

PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE
210 Welcome Ave. Norwood, PA 19074

12 February 2002

Randy C. Miller
607 Woodland Drive
Manheim, PA 17545-9553

Dear Randy,

Thank you for submitting documentation of the Thayer's Gulls at Memorial Lake State Park on December 24 and 26, 1997, and the Northern Wheatear there on October 19, 1998. After careful review, the Committee regrets that it has voted not to accept these records.

Thayer's Gulls: Members' opinions were divided, and the balloting went two rounds (which partly explains the delay in announcing our decision). The final vote was five votes in favor of acceptance and two not in favor -- one vote short of the 6-1 decision which our bylaws require for acceptance.

One dissenting member felt that the birds were quite likely Thayer's but was concerned that a Thayer's/Iceland intergrade was not eliminated conclusively. The other felt that there was not quite enough detail to be sure about bird #1. About bird #2 he was troubled by the pinkish base to the bill, commenting "I think it is really too early for a 1st-winter to have this."

Northern Wheatear: Balloting went two rounds on this record as well, with a final vote of four members favoring acceptance and three not in favor.

The outcome placed the record in PORC's Class IV-A: "a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of an observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt."

The three dissenting members expressed one or both of two concerns: There was no mention in the description of whether the inverted T on a Northern Wheatear's tail was seen. The (indeed very remote!) possibility of an Isabelline Wheatear from the Old World was not eliminated, as it was for a bird seen earlier in October in Juniata County.

Non-acceptance certainly does not imply that these birds were not identified correctly, but rather that too few members felt they could accept the records with certainty. We hope this does not discourage you from submitting reports of rarities in the future.

Sincerely,



For the Committee:
Paul Hess, Chairman

Record #348-03-1997, 348-04-1997 (Thayer's Gulls); 646-02-1997 (Northern Wheatear)

RARE SPECIES REPORT

Add on note. The #1 bird was seen again on 18 Jan. 1998. Same location by myself.

348-03-1997 + 348-04-1997

SPECIES: Thayer's Gull <i>Larus thayeri</i>		1 st winter	NUMBER SEEN: 2
SIGHTING DATE: 24 Dec. 1997 #1 26 Dec. 1997 #2		SIGHTING TIME: 3pm - 5pm	
LOCATION:	COUNTY & STATE: Leb. Co. Penna. DISTANCE & DIRECTION FROM NEAREST TOWN: Memorial Lake State Park DIRECTIONS, IF APPLICABLE: 7 miles north of Annville on 934		
HABITAT: apx. 100 acre lake 1/3 frozen.			
SIGHTING CONDITIONS:	LIGHTING: Partly Cloudy both days DISTANCE: 75 yards to 150 yards EQUIP. USED: 15x45 Bushnell spotting scope LENGTH OF SIGHTING: Mostly 2 hours		
DESCRIPTION:	VOICE: not heard SIZE: Iceland Gull size, slightly smaller than Herring Gull PLUMAGE: Both birds pale grey-brown. Head pale grey-brown with darker area around eye. Whitish at base of bill. Barring on upperparts and wing coverts. Slightly darker than first winter Iceland Gulls. Con't on back. ANATOMY (bill length, leg color, etc.): Bill - apx 2" - slender bill with a gently curving upper mandible tip. Bird #1 had an all black bill. Bird #2 had a pinkish base with a black bill. Dark eye on both. Legs pink. BEHAVIOR: Roosting on lake with apx. 1,000 gulls. Mostly Herring Gulls. 1 to 8 Iceland Gulls roosting here with 2-6 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and up to 45 Greater Black-backed Gulls. Apx. 150± Ring-billed Gulls.		
FAMILIARITY WITH THIS & SIMILAR SPECIES: I have seen and photographed only one imm. Thayer's Gull. Jan. 1987 in Lanc. Co. I have seen many 1 st year Iceland and Glaucous Gulls.			
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES: Direct comparison to 1 st winter Iceland Gull. Side by side.			
HAS A PHOTOGRAPH BEEN TAKEN? no IF SO, BY WHO?			
Have any additional observers filled out a rare species report? If so, who? Maybe those listed below.			
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Use back of form for more space): Seen by Jonathan Heller on 12/26 #2 bird and by Devanne Hoffman on 1/2/1998 #1 bird			
SIGHTING & REPORT BY: Randy C. Miller			
ADDRESS: 607 Woodland Dr. Manheim Pa 17545-9553		PHONE # (717) 664-3778	
SIGNATURE Randy C. Miller		DATE: 1/14/1998	

Perched on the ice the wing tips were a medium brown. The primaries showed a pale "V" fringe. Tertiaries pale brown, matching upperparts.

In flight. Dark tips on outer primaries, pale base to primaries. Primary coverts matched primary tips. The secondaries were med. grey-brown. But not as dark as Herring Gull 1st winter. Broad grey-brown tail band, pale tail base and barred uppertail and undertail coverts. Pale grey-brown on underparts. Head shape, round. From below in flight the flight feathers appear translucent, like the 1st winter Iceland Gull present. When on the water and perched, the wing tips went past the tail approx 2".

On 24 Dec. 1997 while birding Memorial Lake in Leb. Co. I was sorting through the gulls. A few days before I had seen 3 imm. Iceland Gulls. On the 24th I had found 1 imm. Iceland Gull with approx 300 Herring Gulls, 25 Ring-billed Gulls, 4 Great Black-backed Gulls, and 1 imm. Lesser Black-backed. Then I found on the ice what looked like an Imm. Iceland Gull behind a Herring Gull. When the gull stepped out I could see the primaries were grey-brown. When he put out his wing I could see the dark tips on the primaries, light base, and primary coverts were grey-brown. The secondaries were also grey-brown. On short flights I could see the broad grey-brown tail band. Unlike the barred tail of the imm. Iceland Gull. The bill was all black. I had side by side views at 100 yards of the Thayer's Gull and imm. Iceland Gull on the ice and swimming. Seen from 3-5 pm.

On 26 Dec. 1997 I was joined by Jonathan Heller and his book Gulls A Guide to Identification, By P.J. Grant. We found a imm. Thayer's Gull at 3 pm and studied it on the ice, swimming, and in flight. This bird showed a pinkish base to the bill, unlike the bird on the 24th. We had side by side views with 2 imm. Iceland Gulls. Both Thayer's Gulls plumage were the same.

348-03-1997

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348-04-1997

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Thayer's Gull (Larus thayeri)

Date of Sighting: 24 December 1997 to 24 December 1997

Location: MEMORIAL LAKE STATE PARK

County: LEBANON

Observer(s): Randy Miller

Date of Submission: 1997

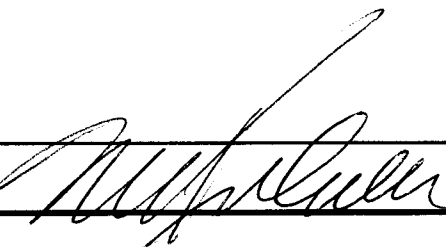
Submitted by: Randy Miller

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION YES PHOTO NO SPECIMEN NO RECORDING NO

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. Couchman			X					
T. Floyd								X
P. Hess				X				
R. Ickes								X
J. McWilliams			X					
B. Reid			X					
P. Rodewald			X					
TOTALS			4	1				2
DECISION								

Comments: 4/1/2 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

10/22/00