

332-02-1999

POMARINE JAEGER

Stercorarius parasiticus

pomarinus

Location: Sunset Point at Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, Pa

Date: December 28, 1999 and January 2, 2000

Time: 8:45 to 8:50 AM and 8:00 AM on 1/1/00

Weather: Cloudy, wind southwesterly to about 10 mph. Visibility good.

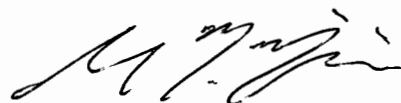
Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and Kowa TSN 4 Spotting Scope from 35 to 45X

Viewing distance: about 1/2 mile away

Details of sighting & description: While conducting the waterbird count I spotted a very dark gull-like bird at the horizon heading west. As it got closer I could clearly identify it as a jaeger by the overall darkness of the plumage, the falcon-like flight, and the white flashes in the primaries. It flew past some Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), but never chased them instead it flew in a rather constant westerly direction. It would glide up to about 20 feet above the water and then drop back down to almost touching the water before ascending again. It continued this flight pattern until it flew out of sight. Compared to the Ring-billed Gulls it flew past, I could clearly see that it was at least as large but had a heavier body. The following characteristics helped me determine that it was a Pomarine Jaeger. The entire upperside and underside of the bird, except the wings, were black. The underwing coverts were dark brown with black barring. The white flash at the base of the primaries was rather extensive even on the uppersides and from this distance it appeared as if there was a hole in each wing. When the bird banked and showed the entire underside of the wing the white base of the primaries and a smaller white patch in the area of the primary coverts could be clearly seen. There were no tail projections and when the jaeger spread its tail it looked slightly wedged shaped. Compared to the Ring-billed Gulls it had broader wings, a heavier body, and a thicker neck. Parasitic Jaegers have slighter builds, reminiscent of Peregrine Falcon, and are about the same size as Ring-billed Gulls. This jaeger flew more like a gull, gliding frequently with a more labored wing beat and few quick turns, unlike the agile moves of Parasitic Jaeger. It held its wings in an arch below the horizontal when gliding and when it flapped its wings the wing beats were shallow and slow. Its wings were broad at the base and angled back at the wrist. On January 2, 2000 I saw a bird identical to the one seen on December 28, 1999. The same conditions and description above apply to this bird. I can't be sure if this is a different bird or the same bird that is cruising around the lake making appearances every so often.

This is the fifth or sixth Pomarine Jaeger I have seen at Presque Isle State Park.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round One

Species: Pomarine Jaeger (Stercorarius pomarinus)

Date of Sighting: 28 December 1999 to 2 January 2000

Location: ERIE

County: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2000

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

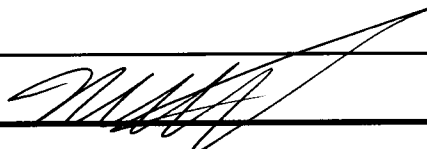
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead			X					
D. Couchman			X					
P. Hess			X					
R. Ickes			X					
B. Reid			X					
P. Rodewald			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/26/01