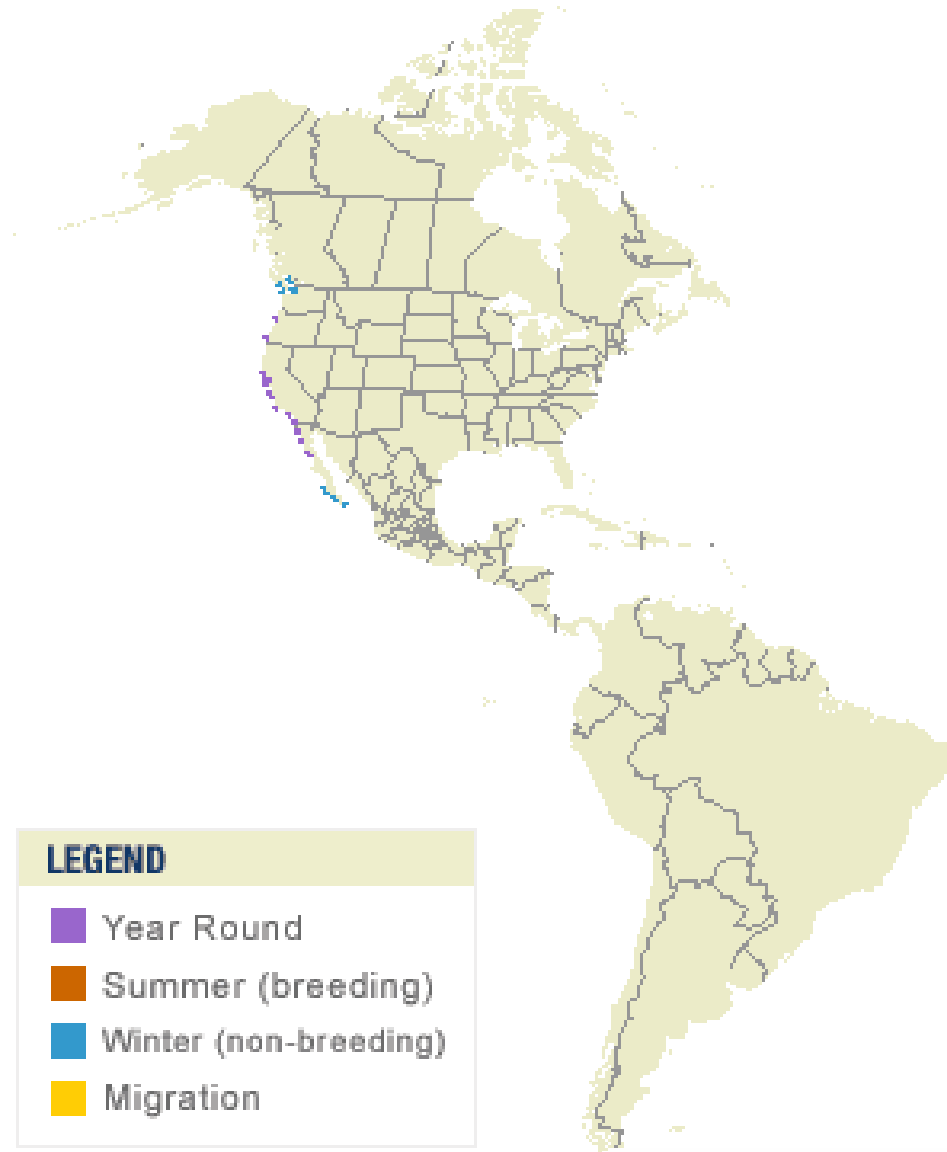
Distribution

- Breeds on Pacific coast from Washington to Baja California.
- During winter, regularly occurs north to British Columbia.
- Preferred habitats include coastal waterways, beaches, harbors, dumps, and open ocean

Interesting Facts

- They typically live 15 years, but can live to at least 25 years.
- A group of gulls has many collective nouns, including a "flotilla", "gullery", and "screech"
- Seagull Chicks can Distinguish the call of their parents

Western Gull
Larus occidentalis



Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe

Hypothesis

If a Recorded Seagull call is broadcast then seagulls will congregate near the broadcast because it is similar to their own call and it can signal food



Background



- The Chicks of the Black Headed gull are able to Differentiate between the calls of its own parent out of the calls of other seagull parents
- This talks about how the communication of seagulls is different then human communication
- Babies Seagulls are able to make the distinction between different breeds of seagull to determine their parents

Procedure

- Step 1: Play Recorded Seagull Call using Car Stereo
- Step 2: Count the Number of Seagulls that come within 50 ft of broadcast during a 10min broadcast period
- Step 3: Repeat Procedure over 3 day period
- Step 4: Record Data



Results

- The greatest accumulation was when there was no call
- The smallest Accumulation occurred when there was a call
- 5 more gulls appeared when there was no noise

