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## Goéland du Cap *Larus dominicanus* et Goéland marin *Larus marinus* à Khnifiss

### African Cape (Kelp) Gull *Larus dominicanus* and Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* at Khnifiss

La situation de ces deux espèces à Khnifiss vient d'être analysée par Jönsson (2011). Il en ressort les points suivants :

- Aucune preuve de reproduction de Goéland du Cap n'a été enregistrée à Khnifiss ni ailleurs dans le paléarctique. Les oiseaux incubant en mai 2009 à Khnifiss (Bergier *et al.* 2009) sont des Goélands marins
- Après ré-analyse, il n'y a que deux ou trois observations valides de Goélands du Cap à Khnifiss jusqu'à fin 2010 :
  - Deux adultes probables photographiés par P. Vantieghem le 23 avril 2009 (photographie *in* Jönsson 2011 planche 11)
  - Un adulte le 20 mai 2009 (photographies *in* Bergier *et al.* 2009 planche 1 et *in* Jönsson 2011 planche 12)
  - Deux adultes (couple) photographiés par J. Jones le 7 juillet 2010 (photographie *in* Jönsson 2011 planche 13), en compagnie de 6 *L. marinus*
- L'ensemble des quelque 70 autres documents photographiques étudiés par O. Jönsson montre des Goélands marins.

The status of these two species at Khnifiss has been analyzed by Jönsson (2011).

- There is no definite proof of Kelp Gull breeding at Khnifiss, nor in the Palearctic. The birds that have bred in 2009 (Bergier *et al.* 2009) are GBBGs.
- Until late 2010, there are only 2 or 3 valid records of Kelp Gull at Khnifiss:
  - Two likely adults photographed by P. Vantieghem on 23 April 2009 (picture *in* Jönsson 2011 plate 11)
  - An adult on 20 May 2009 (pictures *in* Bergier *et al.* 2009 plate 1 and *in* Jönsson 2011 plate 12)
  - Two adults (pair) photographed by J. Jones on 7 July 2010 (picture *in* Jönsson 2011 plate 13), with 6 *L. marinus*

Les éléments apportés par la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine dans ses rapports #15 et #16 (Bergier *et al.* 2010 et 2011) doivent être réinterprétés à la lumière du travail de Jönsson.

- Rapport CHM #15 (Bergier *et al.* 2010) :
  - dossier 08/56 accepté par la CHM (4 adultes, 19 février 2008, photos - T. Pettersson, K. Mild & P. Waern) : *L. marinus* ou *L. dominicanus*
  - dossier 09/47 accepté par la CHM (10 adultes, photos, 23 avril 2009 - P. Vantieghem *et al.*) : 2 adultes *L. dominicanus* probables, voir ci-dessus
- Rapport CHM #16 (Bergier *et al.* 2011) :
  - Dossier 09/71 accepté par la CHM (6 adultes et 2 immatures, photo, 18 novembre 2009 - K. Olsen *et al.*, Norwegian Ornithological Society) : *L. marinus*
  - Dossier 09/85 refusé par la CHM (photos, 4 adultes le 11 décembre 2009, 8 adultes le 14 décembre 2009 - C. Batty, S. Piner *et al.*) : pour l'un des adultes photographié : 'I think this bird shows an all white tip on P10 and, despite the poor flight picture, because of the large amount of white in the wing tip you can also suspect this bird to have a mirror on P9. Also,

I think there is a pinkish hue to the leg colour and the eye looks pretty pale (hard to say for sure from the picture though). I don't think this is a (pure) *vetula*' (O. Jönsson *in litt.*)

- Dossier 10/14 refusé par la CHM (7 adultes et 1 immature le 21 janvier ; 6 adultes, photos, 4 février 2010 - V. Bunes *et al.* ; 2+ le 13 mars et 6 le 16 mars 2010 - A. Nava *et al.*) : *L. marinus*

Based on Jönsson's work, the records analysed by the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (MRBC) in its reports #15 et #16 (Bergier *et al.* 2010 and 2011) have to be re-interpreted.

- Report CHM #15 (Bergier *et al.* 2010) :
  - file 08/56 accepted by MRBC (4 adults, 19 February 2008, pictures - T. Pettersson, K. Mild & P. Waern) : *L. marinus* or *L. dominicanus*
  - file 09/47 accepted by MRBC (10 adults, pictures, 23 April 2009 - P. Vantieghem *et al.*) : 2 likely adults *L. dominicanus*, see hereabove
- Report CHM #16 (Bergier *et al.* 2011) :
  - file 09/71 accepted by MRBC (6 adults and 2 immatures, picture, 18 November 2009 - K. Olsen *et al.*, Norwegian Ornithological Society) : *L. marinus*
  - file 09/85 not accepted by MRBC (pictures, 4 adults on 11 December 2009, 8 adults on 14 December 2009 - C. Batty, S. Piner *et al.*) : for one of the birds: 'I think this bird shows an all white tip on P10 and, despite the poor flight picture, because of the large amount of white in the wing tip you can also suspect this bird to have a mirror on P9. Also, I think there is a pinkish hue to the leg colour and the eye looks pretty pale (hard to say for sure from the picture though). I don't think this is a (pure) *vetula*' (O. Jönsson *in litt.*)
  - file 10/14 not accepted by MRBC (7 adults and one immature on 1 January 2010; 6 adults, pictures, 4 February 2010 - V. Bunes *et al.* ; 2+ on 13 March and 6 on 16 March 2010 - A. Nava *et al.*) : *L. marinus*

Les traits permettant de séparer les adultes de ces deux espèces dans la nature sont rappelés ci-dessous (d'après Jiguet *et al.* 2001, Olsen & Larsson 2004, Jönsson 2011) :

The table shows the main differences between the two species in the field (following Jiguet *et al.* 2001, Olsen & Larsson 2004, Jönsson 2011):

	<i>Larus dominicanus vetula</i>	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Rémiges primaires	Seulement un miroir sur P10 (rémige la plus externe)	Terminaison de la P10 (rémige la plus externe) entièrement blanche ; miroir sur la P9
Primaries	Mirror only on P10	Large, all-white tip to P10 (outermost primary), mirror on P9
Bord de fuite des ailes	Large bande blanche sur toutes les rémiges secondaires et la première moitié des primaires	Large et blanc seulement le long des rémiges secondaires. Sur la première moitié des primaires, la bande blanche devient étroite et 'cassée'
Wing trailing edge	Evenly broad white trailing edge along the secondaries and the inner half of the primaries	White and wide only along the secondaries and not along the inner primaries where it shows only a very narrow and uneven white edge
Couleur des pattes	Olive	Rose
Legs color	Olive	Pink
Couleur de l'oeil	Sombre	Gris-jaune à brun pâle
Eye color	Dark	Pale greyish-yellow to brown
Cercle orbital	Jaune-orange Durant la saison de reproduction. Jaune pâle le restant de l'année	Rouge à orange
Orbital ring	Yellowish orange during breeding season and pale yellow during the rest of the year	Red to orange

New records of Kelp Gulls at Khnifiss, after Jönsson's paper:

- 18 February 2011. 'Despite Jönsson claiming only GBBGs in January and February 2010 and 2011 there was one Cape Gull still present at Khnifiss Lagoon on 18th feb. 2011' (T. Olsen *in* <http://www.surfbirds.com/forum/showthread.php?t=7147&page=4>, post dated 10 March 2011) Photos on [http://www.netfugl.dk/pictures.php?i...species\\_id=387](http://www.netfugl.dk/pictures.php?i...species_id=387)
- 1 March 2011. 'We saw EIGHT different birds - two individuals which were dark-eyed, greenish-grey legged and extensively white in the trailing edge which were recognised as African Cape (Kelp) Gulls and 6 other birds (3 displaying pairs), some of which shared intermediate characters, which could be argued were Great Black-backed Gull-types, two individuals having clearly pale irides and quite obvious pink legs. One of the adult Kelp Gulls (perhaps the male as he often perched on top of the rock long-calling) had more extensive white in the wing than the other bird and I would assume that they were the two adults that Josh Jones photographed and videoed last July at the site. This is a unique population of birds, clearly resident and clearly very closely related, not only with each other but also with the 18 or so pairs of Atlantic Yellow-legged Gulls in the colony. I am told that one adult black-backed gull hybridised with one of the Yellow-legged Gulls there last summer' (Lee Evans *in* <http://www.surfbirds.com/forum/showthread.php?t=7147&page=4>, post dated 14 march 2011).
- 19 March 2011. 'Found just before dusk after 2 full days of intensive research. At least, we saw not less than 13 Great Black-backed Gull on the same spot (2nd winter 2, 3rd winter 1, subadult/adult 10 together with a strange looking 3th/4th winter GBBGull a Cape Gull-like at more than 30 meters). The Cape Gulls of the picture are at 980m from us. Look on the broad trailing edge (best key on the ground to me), the greenish legs and overall appearance of GBBG. They have a small mirror on P10 and a full black on P9 visible only in open wing. Close to GBBG in size but however they looks slightly smaller but bigger than Yellow-legged Gulls' (V. Legrand *in* [http://www.netfugl.dk/pictures.php?id=showpicture&picture\\_id=39188](http://www.netfugl.dk/pictures.php?id=showpicture&picture_id=39188), photo)

This same day, an apparent hybrid gull: 'Atlantic Yellow-legged Gulls also occur in the area. So the photos of the bird below (taken March 19th 2011) by Vincent Legrand are intriguing. They are stunning photos and at first glance my best guess would be something with a GBB type head and bill (watered down) that had a Yellow-legged Gull as its other parent. However as Vincent has pointed out, the white trailing edge to the primaries is particularly wide. A feature of Cape Gull. So hypothetically, an adult

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Yellow-legged Gull X Cape Gull hybrid?! And the inevitable scary question - what if the Great Black-backed and Cape Gulls hybridise? (Martin Garner in <http://birdingfrontiers.com/>, post dated 6 April 2011, photos)

- 14 April 2011. The Khnifiss gulls are confusing so the data which is in our trip report ([www.go-south.org/09\\_TripReports/R250\\_2011\\_03\\_paal.pdf](http://www.go-south.org/09_TripReports/R250_2011_03_paal.pdf)) IS INCORRECT based on the information i have gone through lately... I can confidently claim that we identified correctly (based on the photos): 5 GBBG (*L. marinus*), 2-3 hybrid (with unknown parental species, most likely YLG x GBBG) and presumably 1 pure Kelp Gull (no photos). There were few other large gulls of which i don't have photos so I'm not confident what they were. I think this group of birds needs extremely cautious approach (Uku Paal, e-mail 12 April 2011)

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extrait de **Bergier, P. ; Qninba, A. & Thévenot, M.** (2011)

... Depuis, de nouvelles observations de Goélands du Cap faites par des ornithologues avertis du problème très complexe des 'grands goélands sombres' de Khnifiss, ont été postées sur internet (cf en particulier les blogs : [www.surfbirds.com/forum/showthread.php?t=7147](http://www.surfbirds.com/forum/showthread.php?t=7147) et [www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=181282](http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=181282)) dont certaines transmises pour analyse à la CHM.

Il en ressort qu'outre les Goélands du Cap (apparemment minoritaires) et les Goélands marins (en plus grand nombre) observés nicheurs dans la colonie de Goélands leucophées *Larus michahellis* de l'île de Khnifiss, il a été vu des couples 'mixtes' avec des Goélands leucophée (e.g. in Bergier *et al.* 2009) et des individus présumés hybrides *L. dominicanus x L. michahellis* ou *L. marinus x L. michahellis* – voir par exemple Jönsson 2011 et les forums :

- <http://www.surfbirds.com/forum/showthread.php?t=7147&page=4>,
- <http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php?t=181282>,
- [http://moroccanbirds.blogspot.com/2011\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://moroccanbirds.blogspot.com/2011_03_01_archive.html).

Enfin nul ne sait à quoi ressemblerait un hypothétique hybride *L. dominicanus x L. marinus* mais la question peut se poser comme le fait Martin Garner (posté le 6 avril 2011 sur Birding Frontiers) : '*And the inevitable scary question - what if the Great Black-backed and Cape Gulls hybridise?*' (<http://birdingfrontiers.com/2011/04/06/cape-gull-hybrid/>)

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**Bergier, P. ; Franchimont, J. ; Thévenot, M. & CHM** 2010. Les oiseaux rares au Maroc. Rapport de la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine numéro 15. *Go-South Bull.* 7 : 1-14.

**Bergier, P. ; Franchimont, J. ; Thévenot, M. & CHM** 2011. Les oiseaux rares au Maroc. Rapport de la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine numéro 16. *Go-South Bull.* 8 : 1-20.

**Bergier, P. ; Qninba, A. & Thévenot, M.** 2011. Notes naturalistes au Sahara Atlantique marocain - 3. *Go-South Bull.* 8 : 67-103.

**Jiguët, F. ; Jamarillo, A. & Sinclair, I.** 2001. Identification of Cape Gull. *Birding World* 14: 112-125.

**Jönsson, O.** 2011. Great Black-backed Gulls breeding at Knifiss lagoon, Morocco and the status of Cape Gull in the Western Palearctic. *Birding World* 24: 68-76.

**Olsen, K.M. & Larsson, H.** 2004. *Gulls of Europe, Asia and North America*. Second print. London