

333-01-1991

PARASITIC JAEGER, ERIE COUNTY 10/5/91 Ed Kuater

At about 4.30 p.m. on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1991, Jerry M<sup>c</sup>Williams, Jim Stull and I were standing at the northern end of Gull Point, Presque Isle State Park. There was a strong westerly wind blowing. It was overcast and raining. Looking north across Lake Erie I saw a ~~bird~~ jaeger (Stercorarius sp.) chasing a Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) about 200 yards offshore. I identified it as a ~~jaeger~~ Parasitic Jaeger (S. parasiticus) based on the following characters:

The flight was reminiscent of a Peregrine (Falco peregrinus) with strong flexible wingbeats. It was a dark-phase juvenile bird. The general plumage color was extremely dark brown, the belly being slightly paler than the rest of the plumage and there was also a suggestion of a slightly paler nape. The wings were fairly broad at the base but sharply pointed at the tips. There was a noticeable white patch on the upperwing formed by the bases of the outer primary shafts, more prominent than in Long-tailed Jaeger (S. longicaudus) but less so than in Pomarine (S. pomarinus). There was an even more noticeable white patch on the underside of the outer primaries formed by the ~~the~~ white primary bases. There was no white crescent on the greater under primary coverts as in Pomarine Jaeger. When the tail was spread during the pursuit of the Herring Gull, the pointed central rectrices could be seen projecting beyond the rest of the tail which was wedge-shaped. The bird was noticeably smaller than Herring Gull.

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After chasing the gull, the jaeger flew down to the lake surface where it alighted briefly with its wings raised high over its mantle. It ~~lay~~ remained on the water for about half a minute before taking off and flying directly west into the strong head wind and very close to the water. The bird seemed to have no problem flying into the wind. Total observation time was 4 or 5 minutes through  $\times 10$  binocular &  $\times 25$  spotting scope. The bird was also seen by JM & JS.

3-3-01-1991 (W. &amp; C. 1991)

PARASITIC JAEGER  
*Stercorarius parasiticus*

- Date...Oct. 5, 1991
  - Location...Gull Point, Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co., PA
  - Time...Approx. 4:30 PM
  - Optics...10 X 40 Ziess Dyalyt Binocular
  - Weather...Cloudy (stratus) wind westerly to approx. 35 mph  
temp. about 50°F with moderate rain showers,  
visibility was fair.
  - Other observers...Ed Kwater and Jim Stull
  - Details of sighting...The 3 of us were standing at the outer beach (north end) of Gull Point watching the lake for migrating birds, particularly jaegers, Sabine's Gulls, and phalarope's. Within 30 minutes Ed shouted "jaeger" at which time I immediately got on the bird. Ed spotted the jaeger chasing a gull. When I saw it, the jaeger was just abandoning the chase and started flying towards us, at which time it landed on the water briefly before continuing towards us. It landed 2 or 3 more times on the water holding its wings up and occasionally flapping them before flying to the right to continue in a westerly direction. Its closest approach to us was several hundred yards. We followed it until it was out of sight.
  - Description...The distance between us and the bird in addition to the high wind and rain made viewing difficult. However, I was able to determine the jaeger to species by the relative size and behavior of the bird. The gull it abandoned from the chase was a Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) which appeared to be noticeably larger and slower than the jaeger. The jaeger's wings were sharply bent backwards as it flew in much the same way a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) would hold its wings. The body was typically gull-shaped and was not barrel-chested like Pomarine Jaeger (*S. pomarinus*). The bases of the wings were not broad as in Pomarine Jaeger. The bird looked entirely dark and the white primary bases could be seen occasionally on both the upper and undersides of the wings. I couldn't detect pale areas on any other parts of the bird. The tail shape could not be seen except when it turned <sup>1</sup> could see that there were no long central rectrices.
- Pomarine Jaegers flight is more direct and usually less erratic with less gliding than Parasitic Jaegers. A Pomarine Jaeger would appear to be nearly the same size as a Herring Gull rather than looking noticeably smaller than the Herring as this bird did. Long-tailed Jaegers (*S. longicaudus*) wings appear long and narrow and they fly more buoyantly much like a tern or a Bonaparte's Gull (*L. philadelphia*).

Jerry McWilliams



Record No.: 333-01-1991

# Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

## Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Parasitic Jaeger**

Date of Sighting: **5 October 1991**

Observer(s): **Ed Kwater**

Date of Submission: **1991**

Submitted by: **Ed Kwater**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V		
					A	B	C
E. Kwater			X				
B. Haas			X				
F. Haas			X				
R. Leberman			X				
G. McWilliams			X				
S. Santner			X				
P. Schwalbe			X				
TOTALS			7				
DECISION			X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary): *Bm Haas*

Date: *3/2/92*