

348-01-1993

Thayer's Gull

Larus thayeri

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: December 26, 1993

Time: 4:00 to 4:15 PM

Weather: Cloudy, wind northerly to approx. 15 mph, temp. 12 F

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Opics: Kowa TNS 4 Spotting Scope at about 30X

Viewing distance: 200 to 300 yards away

Details of sighting and description: Cold arctic air passing over northwestern PA the last two days brought in thousands of gulls to Presque Isle Bay including a high percentage of Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) and Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*). These conditions almost always bring in white-winged gulls. At least 8 Glaucous Gull (*L. hyperboreus*) were found, five of which were within 200 yards of each other. While searching through the closest group of gulls comprising about 200 birds, I discovered a Thayer's Gull in basic definitive plumage. The bird was studied in the air and on the water in company of Herring and Great Black-backed Gull. The size and shape of the Thayer's Gull was about the same as the Herring Gull except that it was slightly smaller. It was easily identified in flight by the reduced amount of black in the outer primaries and by the extent and shape of the wing-tip pattern. From the upper side the black was confined to the outer webs of the outer-most primaries giving the appearance of narrow black fingers. The first and second outer primaries had large white mirrors. The undersides of the primaries were pale (looking like a white-winged gull) with the only black appearing as a thin black line along the trailing edge of the outer primaries. Herring Gull always shows black on the undersides of the outer primaries duplicating the black on the upperside only somewhat more reduced. The mantle was medium gray appearing identical to the nearby Herring Gull in the same plumage. Iceland Gull (*L. glaucooides kumlieni*) always shows a noticeably paler gray mantle than Herring Gull. When resting on the water the Thayer's Gull looked almost identical to Herring Gull except the head was smaller and rounder, the bill was shorter and narrower and the brown streaking on the head and neck was more pronounced than on any of the nearby Herring Gull. The eye appeared to be dark, but it was difficult to be sure because of the light and the viewing distance.

I have seen several Thayer's Gull in definitive plumage at Niagara Falls and have found birds in this plumage on Presque Isle two or three years ago.

I saw this bird again on the Christmas count on January 1, 1993. The above details were noted again with the only difference being that I saw the bird in a little better light which allowed me to judge the upperwings and mantle to be slightly darker than the Herring Gulls that were flying next to it.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)**

Date of Sighting: **26 December 1993 to 26 December 1993**

Location: **PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK**

County: **ERIE**

Observer(s): **Jerry McWilliams**

Date of Submission: **1994**

Submitted by: **Jerry McWilliams**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

| Member | Class I | Class II | Class III | Class IV | Class V | | | Abstain |
|-----------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---|---|---------|
| | | | | | A | B | C | |
| F. Haas | | | X | | | | | |
| N. Pulcinella | | | X | | | | | |
| E. Kwater | | | X | | | | | |
| R. Ickes | | | X | | | | | |
| G. McWilliams | | | X | | | | | |
| P. Schwalbe | | | X | | | | | |
| J. Skinner | | | X | | | | | |
| TOTALS | | | 7 | | | | | |
| DECISION | | | X | | | | | |

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

9-25-94