

332-01-2002

POMARINE JAEGER

Stercorarius parasiticus pomarinus

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

Date: January 1, 2002

Time: 10:15 to 10:18 AM

Weather: Cloudy, wind westerly to about 15 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 1/4 mile away

Details of sighting & description: While conducting the waterbird count I spotted a very dark gull-like bird at the horizon heading south towards me. As it got closer, within 1/4 mile, it turned to fly southwest parallel to the shoreline. 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 continued flying steady in a southwesterly direction without gliding until it was out of sight. The wing beats were slow yet it moved along rather quickly. The following characteristics helped me determine that it was a Pomarine Jaeger. Except for the pale rump, the entire upperside of the bird was blackish. Distinctive black bars past over the pale rump as well as the undertail coverts. The underwing coverts were a light grayish-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 seen. There were very short central tail projections that appeared wide and blunt tipped. The jaeger had broad based wings giving the wings a rather short stubby look. The body appeared bulky and the underside was a dingy brown or grayish brown becoming a warmer brown color on the lower belly. I did not detect any barring across the breast or around the neck. However, the breast did appear darker than the rest of the underside. Barring could be clearly seen across the lower belly and undertail coverts. Parasitic Jaegers have slighter builds, reminiscent of Peregrine Falcon, and are about the same size as Ring-billed Gull. This jaeger flew more like a gull with a more labored wing beat and few quick turns, unlike the rapid 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.

This is the sixth or seventh Pomarine Jaeger I have identified at Presque Isle State Park. I feel fairly confident that the jaegers I had seen last week were Pomarines as well since their shape, flight behavior, and amount of white at the base of the primaries was identical to the Pomarine seen today.



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Pomarine Jaeger (Stercorarius pomarinus)

Date of Sighting: 1 January 2002 to 1 January 2002

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

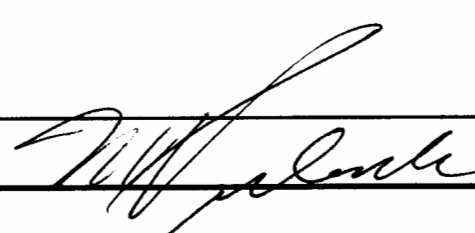
Specimen: No

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. Heathcote			X					
P. Hess			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 2/5/03