

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

8 February 2001

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

Dear Randy,

Thank you for submitting documentation for the Swainson's Hawk at Gov. Dick Tower on 14 September 1997, the Mew (Common) Gull at Memorial Lake State Park in January 1998, and the Thayer's Gulls at Memorial Lake in December 1997. After careful review, the committee regrets that it cannot accept these records.

On the hawk, a majority of members felt that the bird was most probably a Swainson's, but several believed that the description was not sufficient to rule out melanistic individuals of other Buteo species.

On the Common Gull, one member voted to approve it, but the other six were reluctant though they thought the bird was likely a Common. Among the latter group's doubts were concerns about the "white spots" on the outer primaries and a "blackish...carpal bar," neither of which would be expected on a first-basic Common Gull.

On the Thayer's, one member voted for acceptance, but the majority who declined listed several troubling features of the description: the pinkish-based black bill (first-winter Thayer's should have an entirely black bill at least through December); no mention of the bird's size relative to other species, and no description of the tertials (fairly solid in Thayer's; mottled in Iceland). These latter members felt that more detail would have been necessary to rule out a dark Iceland or an intergrade Thayer's x Iceland conclusively.

The committee emphasizes that non-acceptance does not mean that the bird was not the species reported, but rather that the committee believes the documentation submitted does not support the identification with certainty. We hope that this will not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rarities you may find in the future.

Finally, the committee apologizes for the unacceptably long delay before all members were able to vote on the record. Circumstances beyond our control caused the problem, and we believe that we are back on a timely track.

Add note: the #1 bird was seen again on 12 Jan 1998, same location by myself.

RARE SPECIES REPORT

348-03-1997 + 348-04-1997

SPECIES: Thayer's Gull <i>Larus thayeri</i>		1 <sup>st</sup> 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 Anville 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. Barling 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+ King-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 <sup>st</sup> year Iceland and Glaucous Gulls.			
COMPARISON TO SIMILAR SPECIES: Direct comparison to 1 <sup>st</sup> 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 Deanna 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	

atched on the ice the wing tips were a medium brown. The primaries  
wet a pale V fringe. Tertiaries pale brown, matching upperparts.  
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 1<sup>st</sup> winter. Broad grey-brown tail band, pale tail base and  
red uppertail and undertail coverts. Pale grey-brown on underparts.  
Bill shape, round. From below in flight the flight feathers appear  
translucent, like the 1<sup>st</sup> winter Iceland Gull present. When on the water and  
landed, 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 24<sup>th</sup> I  
did find 1 imm. Iceland Gull with approx 300 Herring Gulls, 25 Ring-billed Gulls, 4  
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  
put 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  
a 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 a distance.

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

348-03-1997  
+

348-04-1997

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation - Round One

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

Date of Sighting: 26 December 1997 to 26 December 1997

Location: MEMORIAL LAKE STATE PARK

County: LEBANON

Observer(s): Randy Miller, Jonathan Heller

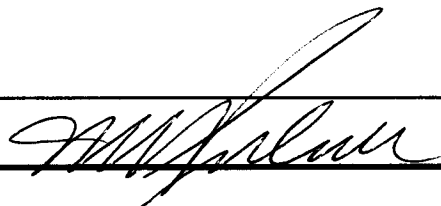
Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Randy Miller

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			<del>XX</del>		X			
R. Ickes								X
J. McWilliams			<del>XX</del>	X				
B. Reid			X					<del>XX</del>
P. Rodewald					X			
TOTALS			1	1	3			2
DECISION					X			

Comments: 1/4/2

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 9/28/00