

333-01 -1998

PARASITIC JAEGER

Stercorarius parasiticus

Location: Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, Pa

Date: December 13, 1998

Time: 9:40 to 10: 15 AM

Weather: Clear and a light south wind

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and Kowa TSN 4 Spotting Scope at 30X

Viewing distance: about 500 yards

Details of sighting & description: I had been counting waterbirds passing Sunset Point and was planning to leave in twenty minutes or so. It was a rather slow morning with a nearly calm lake and few waterfowl and gulls most of which had settled down for the day. At 9:40 all of the Bonaparte's Gulls began to fly and from the northeast I could see a Peregrine-like bird racing towards them. When it got to within 800 yards or so I could see that it was very dark on top and very light below. It continued to fly closer until it got within 500 yards and then it veered to the west giving me a broadside view. At this point I identified the bird as a jaeger. It dropped down so it was flying within two or three feet of the water and quickly picked up speed rapidly reducing the distance between itself and the Bonaparte's Gulls. When it caught up to the gulls it shot skyward and pursued a Bonaparte's chasing it for a few seconds before trailing off without a meal. During the course of this aerial maneuver I was able to identify the jaeger as a light morph Parasitic in basic definitive plumage by the following characteristics: It was not a heavy bird though the wings at times seemed broad-based. It was about a third larger than a Bonaparte's, but about a third smaller than a Herring Gull that it pursued later. The entire upper back, wings and tail were dark brown, the rump was paler and may have had some light barring. A faint white patch was present at the bases of the outer primaries. There was a broad white collar that separated the dark brown mantle from the dark brown cap. The lower half of the face was dirty white and the throat was a clean white. There was a prominent light brown upper breast band that separated the white throat from the pure white lower breast and upper belly. There were some dusky feathers high on the flanks. The lower belly was pale brown becoming darker on the undertail coverts. There was some faint barring on the lower belly and undertail coverts. The wing lining and axillaries appeared unmarked medium gray-brown and a bold white half moon shaped patch was easily seen at the bases of the primaries. The tail was wedged shaped with two narrow pointed central tail

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projections extending perhaps an inch or inch and a half. A side view of the tail made the overall length of the tail seem longer than it actually was. These central tail projections were not always easy to see; only when the bird banked showing a face on view of the tail could they be seen. The Parasitic Jaeger spent most of the hour it was observed sitting on the water only about a hundred yards from the flock of gulls. It would only fly when the gulls would begin feeding. It pursued gulls about six times and never appeared to be successful in getting food from them. When on the water it sat rather high with neck extended. The bill appeared to be short and thin and the inner two thirds looked pinkish-yellow with a dusky tip. The dark cap extended below the eye and angled upwards towards the back of the head. The white of the face, throat, and nape showed a strong contrast between the dark cap dusky upper breast and dark brown back. There were some pale edged feathers on the scapulars. The folded primaries looked solid black against the dark brown mantle and wing coverts. The long pointed central rectrices could be seen fairly well when it flared its tail to preen. At 10:40 the bird took off the water and flew westerly parallel to the shoreline and out of sight. This the first adult jaeger I have observed in Erie County. I took 29 photographs of the bird on the water and in the air, but because of the distance between me and the bird the photos are likely to reveal only jaeger species.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to the author of the text, located at the bottom of the page.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

Date of Sighting: 13 December 1998 to 13 December 1998

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1998

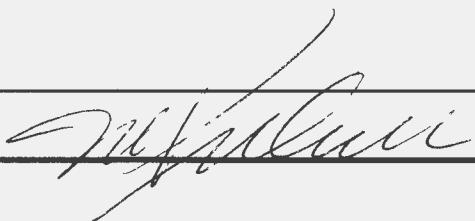
Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

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 | |
| D. Couchman | | | X | | | | | |
| T. Floyd | | | | | | | | X |
| P. Hess | | | X | | | | | |
| R. Ickes | | | X | | | | | |
| J. McWilliams | | | X | | | | | |
| B. Reid | | | X | | | | | X |
| P. Rodewald | | | X | | | | | |
| TOTALS | | | 6 | | | | | 4 |
| DECISION | | | X | | | | | |

Comments: 6/0/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

9/28/00