

Pomarine Jaegers (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)
Greenlick Run Reservoir, Fayette County
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BACKGROUND

I stopped by Greenlick Run Lake after work to check for birds that took refuge at the lake during the passage of Hurricane Sandy. As I parked near the lake, I noticed a group of birds flying around in a kettle. Naked eye, I thought they were all gulls, but when I put my binoculars on them, I realized they were all jaegers. I counted 29 birds. They were difficult to count because they were constantly crossing while in flight, scattering, grouping, etc. The field marks I noted immediately included the dark brown color, the breast band and the white flashes near the primaries.

The birds were restless and active, landing on the lake for a few seconds and picking up again. I managed to get my scope on the group for a few seconds while they were on the water and then in the air. I also observed them through binoculars as they swirled overhead before moving on and leaving the lake.

DESCRIPTION

- Large, bulky dark gull like birds.
- Larger than Ring-billed Gull (direct comparison as they were flying around with Ring-billed Gulls).
- Dark brown upperparts including wings, mantle, tail and crown.
- Bill dark (black)
- White chin and underparts broken by a broad dark breast band, mottled at the edges. Dark undertail coverts.
- Wings brown with white patches at the base of the primaries both on the upperside and underside. Distinct white primary shafts were not visible due to distance and viewing conditions (snow and gusty wind). All I could see was a white patch near the tips of the wings. Base of wings broad and tips pointed.
- One bird had the distinctive thick long, club-like central tail feathers. Other birds showed stubby central tail feathers.
- At least one bird was smaller and less bulky than the others so there may have been one or more Parasitic Jaegers in the flock, but due to conditions I was unable to determine that for certain.