

348-01-1994

THAYER'S GULL

Larus thayeri

Location: Presque Isle State Park

Date: February 18, 1994

Time: 8:45 AM to 11:00 AM

Weather: Clear, wind southerly to about 10 mph

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Optics: Zeiss 10 X 40 Binocular and Kowa TSN 4 at variable power

Viewing distance: 200 to 300 yards

Details of sighting and description: I was scanning through about 1000 gulls, most of which were resting on the ice with about 200 flying, when I spotted a gull showing grayish ventral primary tips. When it banked showing the dorsal surface I could see blackish primary tips with the black being more reduced than the nearby Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*). The gray across the dorsal surfaces appeared to be equal in tone to the gray dorsal surfaces of Herring Gull and Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*). This characteristic eliminated the very similar Iceland Gull (*L. glaucoides kumlieni*) which is always a paler gray across the dorsal surfaces than the latter species. My initial observation of the gull was when it was about 400 to 500 yards away. Despite this distance, I suspected that it was a Thayer's Gull in alternate definitive plumage. Upon a closer approach, I was able to obtain additional field characteristics to add validity to the sighting. When I was within 300 yards, the details became clearer. The ventral surface of the primary tips were grayish with a large white mirror showing through near the tips of the outermost primaries. The only black seen was at the very tips of the outermost primaries. On the dorsal surface of the primaries, black was limited to the outer webs of the outer five primaries with the very tips being white. There were two large mirrors about 2/3 way up on the outer two primaries.

After the bird landed, I was able to study it with the sun to my back. It landed next to a Herring Gull that was in prealternate definitive plumage allowing me direct comparison. The bill, head, and neck were smaller than the Herring Gull. The head also appeared rounder rather than flat-headed like the Herring Gull. The body of the Thayer's Gull was not as heavy-looking as the Herring Gull and was slightly smaller. The white spots at the tips of the primaries on the Thayer's Gull were larger and rounder than the Herring Gulls. The iris color appeared to be dull yellow compared to the Herring Gulls brighter lemon-yellow colored iris (Thayer's Gull can occasionally have yellow eyes). The legs were a brighter pink than any of the nearby Herring Gull. I might add that the bill was a darker

yellow compared to the brighter yellow of the nearby Herring gull. I photographed the Thayer's Gull while it was in flight and when it was perched.

When I was ready to leave, an alternate definitive plumaged Iceland Gull appeared. Even though I did not see it with the Thayer's Gull, I did compare it with the Herring and Ring-billed Gulls to confirm the paler dorsal surfaces of the Iceland Gull. I photographed both the Thayer's and Iceland Gulls.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. J. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

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

Date of Sighting: 18 February 1994 to 18 February 1994

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1994

Submitted by: Jerry McWilliams

Written Description: YES Photo: YES 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	6		1					
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

J. C. Haas

Date:

9-25-94