

BEHAVIORAL TRAITS OF A RING-BILLED GULL

Range and Habitat:

This gull breeds locally south to California, the northern Great Plains, and the southern prairie provinces of Canada, and also in the Great Lakes region, Canadian Maritimes, and northern New England. It winters on coasts, rivers, and lakes from southern New England south to Cuba, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast, and from British Columbia to southern Mexico. Preferred habitats include lakes and rivers and many moves to salt water in winter.

Breeding and Nesting:

Two to four spotted buff or olive eggs are laid in a hollow in the ground, sometimes lined with grass or debris. In the North, they sometimes nest in low trees. These gulls nest in colonies, often with other gulls or terns, usually on islands in lakes. Incubation ranges from 21 to 28 days and is carried out by both sexes.

Foraging and Feeding:

This gull is a scavenger. It will eat fish, rodents, small aquatic animals, bird chicks and eggs, and sometimes grasshoppers. It is best known for frequenting landfills, garbage dumps, and following ships which dump refuse overboard. It will also scavenge from plowed fields, parks, and parking lots. In flight, the Ring-billed Gull is able to snatch food from the water's surface.

Vocalization:

This gull has a call which sounds like kree, kree uttered in a screeching fashion or a shrill kyow-kyow-kyow with high-pitched squealing notes. This is also known as the alert call.

Similar Species:

The Ring-billed Gull may be confused with the Herring Gull, which is larger and has a thicker bill which lacks the black ring. Also similar is the California Gull, which is larger and has a red spot near the tip of its lower mandible.



Breeding Locations:

Grassland with scattered trees,
Seashore, rocky or sandy

Breeding Type:

Abundant

Breeding Population:

Grassland with scattered trees,
Seashore, rocky or sandy

Egg Color:

Green Brown

Number of Eggs:

2 - 4

Incubation Days:

21 - 28

Egg Incubator:

Both sexes

Nest Material:

Made of weeds, debris, and grass.

Migration:

Migratory