



On the Watch
June Hitchcox

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Herring Gulls

There are many species of Gulls. Says a bird book: “It is best to thoroughly learn to recognize one common species then you will be able to notice the differences when another comes along.” Bird books suggest to start with the adult Herring Gull - four years old or more. Until then, they go through many yearly and seasonal changes - different colours etc. - but for this article, to make it more simple, we will stick with the adult Herring Gull. Herring Gulls - widely known as “Sea Gulls” - are found all over our Northern Hemisphere.

In Ontario, favourite spots are our Great Lakes and north to even Hudson Bay. Apsley is mentioned where we had such a wonderful retirement life with such good friends and all the places where I now live in the Toronto-Oakville area - to be near our sons.

This bird is a scavenger, often found eating in dumps as well as finding food in plain or salt water. They are often found in a lake or river, washing off the salty water collected on their feathers. When lakes freeze over, they must migrate to open water and have been seen as far south as Mexico.

They are a large bird - about 23” to 26” long. They have learned to drop shell fish over rocks to break off the shells to be able to eat them and they have passed that knowledge on to their young. It is the only large Gull with a gray “mantle” that stretches solidly from one wing to the other, over its back, ending in wing tips that are black and white feathers. Otherwise, their feathers are white. Their legs and webbed feet are pink. Their beak is yellow with a red dot on the underside near the tip. Their voice is a loud “kee-ow” + whinng and squealing notes. In colonies, their voice is a dry “gah, gah gah”.

That is it for the adult Herring Gull, in my bird books. I hope to put this article to good use for me to be able to identify it and hope that you will, too.

Editor’s Note: An old friend used to refer to Sea Gulls as “Rats with Wings”. **Below:** Unsplash photo by Jake weirick.



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NORTH KAWARTHA COMMUNITY CENTRE

CASH BAR | 50/50 DRAW

COCKTAILS	6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.
DINNER	7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
ENTERTAINMENT	9:00 P.M. - 12:00 A.M.

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DINNER PREPARED BY: HEAVEN ON SEVEN
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- SMOKED HAM WITH CINNAMON CREAMED SAUCE
- SMOKED TURKEY WITH FRESH ORANGE AND CRANBERRY
- SMOKED BEETS, CARROTS AND TURNIP
- MASHED AND DOUBLE SAUCED GOLDEN POTATOES
- TURKEY/SAUCE GRAVY
- ORGANIC CORN WITH HERB BUTTER AND SEA SALT
- CHOICE OF 2 SALADS
- BREADS AND FRESH ROLLS BUTTER ON THE SIDE
- CONDIMENTS
- FRESH APPLE AND PUMPKIN PIE WITH REAL WHIPPED CREAM