

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2017-08-28 11:22:56
Observer's Name	David Brown
E-mail	davidebrownpa@gmail.com
Phone	5707729262
Observer's Address	1201 Cherry St Montoursville PA 17754 United States
Names of additional observers	Maddi Dunlap
Species (Common Name)	Long-tailed Jaeger
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Juvenile
Observation Date and Time	08-26-2017 6:30 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38853562
County	Lycoming
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Williamsport
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Williamsport River Walk
GPS coordinates of sighting	41.238676, -76.998403
Habitat	Flying over river, highway, and city
Distance to bird	Less than 50 meters
Viewing conditions	Sunny and calm evening. Initially the bird was in good light then as it got farther away it was heading towards the sun .
Optical equipment used	Canon 7Dii camera with Canon 400mm f/5.6 L lens

Description

While watching a northern harrier soaring I spotted the jaeger fly across between us and the harrier. I initially spotted it naked eye and since we were near the bridge and the bird would quickly go out of sight I went straight for my camera rather than my binoculars. My initial reaction when I saw the bird naked eye was that it was a common nighthawk because the bird seemed somewhat small and buoyant. As I looked through the viewfinder of my camera while taking photos I could tell that the shape was not correct for nighthawk and wondered if it was a dark tern (black tern, white-winged tern).

After taking a number of photos over a view seconds I very quickly glanced at a photo on my camera and immediately recognized the shape and plumage as that of a jaeger. I have previously seen parasitic jaeger in Lycoming County (awaiting PORC review) and have seen all 3 jaeger species on pelagic trips out of the mid-Atlantic, including multiple close views of long-tailed jaegers in similar plumage.

As soon as I realized it was a jaeger I immediately began taking photos again but by this point the bird was headed away and in worse light. I never viewed the bird through my binoculars because I was focusing on attaining photographs. All details of plumage and shape can be evaluated from the photographs. I have no additional details to add.

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

The bird flew over just east of our position and I spotted it as it was just northeast of us over the highway. The bird was continuously flapping and was heading in a straight line towards the northwest. As I began taking photographs the bird turned slightly giving me the best angle for a brief moment. We watched until it disappeared out of our sight (as bridge blocked our view). We quickly ran under the bridge to the other side but were not able to relocate the bird over the city.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Before looking at any references, I tentatively identified the jaeger as a long-tailed jaeger based on the buoyant flight style. As I have limited experience with jaegers I shared my photos with birders with more experience with jaeger identification and the consensus was long-tailed.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

My own experience is limited so I have deferred to those who are experts to evaluate whether the photos are diagnostic. I believe that with my discription and photographs that experts can identify this bird to species with certainty.

During

None because the sighting only lasted less than 30 seconds.

After

Sibley Birds iPhone app immediately after in the field. At home: Peterson Field Guide to Advanced Birding, Peterson Reference Guide to Seawatching

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings

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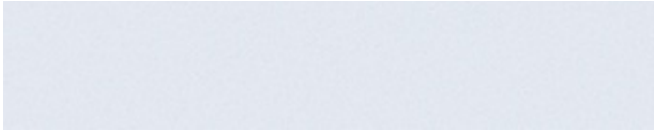


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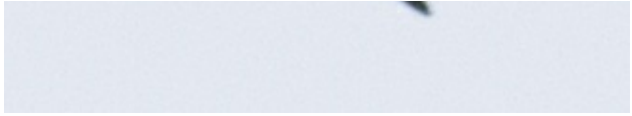


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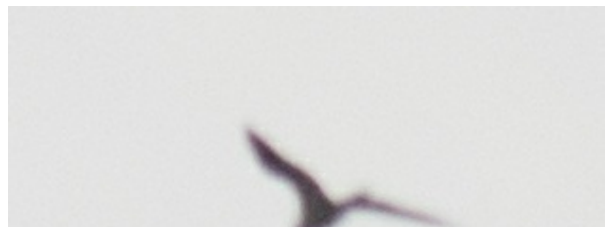
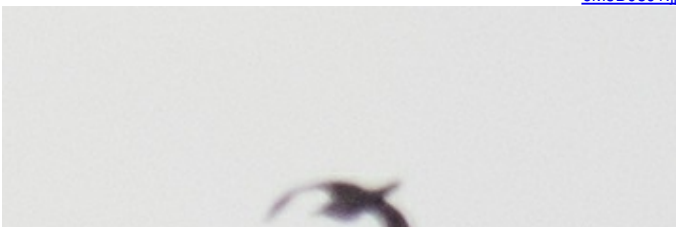
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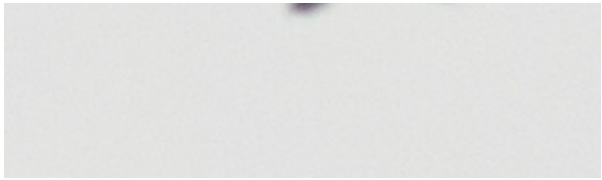


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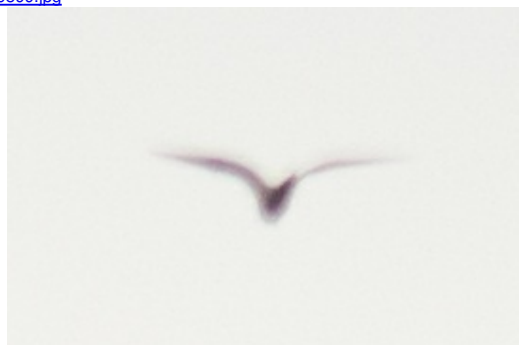
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