

348-02-1996

## THAYER'S GULL

*Larus thayeri*

**Location:** Presque Isle Bay, Erie County, PA

**Date:** February 25 & 29 and March 28 & 29, 1996

**Time:** During the four days, between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM

**Weather:** Viewing conditions good all days.

**Observer:** Jerry McWilliams

**Optics:** Kowa TSN 4 at variable power

**Viewing distance:** anywhere from about 200 feet to about 500 yards

**Details of sighting and description:** Since all birds identified were of the same age, rather than duplicating descriptions of all sightings during this period, I have written one description to cover all sightings.

I was scanning through about 500 gulls that were flying over Presque Isle Bay when I spotted a gull that appeared to be similar to an adult Herring Gull showing light grayish rather than black ventral outer primaries. When it banked showing the dorsal surface I could see blackish outer primaries with the black being more reduced than the nearby Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*). The gray across the mantle and forewings of this bird appeared to be equal in tone to the gray across the mantle and forewings of a nearby Herring Gull. This characteristic eliminated the very similar Iceland Gull (*L. glaucoides kumlieni*) which is always a paler gray across the mantle and forewings than Herring Gull. The nape and head were unmarked white indicating that it was in alternate plumage. As I studied the gull for several minutes, I was able to obtain additional field characteristics. The ventral surface of the primary tips were grayish with a large white mirror showing through near the tips of the outer two most primaries. The only black visible was near the very tips (the tips of the primaries were white) of the outermost primaries forming a thin dark submarginal line and along the outer web of the outermost primary. On the dorsal surface of the primaries, black was limited to the outer webs of the outer five primaries (appearing as black fingers) except where the black narrowly crossed over the inner web bordering the white primary tips. There were two large mirrors about 2/3 way up on the outer two primaries.

On the 28th & 29th of February, several thousand more gulls moved into the bay, and I identified at least another four or five adult Thayer's Gulls in alternate plumage. In addition to the Thayer's Gulls, I saw three Iceland, five Glaucous, and one Herring X Glaucous Gull.

I am quite familiar with Thayer's Gull, since I have seen many along the Niagara River in Canada and many in Presque Isle Bay. Until the last few years, all Thayer's Gull sightings were of immatures, now they have been replaced with all adults.

On March 28 & 29 I saw and photographed one of the Thayer's Gull in alternate definitive plumage. See photograph.

I suspect there may have been at least six or perhaps seven different Thayer's Gull during the reporting period.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. T. Griffin".

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

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

Date of Sighting: 28 March 1996 to 28 March 1996

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Jerry McWilliams

Date of Submission: 1996

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							
S. Feldstein	X							
TOTALS	5		1					1
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*J. C. Haas*

Date:

2-22-97