

348-01-1991

THAYER'S GULL  
(Larus thayeri)

PORC

A Thayer's Gull in basic definitive plumage was discovered at 3:15 PM on Feb. 17, 1991.

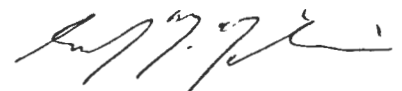
I was scanning a flock of 400 or 500 gulls that were feeding and resting at an area of open water northeast of Dobbins Landing in Erie when Joyce Hoffmann directed my attention to a gull whose bill color appeared to be different from that of the nearby Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. Since the bird in question was concealed behind 2 Herring Gulls, several minutes passed before I saw the primary extensions. The primaries appeared to be dark with very large white tips. This characteristic is only found in Iceland Gulls and Thayer's Gulls in adult plumages. When the bird in question came into view it could be studied. The following field marks were noted at a viewing distance of 300 to 400 yards using a 25X Bushnell Spotting Scope. The bird was intermediate in size between a Herring and a Ring-billed Gull. The head was small and slightly rounded. The bill was as long as a Herring Gull, but was less thick at the gony and darker yellow. The bird was in basic definitive plumage, showing large extensive light brown markings on the otherwise white head and neck down to the mantle and around the neck and to the upper breast. No Herring Gulls in the same plumage showed as many dark feathers on the head and neck. The mantle was medium grey and appeared to be the same tone of grey as the Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, definitely not paler. This eliminates Iceland Gull, which always have paler mantles than Herring or Ring-billed Gull. The legs were shaded by surrounding gulls, but they appeared to be darker pink than the Herring Gulls'. The exact iris color was difficult to see because of the distance and the light. However, the iris was darker than that of the Herring Gulls standing next to it. When the bird flew, the upperside and undersides of the primaries were seen clearly. Only the outer webs of the outermost primaries were pigmented the inner webs white. The outer webs were black, not frosty (Larus glaucoides ~~Kuulieni~~ have frosty and never black primaries). The outer 2 primaries showed 2 large white windows near the tip. The outer primary pattern shows the primaries to be white with 5 thin black stripes. The black joining only on the tips of the primaries unlike the solid (excluding the white windows) black outer primaries of Herring Gulls. The underside of the primaries was very pale grey with the outer tips black. The black could only be seen when the lighting good. The tail and underside were all white.

I studied the Thayer's Gull carefully for about 30 minutes. Other species of gulls present within 50 feet of the Thayer's included 1 Glaucous Gull (alternate definitive), 1 Iceland Gull (Basic I), and 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull (basic definitive).

The sky was cloudy (thin stratus), and the wind was westerly at approximately 5 mph.

It is likely that the other Thayer's Gull seen was a different bird. The characteristics explained above also pertained to this bird as well except for the following; less extensive brown markings on the head and neck and the mantle was darker than the Ring-billed Gull that was next to it.

Jerry McWilliams



Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # of

Species: **Thayer's Gull**

Date of Sighting: **February 17, 1991**

Observer(s): **Jerry McWilliams**

Date of Submission: **1991**

Submitted by: **Jerry McWilliams**

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):

*B. Haas*

Date:

11-6-91