93 Mongolian Gulls / Mongoolse Meeuwen *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*, adults, Lake Baikal, Siberia, Russia, June 1992 *(Pierre Yésou)*. Note contrast between pale grey underwing-coverts, darker grey band formed by bases of remiges and white (almost translucent) trailing edge to wing **94** Mongolian Gulls / Mongoolse Meeuwen *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*, adults, Lake Baikal, Siberia, Russia, June 1992 *(Pierre Yésou)*. Note distinct white trailing edge to wing

TABLE 2 Number of black-tipped primaries in Mongolian *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*, Vega *L vegae* and Baraba Gulls *L (c) barabensis*. Data on *barabensis* and *vegae* from Panov & Monzikov (2000) and from skins at Zoological Institute of St Petersburg, Russia, respectively. [a] Number of black-tipped primaries can differ by one, thus bird showing, for instance, eight black-tipped primaries in one wing and nine black-tipped primaries in other wing is scored 8.5. [b] *Vegae* includes Birula Gull *L v birulai* but no birds of Taimyr have been considered in sample. [c] Panov & Monzikov (2000) did not look for asymmetry in number of black-tipped primaries. Also, their small sample did not include any specimen with nine black-tipped primaries; however, such birds do occur (Yésou & Hirschfeld 1997)

Number of black-tipped primaries	*mongolicus* (%)	*vegae* [b] (%)	*barabensis* (%)
8.5 [a]	1	-	- [c]
8.0	11	-	39
7.5 [a]	8	-	-
7.0	74	36	39
6.5 [a]	-	10	-
6.0	6	42	22
5.5 [a]	-	4	-
5.0	-	8	-
Sample (n)	89	50	18

black-tipped primaries and the frequency of black on the coverts, the wing-tip of *mongolicus* is among the darkest of the Asian taxa of the *argentatus-cachinnans-fuscus* complex, averaging darker than in *vegae*. Only *barabensis* more frequently shows black on eight primaries (table 2).

The tongue on the inner web of the outermost primary (p10) is pale grey. It is usually rather long, ending 9-15 cm from the primary-tip (see also Panov & Monzikov 2000) and covering about two-thirds of the width of the inner web. It is, however, shorter (ending up to 20 cm from the primary-tip) and narrower and somewhat darker in some birds, particularly those with eight or nine primaries with black, then resembling the usual *vegae* and *birulai* pattern. In such birds, the pale tongue can be less distinctly delineated from the black inner part of the web, being suffused with blackish.

White mirrors usually occur on both p9 and p10 but seven out of 67 (10%) adult-plumaged birds examined showed only a white mirror on p10.

The white mirror on p10 invariably forms a complete band covering the full width of both webs. It is usually separated from the white wing-tip by a subterminal black bar of 5-25 mm width although this bar was absent in two birds and incomplete in four others. The subterminal black bar was thus lacking, at least in part, in 9% of the handled birds. By way of comparison, this bar was incomplete or absent in 13 out of 45 (29%) skins of *vegae* and *birulai*, and it is usually absent in *cachinnans* (eg, Garner & Quinn 1997, Panov & Monzikov 2000). The length (measured along the feather-shaft) of the white mirror on p10 varied from 19 to 47 mm (with a mean of 36.4 mm), being 34-40 mm in half of the sample. It was worn at the tip and 48 and 55 mm long, respectively, in the two birds without a subterminal black bar.

The white mirror on p9 extends onto both webs (68% of 60 birds with a white mirror on p9) or is limited to the inner web (32%), exceptionally to the outer web (one case was mentioned by Panov & Monzikov 2000, ie, 1% of 92 birds, pooling their and mine samples). It forms either a complete white band (nine birds, 15%) or more often one or two white spots of variable pattern: white on both webs, extending to the border of the inner web (28%); white on both webs, fully surrounded with black (25%); white on the inner web only, extending to the border of the web (12%); white on the inner web only, fully surrounded with black (20%). The maximum length of the white mirror on p9 (measured parallel to the feather-shaft) varied from 6 to 31 mm (with a mean of 17.7 mm), being 10-22 mm in 77% of the cases.

No strong statistical relationship was found between the respective sizes of the white mirrors on p9 and p10 (n = 60).

Bill colour

The bill is yellow, varying from pale yellow to bright orange-yellow, commonly with a paler tip. The red gonydeal spot usually does not reach the upper edge of the lower mandible, falling short by 2-3 mm. Dark markings (spots or broken lines in front of the red gonydeal spot) occur in one out of three birds. Of 107 adult-plumaged birds trap-

95-96 Mongolian Gull / Mongoolse Meeuw *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*, adult, upperwing, Lake Baikal, Siberia, Russia, June 1992 *(Pierre Yésou)*. Typical wing-tip patterns. Note large white mirror and subterminal black bar (white tip more or less abraded) on p10 and mirror of variable extent on p9