

332-01-2011 #1

POMARINE JAEGER

*Stercorarius pomarinus*

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Location: Sunset Point, Presque Isle S.P., Erie, Pa.

Date: November 6, 2011

Time: about 10:30 AM

Weather: clear, wind s to 15 mph, temp. 50 F

Viewing distance: about ¾ mile offshore

Optics: Kowa TSN 4 at 30 to 50X

Details: I had just walked away from my waterbird count to relieve myself across the road from Sunset Point, when I heard a shout coming from Rich Rehrig and Mike Weible saying "jaeger." This always seems to happen to me! I raced back to my car and directed my scope in the direction they described and I got on it as it was pursuing a Ring-billed Gull. They had had much closer views of the jaeger as it zoomed past just outside breakwater #57 heading east while I was in the bushes doing my thing. We watched it for several minutes out over the lake chasing around Ring-billed Gulls. Finally it latched on to one of the gulls and carried it down to the water where we could see the gull struggling with the jaeger. We never saw the jaeger or the gull again. We assumed the jaeger killed the gull and consumed it on the water, though it is difficult to know for sure because they would constantly disappear between the waves. It is possible that the gull was carrying food in its mouth that it was not willing to give up and the jaeger latched on to it and tried to pull it free from the gull. I have never seen a jaeger actually take down a gull.

The light was excellent giving nice views, despite the distance. Compared with the Ring-bills, the jaeger was noticeably bulkier with broader wings. This was especially notable when the two jostled together down to the water from about 25 feet above the surface. The flight was not especially fast with relatively slow shallow wing beats, except when in pursuit. It did not give the overall behavior of Parasitic Jaeger, which in my opinion suggests a Peregrine Falcon. The white patch at the base of the primaries was very broad and distinctive. The distance was too great for me to see the white crescents on the primary coverts, typical of most immature Pomarine Jaegers. The under tail coverts as well as the upper tail coverts were boldly barred with black and white. This contrasted immensely with the overall brown appearance of the upper side. The belly appeared paler than the rest of the bird. The under wing coverts were also well barred with black and white contrasting with the darker flank feathers. It was never close enough for me to see the shape of the central tail feathers, though I could clearly see that they did not project beyond the other tail feathers. However, Mike and Rich said when it was in close before I got there, they could clearly see that the tips of the central tail feathers were definitely round and not pointed. I feel confident that the bird was a Pomarine and not Parasitic Jaeger, based upon its size, its behavior, and plumage. I have some experience with both species of jaegers, especially Parasitics, on Lake Erie and on the Atlantic Ocean.

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Date of Sighting: 6 November 2011 to 6 November 2011

County : ERIE

Location : PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams, Rich Rehrig, Mike Weible

Date of Submission: 2011

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. DeReamus			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter			X					
R. Koury			X					
D. Weber			X					
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary) Nick Pulcinella

Date: 7/16/12