



Longtailed
Jaeger
Sarasota Lake PA
8-27-05
J. R. Payne





PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

334-01-2005

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Long-tailed Jaeger Stercorarius longicaudus
Subspecies, if known _____

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) Unknown

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): adult in breeding plumage - tail streamers missing

DATE OF OBSERVATION 8-27-05 TIME found 1:40 pm, left 2:15 pm

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Somerset Borough

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Somerset Lake

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Jeff & Retha Payne
Address 9755 Gladys Pike
City Bellin State PA ZIP 15530
e-mail (optional) paynemt@chilitech.com phone (optional) 814 267-5718

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you): _____

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) sitting on lake or flying and circling above lake

DISTANCE TO BIRD sitting 350-500 yds, flying as close as 150 yds to infinity

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) 63°, very low cloud ceiling, on & off misting rain, sun overhead

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Swarovski 65mm scope (20-60x) Zeiss 7x42 binocs
" 10x42 binocs Olympus D-40 Zoom Digital Camera

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed - size relative to other species present; "jizz" = e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual): see attached Description and Narrative

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) - described in narrative. There were no other gulls or terns present while the bird was there for interaction.

VOCALIZATIONS none

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY: see comments below

Photograph Video recording _____ Audio recording _____ Drawing copy of field drawing

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name Jeff Payne

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

e-mail (optional) _____ phone (optional) _____

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

General condition _____

If collected (by permit), location of specimen if known _____

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others) Parasitic Jaeger was the main rule out but a combination of factors led us to Long-tailed. The contrast between back color and primaries and lack of breast band on the sitting bird were well seen on the flying bird the lack of a white flash on underwing primary shafts and the light belly and chest with no breast band ruled out Parasitic. The dark underwings and light leading edge of primaries seen on top when bird circling towards us is supportive of Long-tailed.

We realize this is a rare bird and it does not seem to be associated with any particular wind v pattern

DISCUSSION - Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it: We wish the bird had tail streamers but Sibley states they are often broken by rain. We would have loved to had more observers on the bird but a dearth of local avid birders and the short time bird present prevented this. Better pictures would be nice but we did the best we could with weather, distance and equipment. We got an e-mail report on 8/28 that West Virginia had its first Long-tailed Jaeger in Jefferson Co from Aug 24-26, 2005 that bird had some wonderful photographs taken of it - perhaps these two birds will turn out to be two of several travelling overland?

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES We have not previously seen Long-tailed. We have observed Parasitics from the coast in New Jersey and Cape Cod. We have observed Parasitics on pelagic voyages and one hurricane tossed bird at Sunset Lake on 9-9-03

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? (why or why not) Yes weather and distance were not ideal, but all salient points support Long-tailed Jaeger over other species.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

During observation Sibley Guide

After observation Harrison's Seabirds

DATE OF THIS REPORT: 8-28-05

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER

Jeff Payne

Lauretta Payne

Several digiscoped pictures were taken including the magnified ones here. The breast is visible with no banding and the contrast between black wing tips and lighter coverts and mantle are readily identifiable. We will include a disc with the raw pictures in case anyone wants to look at the rest. The all gray looking picture is taken through the right barrel of the Suravski's while looking through the left. A front view of bird's wingshape is barely visible upper left quarter.

Description and Narrative Long-tailed Jaeger

At 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 27, 2005, Jeff had driven by Somerset Lake on his way to work and observed some shorebirds at the north end and many swallows feeding at the lake surface in the light rain and low cloud ceiling. Hoping to find a Purple Martin and to refind a Western Sandpiper rot County year lists, Retta met Jeff after work and they headed back to the lake. Arriving at the southern end at about 1:30 P.m., they walked up the dam and started glassing the swallows. At 1:40 Jeff noticed a bird sitting on the water (first thought with binoculars was darkish backed gull with black on the head—possible Laughing?) at 400-500 yards and put the scope on it. The bird showed the following characteristics: a short, thick, black bill; a dark cap from upper mandible through eye and half way down the neck when extended; white on breast, sides of face and hind neck, a medium gray with some brown tinge on mantle and wing coverts; contrasting black, long pointed primaries; and the tail appeared all black and roughly the same length as the wing tips. Jeff felt Jaeger from this first look but was not sure which species. He told Retta that they had a good bird and left her to study it while he went back to the car for the digital camera and a Sibley Guide.

Retta had noted the above characteristics and had seen a pale yellow splash on the cheek when the bird turned. The bird was mostly sitting with its head in a low resting position, but it became more alert when larger birds flew by. It did not seem to be agitated by a fishing boat about one hundred yards away from it. At one point a Great Blue Heron flew over and the bird jumped off the water, made a tight turn, and then landed. Although brief, there was not a noticeable white flash in the wings and at this point they started to think that it might be a Long-tailed.

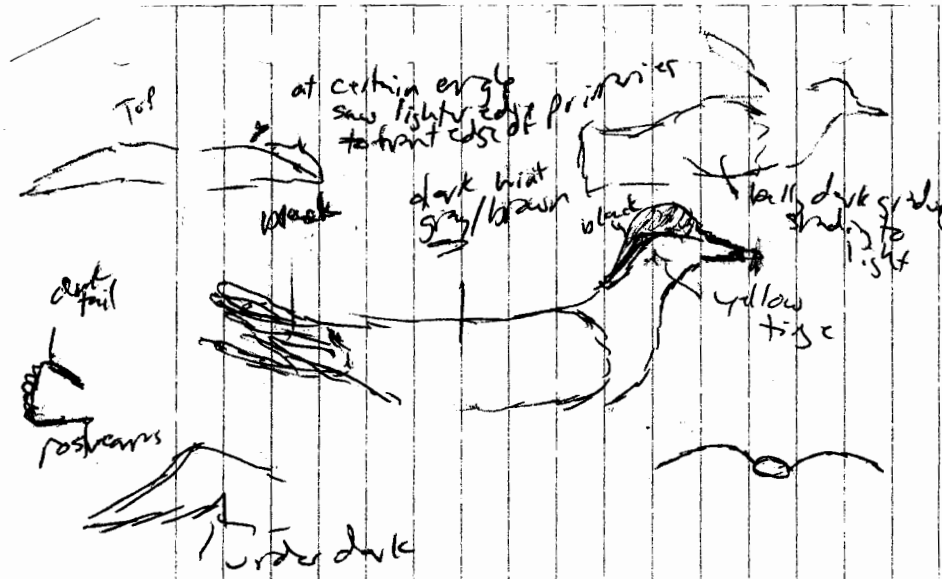
Jeff attempted several pictures with their small Olympus digital through the scope. They do not have a scope bracket for the camera and centering shots at high magnification was proving difficult. A rudimentary sketch was being drawn when the bird got up and flew north (at about 1:55) and proceeded up the lake. Retta could see it against the trees for a while and could not see any white wedges on the dark ventral surface of the wings. Jeff was mostly dropping the camera and paper scraps and the bird was lost to sight.

They left to go up the lake to try to relocate the bird. A phone call to fellow Somerset County birder Scott Bastian was unsuccessful. There was a fair amount of despair because everything was looking good for Long-tailed, but without better photos and looks at the flying bird they were afraid it was going to be a tough call.

Retta jumped out at the boat launch that is mid way up the lake, and before Jeff could get the scope etc. down to the lake she had refound the bird, it was now about 1:05. This time it was a little closer, perhaps 350 to 400 yards, and a couple more pictures were attempted and would be the clearest. The wing and tail tips still looked equal in length. The bird was more active with head up and looking around more frequently. After about 5 minutes it got up and started flying. Its general appearance while flying was of a light, quick bird flying with wings held in a bowed position when viewed head on. The undersides of the narrow, pointed wings were uniformly dark. When circling back towards them, there was a thin, lighter edge on the front edge of the primaries. The tail

appeared all dark with a moderate wedge shape and some irregular scalloping of individual retrices was present. No streamers projected from the central retrices. The undertail and belly appeared dark gray gradually shading to a white chest. There was no dark barring across the chest. The bird circled higher for several minutes then came lower across the water and was directly in front of the boat launch at its closest approach at about 150 yards. It then circled up again and disappeared over the trees headed south/southeast at about 1:15.

A later trip back to the lake at 6:00 p.m. was unsuccessful at relocating the bird.



copy field notes 8/27/05
 Long-tailed Jaeger
 Sunset Lake
 Jeff Payne

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Long-tailed Jaeger (Stercorarius longicaudus)

Date of Sighting: 27 August 2005 to 27 August 2005

Location: SOMERSET LAKE

County : SOMERSET

Observer(s): Jeff Payne, Retta Payne

Date of Submission: 2005

Submitted by: Jeff Payne, Retta Payne

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

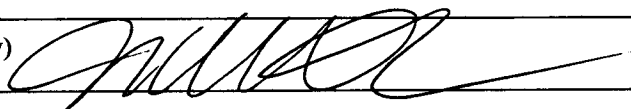
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut	X							
A. Guarente	X							
P. Guris				X				
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
J. Heller	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	6			1				
DECISION	X							

Comments: 6/1

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

8/4/06